COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

COMMITTEE ON HOUSING, NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT

AND THE HOMELESS

Remote location using Microsoft® Teams
Wednesday, October 21, 2020
9:30 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILWOMAN JAMIE GAUTHIER, CHAIR
COUNCILMAN CURTIS JONES, JR., VICE-CHAIR
COUNCILWOMAN CINDY BASS
COUNCILWOMAN KENDRA BROOKS
COUNCILMAN ALLAN DOMB
COUNCILWOMAN KATHERINE GILMORE RICHARDSON
COUNCILWOMAN MARIA D. QUINONES-SANCHEZ
COUNCILMAN MARK SQUILLA

ALSO PRESENT:

COUNCILWOMAN HELEN GYM

BILLS: 200414, 200420, 200421

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COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: I understand that state law currently requires that the following announcement be made at the beginning of every remote public hearing as follows: Due to the current public health emergency, City Council Committees are currently meeting remotely. We are using Microsoft Teams to make these remote hearings possible.

Instructions for how the public may view and offer public testimony at public hearings of Council Committees are included in the public hearing notices that are published in the Daily News, Inquirer and Legal Intelligencer prior to the hearings and can also be found on phlcouncil.com. I now note that the hour has come.

Mr. Weiss, will you please call the roll to take attendance.

Members that are in attendance will please indicate that you are present when your name is called. Also, please say a few brief words when

responding so that your image will be displayed on screen when you speak.

THE CLERK: Councilman Domb.

COUNCILMAN DOMB: Good morning, Madam Chair. Good morning, colleagues. Good morning to the public.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Good morning.

THE CLERK: Councilmember Bass.

COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good morning to everyone. Thank you, Madam Chair, for having this hearing. Looking forward to a productive conversation today.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Good morning.

COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good morning.

THE CLERK: Councilmember Gilmore Richardson.

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: Good morning, Madam Chair. Good morning, colleagues.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Good morning.

THE CLERK: Councilmember Quinones-Sanchez.

COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: Good morning. Good morning. Good morning. Welcome, everyone.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Morning.

THE CLERK: Councilmember Brooks.

COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Good morning, Madam Chair. Good morning, colleagues.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Good morning.

THE CLERK: Councilmember Squilla.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Good morning, Madam Chair. Good morning, colleagues.

THE CLERK: And, Councilmember Jones.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Okay. Thank you. A quorum of the Committee is present and this hearing is now called to order.

I also want to acknowledge the presence of Councilmember Gym at this time. The Councilmember is not a member of the Committee. But as a sponsor of one bill before this Committee today, she has been invited to make comments during the hearing and ask questions of witnesses. The Councilmember will not take part in the public meeting at the conclusion of the public hearing.

This is the public hearing on the Committee on Housing, Neighborhood Development and The Homeless regarding Bill Nos. 200414, 200420 and 200421.

Good morning, colleagues. Thank you so much for being here today and thank you to everyone viewing at home tuning in. We're here today to hear testimony amendment to the bills that comprise the Emergency Housing Protection Act. The EHPA, which I introduced with my colleagues Councilmembers Gym and Brooks, was signed into law by Mayor Kenney on July 1st.

This package of bills protects Philadelphia renters from eviction and late fees and offers mandatory hardship repayment plans to facilitate the long-term payment of back rent for those currently unable to pay as a result of COVID-19-related income loss. The proposal of amendments to the EHPA extend the timeline for these protections. As the pandemic continues with no end in sight and as we head towards what is being called the third wave of infection across the country, it is urgent that Philadelphia residents can remain safe and healthy in their homes without risk of eviction.

There is no overstating how urgent the issue of housing security is right now. Before this crisis even began, Philadelphia had the fourth highest eviction rate in the country. One out of 14 of our renters face eviction each year. And this is a crisis that is concentrated in communities of color. Black renters are

twice as likely to get evicted as White renters. And 70 percent of people evicted from their homes are women of color. On top of that, consider the disparate economic and health impact that COVID-19 is having on our communities of color.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics recently reported that Philadelphia's August unemployment rate was 15.4 percent. That's up from just 6.4 percent in August of 2020, and we know that job losses are concentrated in the low end of the wage distribution among workers who are more likely to be Black or Latino and who are more likely to rent their homes. And on top of this, Black Philadelphians and Hispanic Philadelphians contract COVID-19 at 1.8 times the rate of White Philadelphians.

So with all this in mind, protecting our City's renters isn't just an acknowledgment that housing is a human right, its intentional action to counteract the insidious effects of

structural racism. And unless we extend the EHPA, Black and Brown Philadelphians will bear the brunt of an unprecedented wave of evictions, once Philadelphia's Municipal Court allows them to resume on November 8th. This legislation keeps vulnerable residents housed and safe, ensures landlords get paid and reduces the strain on City resources, like homeless services and our hospital system.

I want to take a moment to give a brief overview of each of the bills we will be considering today. Bill No. 200414, introduced by Councilmember Gym, extends the eviction moratorium through December 31st of this year. This ensures adequate time for renters to seek rental assistance with the cooperation of their landlord and seek additional means of income, all the while maintaining shelter to stay safe from COVID-19.

Bill No. 200421, which I introduced, will extend the mandatory

repayment program until the end of this year. Meaning that even if you lost your job after August 31st, you can still take advantage of this option. The program allows renters experiencing financial hardship to establish a nine-month repayment plan to pay off back rent ending no later than September 30th of next year.

And Bill No. 200420, introduced by Councilmember Brooks, extends the late fee waiver until September 31st of next year. The long and short of it is that these amendments extend the timeline for laws that are already on the books. We did not know how long the pandemic would last when we first introduced the EHPA in the spring.

I'm grateful to my colleagues on the Housing Committee for championing the initial legislation, and this unprecedented health and economic crisis for our City today demands another strong response from this Legislative body. Thank you.

Are there any other Members who would like to make opening comments?

COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Councilmember Brooks.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Councilmember, go ahead.

COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Councilmember Gilmore Richardson was in queue.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: I'm so sorry. One second. Councilmember Gilmore Richardson, go ahead.

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: Thank you. Thank you so much, Madam Chair. And thank you, colleagues.

I just had a brief point of clarification regarding the orders of the day upon reviewing the witness list. I wanted to know for the record if we will have anyone to testify regarding the assistance available not only to tenants, but also to landlords so we can prevent homelessness in our City. So for the record, I just wanted to know if

Eva Gladstein, our Deputy Managing Director of Health and Human Services or anyone from her office will be on this call to respond to any of the questions that we have around preventing homelessness and using some of the CARES dollars to ensure that we can keep people in their homes and housed during this time?

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Sure. Greg Heller is here from the Administration to testify about rental assistance and other resources available to the landlords.

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: Absolutely, that I do understand, Madam Chair. But my specific point of clarification around the orders of the day is that I don't see Eva Gladstein in this witness list. And I think it's important that we have her on this hearing to talk about the Administration's commitment to homelessness prevention in helping those that need to stay in their homes. Okay.

I think that is important. If we can get Eva here on the record, I think that will be most helpful for this hearing.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: We're happy to reach out.

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: Okay. Thank you so much, Madam Chair. Thank you, colleagues, for your indulgence.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Madam Chair? Madam Chair?

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Hi, Councilman Jones.

COUNCILMAN JONES: I just want for the record to be recognized that I am here.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Good and good to see you. Good morning.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Good morning.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Okay. Councilmember Brooks.

COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Thank you so much, Madam Chair.

Yesterday the City reported 268

cases of COVID-19 and 18 deaths. Currently, the doors of our schools remain closed. Unemployment remains high. Violence plagues our neighborhoods, and food insecurity is an ongoing challenge. The pandemic has transformed everything about our daily lives to over seven months, and we can expect that to continue at least through the winter.

Some experts have attributed the rising number of cases across the City, the state and the country to a sense of pandemic fatigue. Pandemic fatigue is when community members relax their social distancing, wearing masks and traveling practice because of a sense of exhaustion that this crisis has caused. But contrary to how tired we feel and how eager we may be to return to normal life, now more than ever we need to be focused on keeping our communities healthy.

As cold weather and many of our already cost-burdened renters struggle

to make ends meet, we need to extend this Emergency Housing Protection Act so that we can keep Philadelphians safe and in their homes. We need to make sure that communities of color which have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic are not thrown into an even greater --

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Councilmember --

COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Yes. Hello?

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: We're having a very hard time hearing you. I'm having a hard time hearing you.

COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Oh, okay.

COUNCIL TECH SUPPORT: It sounds clear to me, so I'm thinking it might be on your end.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Oh, okay. Sorry about that.

COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: All right. I will finish up real quick. We need to make sure that our community members are not amassing more and more

debt as a result of fees that they have time -- that they won't be able to recoup over time or recover. We need to maintain the systems in place to stabilize renters while also ensuring that landlords eventually get paid.

This past summer, the members of the Housing Committee stood together to say that a massive wave of eviction and homelessness during the worst health and economic crisis of our lifetime was unacceptable. You all stood up for the most vulnerable constituents and protected their right to housing. Now, we're asking you again to advocate on the behalf of thousands of renters who remain in dire need of your support. I want to thank you all in advance for your advocacy and your dedication to this issue.

I conclude, Madam Chair. Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you. Sorry for the interruption.

COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: No

problem.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Councilmember Gym, you had a point of clarification.

COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Yes. Thank you so much, Madam Chair. And thank you to the members of the Committee and especially to my Council sponsors on the reinstatement actually of the eviction moratorium. There is no extension of the eviction moratorium because none currently exists.

So I just want to be clear because I want to get quickly to the hearing. I asked that the members of the Committee will be hearing many things today, and I think it's important to know that it's not necessarily all predictable. I want to be clear that the eviction moratorium is the same bill as was passed unanimously by our Council body last spring. It's the same bill because the public health risks that evictions pose to all of us and especially to the most vulnerable among

us and vulnerable renters still persist in this moment. It's not different. And it never did limit it to just those who experienced COVID-related hardships.

It was a COVID bill because now as was back then, we are still at what we would consider to be at the height of a pandemic that has overwhelmingly impacted vulnerable Philadelphians, especially Black and Brown Philadelphians who are among those most at risk. We'll hear testimony today about what the health risks are for mass evictions that have been seen in other states that have lifted eviction moratoriums.

We will take a look and hear from individuals who can talk about the challenges that have gone on with the courts. Certainly, since the eviction moratorium was instated last spring, our office has not stayed still. We've tried to do everything to see if we can ensure that programs that were established can be funded, better courts

can be good partners with us on this and this is where we are. It's not meant to just be the easiest decision. It's meant to be an important decision and a ripe one. And so, I hope that as we go into this conversation we'll be able to listen about why we instituted a moratorium across the board on evictions last spring and why we also need one right now. Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you.

Mr. Weiss, will you please read the titles of the bills.

THE CLERK: Yes. Bill No. 200414, an Ordinance amending Chapter 9-800 of the Philadelphia Code, entitled "Landlord and Tenant," to address matters related to the landlord and tenant relationship during the novel coronavirus of 2019 pandemic, including providing for temporary eviction relief and making certain technical changes, all under certain terms and conditions.

Bill No. 200420, an Ordinance

amending Chapter 9-800 of the Philadelphia Code, entitled "Landlord and Tenant," to address matters related to the landlord and tenant relationship during the novel coronavirus of 2019 pandemic, including providing for the temporary waiver of certain fees, and making certain technical changes, all under certain terms and conditions.

Bill No. 200421, an Ordinance amending Chapter 9-800 of the Philadelphia Code, entitled "Landlord and Tenant," to address matters related to the landlord and tenant relationship through the novel coronavirus of 2019 pandemic, including providing for repayment agreements and making certain technical changes, all under certain terms and conditions.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you.

Before we begin to hear testimony from the witnesses we have for today, everyone who has been invited to the meeting to testify should be aware

that this public hearing is being recorded. Because the hearing is public, participants and viewers have no reasonable expectation of privacy. By continuing to be in the meeting, you are consenting to being recorded.

Additionally, prior to recognizing Members for the questions or comments they have for witnesses, I will note for the record at this time that we will use the chat feature available in Microsoft Teams to allow Members to signify that they wish to be recognized. In order to comply with the Sunshine Act, the chat feature must only be used for this purpose. Before we call witnesses, we're going to show a short news clip which shows what eviction looks like during a pandemic.

Allison, will you please play the video.

(Video playing.)

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you, Allison. I've seen that video several times and it still impacts the

same way each time. Thank you.

Mr. Weiss, will you please call the first panel or witness we have to testify this morning.

THE CLERK: Yes. The first panel is Demetria Saunders, Dr. Ala Stanford, Kathryn Leifheit, Rue Landau and Chapri Kelly.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Okay. Good morning, Demetria. Are you connected and ready to proceed? Is Demetria Saunders on?

THE CLERK: I think she's muted. She's on. She's muted. Is there a way to unmute her?

COUNCIL TECH SUPPORT: You can hit star 6 to unmute, please.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Demetria, can you hit star 6 to unmute?

Maybe we'll try to give Demetria some assistance. And in the meantime, move on to Dr. Stanford.

THE CLERK: I think Demetria just got unmuted.

MS. SAUNDERS: Hello?

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Are you there?

MS. SAUNDERS: Yes, I am. Good morning.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Good morning. Please state your name for the record and proceed with your testimony.

MS. SAUNDERS: My name is Demetria Saunders and I would like to say good morning to everyone again. I am actually 1 of the 20 million renters across the country currently at risk of eviction. I am a tenant at the 4800 block of Oxford Avenue since 2018. I am also a member of Renters United of Philadelphia. We organize and educate renters to fight for our rights.

My building is owned by MCM Management Solution, a New Jersey-based corporate landlord which has 466 apartments across seven City Council Districts. They own apartment buildings in Germantown, all across the City, Germantown, Tacony, Cobbs Creek, Frankford, Northwood, Olney, West

Philadelphia and also in North Philadelphia.

I am here today to share my story about the challenges I have faced during this pandemic before there was an Emergency Housing Protection Act. I am blessed to be a member of the Renters United. Otherwise, I would have been put out in the streets. I am also here to ask all of the Councilmembers, especially my District Councilmember Maria Sanchez, to vote yes on all three extensions to this Emergency Housing Protection Act before the Housing Committee today.

As of this time, I am barely not working because of this pandemic. I am a one-on-one caretaker for people with mental disabilities and school bus attendant also. This means that I take care of people and make sure that they get what they need to get to their appointments and take care of their errands. It's been a roller-coaster ride between March and now.

I have lost my family to this virus. I have lost and buried them. And as a result of that, I have been having mental health issues, a lot of anxiety and losing sleep through this pandemic. And I'm coping with this by the grace of God and trying to motivate myself by trying to find a new job, but the situation is getting serious and I have to work to pay my bills. And cases are rising all over the City, all over.

In April, I had got a notice on my door from my landlord from MCM Management saying that I had a default on my lease for not paying rent. That means we're planning to file an eviction against me so there could be a hearing as soon as the courts reopen. And I couldn't believe they wanted to evict me during this pandemic and this is serious.

That was a smack in my face because I'm a good tenant. I've always paid my rent on time. And in the beginning of May, I got a notice from

MCM saying I had to leave by the end of June because they were not renewing my lease. Even before this pandemic, I was a member of Renters United of Philadelphia which was a blessing to me, a blessing.

When this letter and then this renewal notice arrived to me, I fought to keep my place and my home and enforce our collective -- COVID-19 demand by negotiating an agreement with MCM. I was able to get a lease renewal with no rent increase, a payment plan for back rent I owed and my late fees canceled. But not everyone is part of the renters movement like me, and extending the Emergency Housing Protection Act will help so many other people who are backed up on their rent and their late fees since March.

A lot of people are scared right now, very scared. And they're scared to come forward for their demands, for their rights. Right now I am requesting my demands. My demand

today is we need to vote yes on this eviction moratorium, late-fee waivers and payment agreements and extension. We need City Council and landlords to work with our tenants so they can have a home. Your home makes you feel at ease and comfortable and safe. It's not a home when you're constantly worried about being put out in the street. That's all I got to say.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you so much. Thank you for sharing your testimony.

Dr. Stanford, can you state your name for the record and proceed with your testimony.

DR. STANFORD: Good morning. My name is Dr. Ala Stanford. I am a pediatric surgeon, Founder of the Black Doctors COVID-19 Consortium. I'm a native Philadelphian. I'm a wife and a mother. And to the woman who just spoke, I'm holding back tears after listening to what you said. And also watching that video and the information

I'm going to present, I believe, supports emphatically that people should not be removed from their homes right now. With coronavirus, they've already had the floor removed from them. Don't take their ceiling.

Why was a Black Doctor COVID-19 Consortium formed? It was formed because in our City of Philadelphia, 52 percent of the deaths were African-Americans, 52 percent when we represent 44 percent of the population. That is also true for the Latinx community, also higher than White Americans in our City and that is true throughout the nation.

So what we did as a group of volunteer medical health professionals is we set up mobile testing units in all of the hardest-hit zip codes. So on phila.gov where they were listed, you could see where the positivity rates were. And initially when I reached out to the City to say, hey, Black people, Latin folks are dying every day higher

than everyone else, what's being done, there was nothing that was done quickly, as quickly that I felt it needed to be done.

So we went to church parking lots, street corners, parks, wherever, labor unions, wherever the people were so that we could test them. And sure enough, the positivity rate at times were as high as 24 percent, 25, almost 1 in 4 people. And now in October, I am having stress because it feels like April again as we're testing people, and last night we were in Maria Quinones-Sanchez's District at Esperanza in North Philly, Hunting Park, North 5th Street. And prior to that, we were at the playground, Hunting Park Rec Center. The cases are going up again. Sometimes 10 percent when we test.

Facts: 221,000 deaths from coronavirus in the United States. African-Americans represent 13 percent of the population and 21 percent of the deaths. And in some cases, it's even

higher. Other facts: If there's not death, there's more diagnoses which means that people who survived have residual symptoms, which means they cannot work and be productive.

I'm not sure if you were aware, but the CDC put out a report last month that said of the children who died from coronavirus, 78 percent of them were Black and Latino, and 33 percent of them died at home. These are some of the facts that we're not hearing. Of the healthcare workers who died, 1,270; 60 percent of them were healthcare workers of color.

The only thing we have right now is testing and contact tracing. There's no cure. We have supportive management. There is no vaccine. I focus in the present on the tools that we have right now. Do we want those things, yes, but this is what we're working with. Our statistics -- because at this point we have tested almost 12,000 people in the City of

Philadelphia. We've analyzed our data with the University of Pennsylvania.

We have tested 87 percent African-American, 10 percent White and 3 percent Latinx. Of those people, the three statistically significant things to have a COVID diagnosis are, one, being Black, two, being Latino and age. And guess what you think that age might be?

All along you've been hearing our elderly citizens, our nursing residents, our healthcare workers, no. Our data shows that the age that you're more likely to be diagnosed with a positive diagnosis is if you're less than 65 and you're less than 18. So who is that? It's the most productive people in our society. It's the working people that are paying the rent. It's the working people that are dying and getting sick. It's the working people that have young children who are also being diagnosed with the disease. It's working people that don't have pensions.

They don't have paid time off to pay their rent.

So again, the highest rate of people we've seen positive 45 to 54, 26 to 34, 35 to 44. Those are the ones being diagnosed. And when we tested them, they had health insurance. 33 percent of them had symptoms. So what does that tell you? That the barriers that existed for them to get tested -- remember, all we have is testing and contact tracing -- is what prevented them from getting a test and what allowed them to continue to transmit the disease that is already more prevalent, not because they had more comorbid conditions, because our data also showed that most of them did not have comorbid conditions.

So let's look at it again. They're younger. They had fewer comorbid conditions. They had symptoms, but they couldn't get tested. Why? The hours were when they were working, they weren't on weekends. When they showed

up with their children, children could not be tested. They needed a state-issued ID. They had to have a copay and they needed a referral. All things that we did not require and we tested the children. And so what happened? Our rates go up and go up. The disease spreads and spreads. People continue to die. People continue to have anxiety and depression and not wanting to get up every day. Why? Because this is one day closer to losing my home which is the only sense of peace and solace that I have. The families are falling apart.

We're doing flu shots now. Oh, my gosh. The flu by itself last year without a pandemic killed 35,000 people in the United States. So now we're going to couple the flu with coronavirus. And for people who are already on one foot, they're not going to make it. So as healthcare workers, we got to do our part. That's why we're doing the flu shots to keep people --

keep their immune system as strong as we can. In these colder months, you know it's going to go up and people are forced to be inside. If they're forced to be inside, then the virus is going to spread more and propagate, again affecting our communities. And --

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Could you --

DR. STANFORD: Yes. And I got to say one final thing because you said 1.2 greater. In the nation, it's three times greater than Black Americans are dying at the rate higher than Whites. It would be inhumane, it would be irresponsible to put people out right now. I thank you for your time. I apologize for the limit. I wrote all of these notes, none of which I said, but I hope you got the point with the facts to support my suggestion, opinion and recommendation. Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: No apologies needed. Thank you so much for your powerful testimony and for your

work, your very important work.

Kathryn, are you on and connected?

DR. LEIFHEIT: Yes. Hello.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Hello. Please state your name for the record and proceed with your testimony. And I'm going to ask folks to please limit testimony to three to five minutes.

DR. LEIFHEIT: Sure. My name's Kathryn Leifheit. So thank you to the Councilmembers for allowing me to testify in support of the bills today and thank you to my co-panelists Dr. Stanford and Ms. Saunders for showing the human consequences of today's hearing. The stakes really are huge. So I'm an Epidemiologist and a Postdoctoral Fellow at UCLA Fielding School of Public Health. My research seeks to elucidate connections between housing insecurity and population health. The views expressed here are my own and do not necessarily reflect the policies or positions of the University

of California.

Over the past several months, I've been conducting research to measure the effects of COVID-19 related eviction moratoriums on populations health outcomes. In this research, we compared COVID incidents and mortality between states that lifted their moratoriums to states that maintained them, controlling for testing rates, mask ordinances, stay-at-home orders, school closures, underlying time trends and also characteristics of the states.

Preliminary data from our analyses show that the states that lifted their moratoriums had significantly higher COVID incidents and mortality rates three and seven weeks after lifting, respectively. COVID incidents was between 1.1 and 1.5 times higher in states that lifted their moratoriums compared to states that did not. Mortality was between 1.4 and 2.1 times higher. We presume that these increased rates are due to mounting

displacement, crowding and COVID-19 transmission as evictions were allowed to proceed.

Based on these results, my co-authors and I concluded that eviction moratoriums should be an important part of municipal, state and national efforts to control the spread of COVID-19 and prevent deaths from the virus. However, the public health rationale for eviction moratoriums does not stop there. A large and growing body of evidence suggest that eviction is damaging to human health in ways that extend far beyond COVID-19.

Among adults, evictions have been associated with several inter-related conditions, including all cause mortality, emergency department utilization, sexually transmitted infections, HIV, treatment outcomes, drug use, exposure to violence, depression, mental health hospitalization and suicides. My doctoral dissertation was focused on the

effects of eviction on child health in part because households with children face a high risk of eviction. Together with colleagues, I found that eviction during pregnancy was associated with increased odds of delivering a baby preterm or low-birth weight.

We found that when children are evicted, they're more likely to become food insecure, to test positive for lead poisoning and to fall behind cognitively. These conditions all have real consequences for children's health in the short-term, but also their health and prosperity as they grow into adults. To summarize, scientific evidence suggests that if evictions are allowed to proceed unchecked in Philadelphia, this will worsen the City's COVID-19 epidemic. Because eviction risk is not distributed equally, unnecessarily illness and deaths would fall upon those households already disproportionately burdened by COVID-19, Black and Latinx Philadelphians, essential workers and

low-income families with children.

Sadly, we would not expect the damages to end there. Mass eviction now may cast a long shadow on health and health equity in Philadelphia, putting the City's most disadvantaged citizens at an increased risk of death and a downward health trajectory for years to come. For these reasons, I urge the City Council to do all in its power to prevent eviction. Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you so much for your testimony.

Cha -- Rue. Sorry. Rue Landau, are you on and connected?

MS. LANDAU: I am here. Can you see me?

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Yes. State your name for the record and proceed with your testimony.

MS. LANDAU: Sure. Good morning and thank you to Chair -- I'm Rue Landau, Executive Director of the Philadelphia Fair Housing Commission and we are the agency that enforces the Fair

Housing Ordinance that will be amended by these bills.

Good morning and thank you to Chairperson Gauthier and members of the Housing, Neighborhood Development, and The Homeless Committee for the opportunity to testify today in support of Bills 200414, 420, and 421 as amended. I also want to thank you, Councilmembers Gym and Brooks and all co-sponsors of these bills.

Before I get started, I also want to take one second to thank my co-panelists. Your testimony was incredible. And, Dr. Stanford, we feel you. Thank you for everything that you're doing in Philadelphia's neighborhoods, to keep particularly our Black and Brown residents and neighbors safe and healthy.

On May 29, 2020, I came before you to testify in support of your original emergency COVID housing bill. At that time, you were pursuing an urgent and necessary pause in evictions

that included a structure for people who were experiencing COVID-related hardship to repay certain past due rent. These bills passed on June 18, 2020, and were signed into law by the Mayor on July 1, 2020. The new laws are commonly known as the Emergency Housing Protection Act, which I will use to refer to them today.

By all measures, your efforts to delay evictions during this global pandemic were successful. The pandemic and accompanying economic crisis have created a devastating financial hardship for thousands of Philadelphians who are struggling with a loss of income. Not surprisingly, the crisis has taken the greatest toll on low-income communities of color. During the pause in evictions that was created by the EHPA, we were all very hard at work.

The Fair Housing Commission, the Department of Planning and Development and tenant advocates and some landlord representatives created new forums, web pages and intake systems

for our work, all while conducting outreach and education to tenants and landlords in multiple languages. By September 1st, Planning and Development miraculously in a short period of time created a full eviction diversion program and a hub for rental assistance that is paid directly to landlords. And by mid-September, the Fair Housing Commission promulgated emergency regulations for the EHPA.

This collective work led to many cases being diverted from Municipal Court and allowed landlords and tenants to enter into repayment agreements through the new diversion program. The program just started in September and needs additional time to reach its full effectiveness, especially since it's instrumental in helping to get landlords and tenants connected to the rental assistance program.

The new bills before you today will give us that additional time and add some new provisions. Overall, the

new bills extend the date by which a landlord can proceed with an eviction to collect late fees, to collect -- I'm sorry, extend the date by which a landlord can proceed with an eviction or collect late fees and creates new time frames for repayment agreements for tenants suffering COVID-related hardships.

Specifically, the bill that ends in 414 extends the time in which landlords are prohibited from filing or proceeding with an eviction until December 31, 2020. For commercial tenants, the bill covers small businesses and those who provide a certification of a COVID-related hardship. The bill maintains the important exception for evictions that are necessary to resolve an imminent threat of harm.

Bill ending in 420 waives all late fees and fines from any past due rent from March 1st until September 30, 2021 for tenants who suffered a

COVID-related financial hardship. And the bill ending in 421 amends the mandatory rent repayment agreement for tenants who suffered a COVID-related financial hardship and have been unable to pay rent for any time between March 1st between December 31, 2020 as follows: Under the new bill, the certification of hardship can be either, one, the signed declaration necessary for the CDC moratorium or a written certification of hardship that we've already had, that include the tenant's loss of income for supporting evidence that's available. If a tenant has already entered into a repayment agreement with a landlord under the terms of the original EHPA, there's no extension. All past due rent must be paid by May 31, 2021.

For tenants entering into repayment agreements on or after this bill becomes law, the tenant must pay any past due rent by September 30, 2021. All repayment agreements still follow

the existing rubric. Tenants must pay their full rent each month, plus the lesser of the total past due month divided by nine months -- divided by 9 or 30 percent of their full monthly rent with any remainder paid by the deadline. If a tenant fails to pay their ongoing rent or three months of their back rent, their landlord can proceed to court.

And finally, during the repayment period the landlord cannot reduce the agreement to a judgment or terminate the lease unless the landlord provides a tenant with a specific 30-day notice and the eviction is based on nonpayment of ongoing monthly rent. The Fair Housing Commission has created a sample notice for landlords. Any violations of these bills is considered an unfair rental practice under the Fair Housing Ordinance and parties can file complaints at our office. Not surprisingly, we've seen a dramatic increase in cases since the EHPA was passed.

While we don't have a large staff, we are dedicated to enforcing the law and ensuring that fairness is delivered as efficiently as possible. These bills strike the right balance of continuing to allow vulnerable tenants to secure the time and money they need to become current in the rent while also helping landlords receive ongoing monthly rent as well as a portion of rent owed so that they can keep tenants in their units and avoid the cost of the eviction. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you so much for your testimony and thank you so much for your partnership as well.

Is Chapri on the line?

MS. KELLY: Yes, I'm here. Can you hear me?

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Yes, I can hear you. Can you state your name for the --

COUNCILMAN JONES: Madam Chair?

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Yes.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Point of information, if I could.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Sure. Go ahead.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you for your testimony and always a pleasure to hear from you, colleague.

MS. LANDAU: Thank you.

COUNCILMAN JONES: I'm asking this question as a Commissioner of the Pennsylvania Human Relations, and I should probably know the answer to this, but is there a redress under this bill once it's passed to both your organization but also the Commonwealth?

MS. LANDAU: So this bill amends -- remember, I oversee two Commissions, the Commission on Human Relations and the Fair Housing Commission. These bills amend the Fair Housing Ordinance, which is the Fair Housing Commission. I have some interesting thoughts going forward that I'm just starting to work out in my head

about ways in which we can pass this over to our respective Commissions, and I'm happy to talk to you about that, about fairness and justice and equity.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Madam Chair, we pay a great deal of attention to the Philadelphia Human Relations Commission. As Pennsylvania Human Relations Commissioner, I just want for the record people to know she is our rock star.

MS. LANDAU: Thank you very much, Councilman.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you so much.

I see there are questions for the panel. I'm going to let this last witness go and then I'll open up for questions for anyone on the panel.

Chapri, if you can state your name for the record and proceed with your testimony.

MS. KELLY: Okay. Good morning, and thank you for allowing me

to talk. Chapri Kelly. I am a single mother of three, and currently we are actually homeless. We were forced out of our home in the 7000 block of Reedland Street, which is owned by Row World Management, August 31st of this year. Like literally the day the moratorium was up we had to leave.

Honestly, this moratorium definitely needs to continue because I really don't want to hear any more stories like mine. I've already heard enough and my story is already -- oh, God, just sitting here trying to say this is a lot. Because right now, currently I lost my job during the COVID. I ended up acquiring another job. But I can't work it as of yet because they're not opening due to COVID.

I've been on unemployment since May and I'm not even getting a regular check. I get a check maybe once a month from unemployment if I'm lucky. Me and my children pretty much split between

three houses and I'm not even exactly sure when I'm going to be able to put us together in a house again. This shouldn't be a reality for anybody. Nobody should have to wake up every day not knowing when they're going to be able to give their children a roof over their heads.

Nobody should have to wake up every day not knowing if the landlord that they were renting from was going to be at the door telling them they had to leave. And I know it wasn't just me because I've talked to other people that rented from the same landlord and they did the same thing. They liquidated half of their houses if I'm not mistaken August 31st. The house that I was in wasn't even or really in livable condition and they already have somebody else living in it. And it's sad. Oh, God. Give me a second.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Okay. It's okay.

MS. KELLY: I just really wish

that me being here and me telling my story can make sure that this doesn't happen to anybody else. Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you so much for sharing your story, and I'm so sorry to hear about the situation that you're in with your children.

I see we have some questions for the panel.

Councilmember Quinones-Sanchez.

COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: Good morning. I want to thank everyone for being here this morning. Many of you we heard from, from the spring. Many of you I have the opportunity to work with all year long. To the Renters Alliance who was recently funded to do some of this renters work, it's a much-needed area. It was a gap in sort of an area of organizing as we relayed and try to deal with housing insecurity indefinitely with some of the larger landlords. I look forward to continuing our work with them.

To Dr. Stanford who has been in

Hunting Park for two days, we have her one more time next week. Last night when she shared some of the statistics that she shared with the group this morning, I was a little surprised at the data, particularly as it related to the children dying in this situation and it really just kind of highlighted again the misinformation sometimes about who was being impacted. In fact, everyone is being impacted, every age group. And I appreciate the fact that we will continue to have her and her Consortium.

Rue, I always appreciate you. I think you are the expert on some of these issues, you've worked on it. One of my questions for you: We continue to advocate to the Administration about ultimately getting us some money so that we can keep people in our homes and obviously keep landlords paid so that we are not putting people in harm's way. You talked about the growing number of cases. I know that we're meeting around making sure the program works and

working through the kinks and ultimately having money, financial support at the end of it. The cases profiled in your portfolio, is there anything that sticks out to you that needs fixing or the ability -- what is it in the profile of the cases that you're getting and how can as we improve and strengthen this program, because I know that we're going at this conversation in December, we're going to be at it next year, and one of the things we want to do is we want to build out programs that are sustainable and get us through this recovery process, what is it that we need to be aware of?

MS. LANDAU: That's a great question. Well, first, you will be hearing from Greg Heller of Planning and Development later who's working on getting the funding to the tenants and the landlords. We started to hear -- hold hearings via Zoom which is great. It's actually more difficult on our staff side, but kind of easier for the

Commissioners, to be honest with you. So we're doing them as much as possible.

The volume of cases coming in through intake is tremendous. We thankfully have three intake people now. We don't have a front desk receptionist. I'm going to be asking that that position get filled. It's very hard to even take the phone calls off of the line. Doing this during COVID and not being around each other is very, very difficult, period. There's nothing you can do about that. Thank you for keeping us safe. But the volume of cases coming in is huge and we can only just see it going up and up.

What are they calling about, there are still -- everything that happens in housing in the City is all a web of connections. So for example, with our cases even before these COVID cases, we rely on L&I inspections to be able to inspect properties, reinspect properties to show that repairs have been made. We needed repair people to

go into properties. When that all broke down because of COVID, we couldn't move our cases forward and caused, you know, there might be landlords who should be getting paid by tenants, there might be tenants who needed to get a rent abatement, it was very complicated. Making sure that we have to all be safe and we have to have our systems working will help move these cases along a little bit faster.

And then the final answer, the largest thing is there's just a tremendous need, a tremendous need to make housing more affordable, to get landlords to make repairs to their properties and then to keep people in their properties. It's beyond the Fair Housing Commission. I appreciate your question so much. We thankfully also were able to hire a lawyer in February just before that happened because it would be very difficult to handle if not. So the volume is huge. It's just going to get bigger.

We are seeing some cases that are strictly EHPA cases. If a landlord files -- issues a lease termination notice in violation of your laws, the case comes to us. Some of them we're doing in an administrative way to handle it. Well, the Commissioners will issue an order by paper that it's clearly a violation. But some of the cases, a lot of them are coming in and they're hybrid. It's a good cause eviction and an EHPA case. It's a regular unfair rental practice case and an EHPA case and we have to have a whole hearing.

COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: Thank you, Rue.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

MS. LANDAU: Thank you for your question.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you.

Councilmember Jones, did you have a question? You don't?

COUNCILMAN JONES: Only if I could under the current law and possibly

past this law. Tell me about the bed and breakfast. What are they called?

MS. LANDAU: Limited lodging Airbnbs. We're having a problem, Councilperson.

COUNCILMAN JONES: I had a -- and the reason why I'm struggling, I had a constituent come in and say that someone came in under the guise of an Airbnb. And then as the eviction moratorium happened, they said and claimed that that can amount to a lease and they weren't leaving. How do you interpret, and I don't need for you -- every case is different, so we're not trying to do case law on this hearing, but I'm struggling with what to tell owners about Airbnbs as it relates to this.

MS. LANDAU: It's a great question and I would love to examine this more closely with you because we're seeing the flip side of landlords who are claiming to have an Airbnb when they clearly have a tenant, and the person is

a tenant and there's no doubt the person is a tenant and they're saying, oh, no, it was just a limited lodging situation. The Code does define limited lodging. I think we need to put more restrictions around that. Let's clearly define it. If you have an Airbnb, it's going to be one thing. And if not, it's a lease, you're a landlord. You've got certain responsibilities as a landlord that have to go forward.

COUNCILMAN JONES: We are boldly going where no law has gone before. Thank you.

MS. LANDAU: Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you, Councilmember.

Councilmember Bass, do you have a question?

COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I do. Thank you, Madam Chair.

I wanted to ask Dr. Stanford about where we are right now and really to draw a contrast as to where we could end up, because the City of

Philadelphia, obviously we already had a housing crisis before this even became -- we really have not taken a good look at what we're really dealing with in terms of the need for affordable and low-income housing in the City of Philadelphia. We haven't dealt with it.

We had a hearing a few weeks ago on the matter, and I remember asking about what was the total universe and I can't remember if it was Eva or someone else who answered, but who said that from what they were counting, and they were only counting people who were in shelters, that number was around 5,000 or so, and that the folks who were on let's say a PHA waiting list, which we know is in the tens of thousands, that list was not considered.

And so, this bill is a little bit like we're trying to keep the dam from bursting and we've got our finger up against the crack in the dam. And so, it's a difficult position that we're in, a terrible position that we're in

and for the sake of making sure that we can contain COVID in the City of Philadelphia as much as we can because our numbers had gone down. Our numbers were better and now they're going back up.

So in an effort to make sure that we don't do anything that's even further damaging, I just wanted Dr. Stanford, if she would, to speak to how much worse this thing could be if we did not involve these protections, particularly for people who are affected by COVID, who have lost their employment or for whatever other reason related to COVID, that they are really jammed up right now and what would the scenario look like for the City of Philadelphia beyond the current housing catastrophe that we have our on hands?

DR. STANFORD: Can you all hear me okay?

COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Yes.

DR. STANFORD: One, thank you for the question. So obviously not

having a place to socially distance and practice good hygiene and now you have more people in the street, more people in shelters, more people staying with friends of friends is going to increase the transmissibility of the virus. That's going to happen even with people not losing their homes. So right now we're at 221,000 deaths, and I'm using deaths on purpose. But for how many deaths, you know there's over 5 million cases, right, and those folks don't always bounce back to be productive members of society.

So right now it's predicted if we stay as is, that is, without any lockdown, without any closing the restaurants, keeping people allowing to travel as much as they want and things like that, that we could approach 400,000 deaths by March. And the reason being is it's been eight months and we've got to 221,000, but that was when it was warmer outside. And now that it's going to be colder and people are

inside and now you've got a disease on top of a disease that weakens your immune system, that's only going to exacerbate the amount of disease, hospitalizations and death. And so, that's what we have coming.

And the folks who are most affected, that is, African-Americans and Latinos and folks in poverty, it's only going to be worse because the reasons why they are affected have not gone away. So the inequities that are in the health system, the inequities that are in housing, inequities in schools with kids sitting outside of Taco Bell to get Wi-Fi if their Chromebook works, all of those things are not going away.

And so, in answer to your question, Councilwoman Bass, for those who are hurting, they will be hurting more. All of America will be. In Europe, they shut down everything. Everything is on a lockdown. And if you watch what happens for them over the next six weeks versus what happens to us

over the next six weeks, you'll be able to see it for yourself, so we need to buckle in.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you, Doctor.

DR. STANFORD: You're welcome.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you, Councilmember.

Councilmember Gym.

COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Yes. Thank you so much, especially to this panel, Demetria and Cynthia. I just express so much gratitude to both of you for having the courage to tell your story. I know it cannot be easy to talk about all this difficulty and pain and especially about being homeless and separated from your children. As a mom, as somebody who's been trying to figure these things out, it's incredibly painful and we're trying to carry your stories with us as we do our work.

Dr. Leifheit and to

Dr. Stanford, I think you said so clearly about what the impact could be and I just kind of want to lay out the scenario. So we got about 2,000 evictions that could go forward if the courts lift their eviction order on November 8th or their eviction moratorium on November 8th. There is no eviction moratorium right now in the City of Philadelphia, except for the ones that the courts are prohibiting right now.

I think you talked about this, but some of these people as you noted preceded COVID. They had financial problems beforehand. There's not a whole lot of rescue that's in place. Can you talk to us about how -- in your mind, is there a difference about whether they experienced their problems pre-COVID or during COVID when we've got 2,000 of them that could potentially go on November 8th and how it would impact your work? And maybe we can start with Dr. Stanford.

DR. STANFORD: Okay. So you were asking did people have health conditions pre-COVID? I'm not sure I heard --

COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Yes. So they had a financial problem that existed during COVID and then there might be protections for them or if they're -- the 2,000 people had problems, had financial issues that existed pre-COVID, those are the ones that are in play as of November 8th. So if the eviction moratorium is lifted and those evictions go forward, does it make a difference about when their conditions happen or what does that mean to you as a doctor?

DR. STANFORD: Sure. So it means that many of the people we tested are exactly who you're talking about. They were the ones that financially were having issues because we didn't collect co-pays. Everything was free. Everything we offered was free to people who came. And for those who had

insurance, we processed it and that allowed us to continue to take care of the people who didn't have, that is, until the CARES Act.

So now if you add more people who are uninsured, most of the testing is done in our City hospitals. And unfortunately, if you don't have health insurance, some of our great institutions are not going to test you, period, period. You cannot get a test. So for folks like us that are mobile units, we're going to see a rise. We're already seeing a rise. As I mentioned earlier, it feels like April again to me with the number of people that are lined up in cars, sitting outside in inclement weather.

Last Friday we were at Deliverance church in the rain. People stood outside because they were giving away food, so it was their food give-away day and Commissioner Farley was there and his eyes were bulging out of his head to see people in the rain who

walked from their neighborhoods to pick up fresh produce that the church was giving out and to also get flu shots and to also get the COVID test. And so, the poverty, he asked the same question, is this worse because of COVID. And my short answer is, yes, it is.

COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you. Dr. Leifheit, can you speak about how -- you've studied what happens in states that lift their eviction moratoriums and talked about the rise of both contracting COVID but also COVID mortality. So, one, I wanted to ask about how race plays into both increased likelihood of eviction and likelihood of contracting COVID. So we got some data studies from the Reinvestment Fund that shows the COVID contraction and mortality is higher in neighborhoods that have a number of evictions associated with them. And so, I'm curious about whether that plays out. And I know you put out numbers like 1.2, 1.4, but how does that translate into

actual people? What numbers are we talking about?

DR. LEIFHEIT: Sure. So thank you, Councilmember, for the question. The first part of your question was about disparities. And we know that -- I think all of the panelists made this case. People of color, people in low-income neighborhoods are more likely to be evicted than anyone else, especially women of color, single moms. And we also know that these are the same groups that are disproportionately affected by COVID, both incidence and mortality.

So one research question that we have is what is the impact of lifting these moratoriums on disparities in COVID cases and also deaths, so we expect that because this exposure is concentrated in communities of color, we also expect that by displacing people who are disproportionately Black and Brown, you would be leading to increased cases and deaths in those communities.

So by lifting the moratorium, we expect that disparities in COVID would increase.

With that being said, we haven't been able to look at it directly because a lot of states weren't reporting COVID data disaggregated by race, especially earlier in the epidemic. It's something that we want to look into, potentially looking at a subset of states that were reporting race-specific data. But I can't give an answer besides that we definitely expect it to broaden disparities.

And then in terms of -- so I did report the relative numbers. I'm trying to pull up -- so this is a paper that's in review. And I can give you sort of absolute numbers that will be national. So we found that the lifting of the moratoriums on a national scale were associated with potentially about 65,000 excess cases and about 5,000 excess deaths. So that's to say if you look nationally if every state had

maintained their moratoriums, our models suggest that that many cases and deaths could be averted, so it's a substantial number.

COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you very much.

And, Dr. Stanford, one other quick question: The way COVID works is that it's not like -- so the renter themselves might be evicted. But if they are at risk of COVID because they're in a shelter, it's not just them who's at risk; is that correct? It's like a community spread that we're worried about. So, in fact, the whole community gets put at risk, especially if we know that evictions are concentrated in particular zip codes, in particular areas of the City.

DR. STANFORD: Was there a question posed to me?

COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Yes. Can you talk to me a little bit about community spread? So the idea is that -- the question before us is we've

got, say, 2,000 evictions that could be lifted as of November 8th. Are you concerned that the zip codes in which those renters live which overwhelmingly tend to be concentrated as opposed to spread out, that those communities could potentially be a greater risk if there's a higher rate of evictions in those areas?

DR. STANFORD: Absolutely. We know what community spread is. Remember with coronavirus, first it was person to person. That was a forest that was put out, that you had to be with someone who was from China, remember that. And then it was, is it respiratory droplets, is it airborne. And then back in February that one gentleman walked through Central Station in New York, remember the lawyer from Long Island, and all he had to do was walk in that train station and hundreds of people were infected and contracted COVID. And now it's cold, right. And as I mentioned before, staying with friends and relatives of

friends and so forth, and that's going to spread.

When they go to the grocery store, that means more people have it, right. So now it's back to April when 1 in 4 persons have coronavirus. That's you're getting on the bus. You're taking the subway. You're taking the train. That means statistically of the people in the room, more people have it in the grocery stores, in the pharmacy, in anywhere you're waiting. As I mentioned, in the train, on a bus, walking down the street.

We know now in restaurants, and hopefully the restaurants will be closed soon, but in restaurants it's actually not the person across the table, but the person sitting right now next to you because if you have it, it falls on your shoulder, it falls on your shirt or it's in the air and the person next to you. That's why our cases are going up now because everybody wants to eat and be served and waited upon.

So to your point will it spread communities, absolutely, absolutely, just the science has shown us over and over. Even with masks, hand washing, how are you going to social distance? Again, it gets back to the recommendations that are put down globally in a condensed, densely populated (inaudible). You can't follow the same recommendations.

COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you so much for all your work, Dr. Stanford. And thank you, Kate.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you. We have Eva Gladstein, our Deputy Managing Director for Health and Human Services joining us.

I know that Councilmember Gilmore Richardson had some questions for Eva. So I want to give an opportunity for the Councilmember to ask those questions and then I ask that we move on to the next panel.

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: Thank you so much, Madam

Chair.

And thank you, Eva, for your flexibility. I truly appreciate your availability.

MS. GLADSTEIN: You're welcome.

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: So my question is specifically around the individuals who are at risk of eviction. The Emergency Housing package was introduced in response to the COVID-19 emergency. Okay. And I really appreciate my colleagues, all of their work and for their foresight and insight around this situation. But prior to COVID, there were individuals who were scheduled for eviction. And my colleagues are saying that it's 2,000 individuals at risk for eviction that happened prior to COVID.

What type of revenue can we utilize for homelessness prevention for those individuals? That's my first question.

MS. GLADSTEIN: Because I jumped on with such short notice, I

don't have all of the specific numbers in front of me. But the Office of Homeless Services has always had a prevention and diversion program, which it has continued to utilize. And the increase of funding this year, I just on the spare of the moment can't give you exactly how much money that's allocated for that this year. They have used that.

It's primarily very low-income individuals who go there and they've used that to help with security deposits, utility deposits or maybe the first few months' rents, so they're continuing that program and serve thousands of people every year with that resource and try to prevent people from coming into the shelter system with that. And if we're able to do that, that's really a good thing.

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: Okay. So for the 2,000 individuals, what type of assistance can we help the 2,000 individuals with,

particularly as it relates to the CARES Act, knowing that if we don't use it, we lose it?

MS GLADSTEIN: Right. So I'm not sure what CARES funding you're talking about because there are multiple pots of it. But I would say that there's several things that we're doing already. The City for about two years now or a little bit over two years has had the Philadelphia Eviction Prevention Project. And I don't know if you have had CLS testifying at these hearings or not, but they are subcontracted with the City to operate that program and have a number of other legal service partners, so they are available to both -- they're at the court offering tenants who have an eviction hearing services the same day in terms of representation, negotiating a better agreement and helping navigate the court, which is a very difficult, confusing place for those who have not been there.

They're also providing full

representation as well in some other cases where tenants are able to contact them early on. They're providing a hotline and website and a number of other resources, including financial counseling. So that program, the Philadelphia Eviction Prevention program continues and that is one way that we are providing that support.

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: Okay. So I want to drill down again on the CARES Act funding. If you could say just for the record out of all the dollars that we have been allocated, how much has been utilized to prevent homelessness in Philadelphia specifically related to COVID-19 hardship relief?

MS. GLADSTEIN: Okay. I cannot speak about any of the resources that -- because there are CARES dollars that have gone, that are CDBG-related. There's a more general funding pot which we call COVID Relief Fund, CRF, which the Recovery Office is managing. The

only CARES-specific funding that the Office of Homeless Services has received is something called the Emergency Solutions Grant.

They did receive two different traunches of that. However, the first traunch, which was $29 million, their entire general -- their general fund was reduced by $29 million, so that was a wash and they had to put those resources into shelter beds which is also keeping people off the street and other necessary, meeting basic needs, feeding people, et cetera.

For the second traunch which was $12.9 million, another $4 million was removed from that general fund. So at the end of the day -- and this is money that's available for two years. They have about $11 million over two years of new money. Due to some of the requirements of that funding, they're actually using a different state grant primarily -- but I can go back and double check and provide Council with

the information -- on homelessness prevention.

They're primarily spending that money on new lower cost housing alternatives. And some of you have read about some of those in the newspaper, so that includes the Tiny House Village. It includes expanding Rapid Re-housing. It includes expanding what we call a Shallow Rent program, where we're subsidizing people for $600 a month for a period of time and they're paying $200 a month for rent.

And it also includes the Shared Housing program that we've done with Planning and Development and the Housing Authority, where there's a very, very modest rent and low- or no-income tenants can just pay 30 percent of that income towards that, and we've created -- I don't know how many bedrooms because some of this will be shared housing of three individuals, but we have 35 former PHA properties that are part of that program, and also

single-room occupancies.

So we're also trying to create more opportunity for people to live in single-room occupancy dwellings, commonly known as SROs in increasing capacity because that's very low cost. People would have their own rooms but would have communal space. And there are RFPs that have been out on the street for the last probably four to six weeks for all of those programs who have begun contracting for them as well.

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: Yes. I just wanted to thank you so much for those responses. And I just wanted to go back to the 2,000. Is there any way that you all track the 2,000 individuals to see what type of assistance they may need?

MS. GLADSTEIN: No. But actually based upon a conversation I had with Councilmember Sanchez, at the end of the day yesterday I said we don't have the actual list, but I understand that Community Legal Services in turn

has pulled that data and has reached out to them and to try to go back and to see with the PEPP program, the Philadelphia Eviction Prevention Project, we can do additional outreach to support those individuals. I know they've already done outreach, but I want to check to see if more can be done.

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: Sure, and I appreciate that response because I am very concerned about this. One, because the Emergency Housing Protection Act was introduced in response to COVID-19 and COVID-19-related hardships. Okay. And then we have the 2,000 individuals that have been affected or impacted by potential evictions prior to COVID-19. So now that there's an opportunity to assist with homelessness prevention, ensuring that we can keep these people healthy and housed, how are we doing that.

We literally need to just go to the list, find the 2,000 people, figure how we can help those individuals

because I don't want to put any additional funding in jeopardy for some of the other communities that do need assistance because of some of the definitions or language, specifically in the legislation that we are deliberating on today does not specifically state that it's COVID-19-related relative to the legislation and in turn the relief that we may need to offer to some of the other folks that have been adversely impacted by this, like the really small landlords who some of them help us with the affordable housing units that are naturally occurring in our housing markets, something that the City doesn't subsidize and that we don't add to as it relates to the affordable housing that's been on the books for years and years and years.

So I just want to be real clear about that, because if we have an opportunity here to help 2,000 people with federal dollars, we should be doing that so that we make sure we don't

jeopardize any funding available to the really small folks who need help to keep affordable housing on the rolls in our City, because we know at this point any affordable housing that goes off the market in the City of Philadelphia, we will never get it back.

If an individual loses that property, the tenant will have to leave. And nine times out of ten, an investor or someone else will purchase that property and it will never be back on the rolls for affordable housing in the City ever again the way our real estate market is moving. So I just want to make sure we're doing all that we can for the 2,000 individuals, but also ensuring that as we deliberate this legislation that we make sure we can help as many people as possible who need assistance. So I just want to make sure with the 2,000 people, that we can look at the funding there to ensure we can help the most vulnerable.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Excuse

me. I just wanted to interrupt on two quick things. So, one, I wanted to just remind everyone that Greg Heller is on the next panel and he is here specifically to talk about landlord assistance and we can ask him to zone in on assistance to small landlords in particular.

Secondly, I did want to just point out a fact. This package of bills was in response to COVID-19, but Councilmember Gym's eviction moratorium that was broadly supported in this Committee and throughout the rest of Council was always a broad eviction moratorium, with the thought that we needed to present evictions in the face of a global health pandemic. So I do want to make sure that we are not confusing that point.

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: No, and thank you for the clarification. But I do have a quick point of personal privilege, Madam Chair. I just want to make sure though

that we do put on the record that we do have to try to help individuals and, yes, Greg is here. He's from another department than Eva. Eva has more control over homelessness prevention, and that's why I just wanted to get her on the record and her department on the record because it could be potentially different pots of money that we need to access, and I just wanted to get that on the record. But thank you so much for your latitude, Madam Chair.

Thank you, Eva.

MS. GLADSTEIN: And I could just add a little bit more information.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Yes.

MS. GLADSTEIN: We have been working on the eviction crisis for many years pre-COVID. I personally have spent many years of my career on being concerned about the eviction process and how the courts operate and the lack of information, training and assistance for tenants, despite the fact that we have great partners such as Community Legal

Services and other legal services organizations.

Back in 2017, we created an Eviction Prevention Task Force. We had set recommendations coming out of that. We had a housing security group that helped kind of support that and is continuing to work on the implementation of that with many action groups. Community Empowerment and Opportunity co-chairs that with Community Legal Services on that ongoing implementation. And we have great partners and a number of providers, legal services organizations, the Bar Foundation itself.

So this is something that we've been working on pre-COVID and will continue to work on. And I just want to point out it's not only the Office of Homeless Services but many other players who are here, so we appreciate your concern and agree.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you for the line of questioning.

And thank you, Eva, for getting on, on short notice. Thanks also for the hearing that we did a few weeks ago digging into this topic. I appreciate the questioning and I appreciate the Councilmember trying to go deep and see what assistance is available for people.

But I think the real question that I'm hoping you can speak to, is the City in any way prepared -- the City and all of its agencies, whether it's OHS and others -- for 2,000 evictions, and what would the impact be on our work?

MS. GLADSTEIN: Again, that's why we're trying to -- we believe we're going to be creating between 900 and 1400 new permanent supportive housing opportunities through the opportunities that I listed before that we're investing in right now. And we did that particularly because we thought there could be a surge in evictions post-moratorium, whenever that is, and depending upon other federal resources there.

In terms of prevention, we were overwhelmed before COVID on prevention. And so, I expect it to continue to be difficult. The Office of Homeless Services, they inherited a 30- or 40-year-old system that was based upon shelter. I think we've all agreed shelter is probably not the best option at all. It's less dignified than other forms of housing opportunity and it's more expensive depending on how long people stay. But we have enough demand for shelter that we can't just unilaterally close those beds, although that's something we've been working on in a more gradual pace and looking at opportunities.

So we've been trying to build out both the front end which is prevention and diversion and build out the other end, which is housing opportunities for low- or no-income individuals. And I do want to point out that most of affordable housing that's developed in the City is aimed at people

who are of higher income than the people that the Office of Homeless Services serve.

So we're serving people's income ranging from $0 to $10,000 a year or something like that. And there are many people with needs so I'm not blaming affordable housing developers, but they're serving people whose income, while it's still low, is higher than that in most cases. So we're trying to do our best to prepare for an onslaught of evictions.

To talk about the 2,000 number, we've had years with 18,000 evictions a year, right. And it was going down slightly pre-COVID. We don't know, but we should assume the number will go up after the moratorium so we're trying to gear up for that.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you.

Councilmember Quinones-Sanchez, did you have a question?

COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ:

You asked Eva the question that I was asking about, what is the preparedness for the onslaught, because as Councilwoman Bass alluded to before, we're putting our hands in a hole that eventually is going to open up.

And, Eva, while today's response is actually the closest you've gotten to telling us that we're more committed to that population, I guess we are faced with do we do a broad eviction or do we limit COVID, what are the two different funding streams so that we can take care of the 2,000, and then obviously prepare to deal with the others.

You talked about you're aware that CLS and folks have canvassed the list of the 2,000. What is the time frame that you think you need to be able, and I know those lists were outreach to -- what is the amount of time you think you need for us to be able to touch base with those 2,000 people so that we're addressing that

need as we move on with the COVID need?

MS. GLADSTEIN: Well, I haven't discussed this yet because we just had the conversation last evening, Councilmember. I haven't discussed it yet with our partners, but I would say two to three weeks. They did mail to everybody I know, and specifically trying to get out information about the CDC moratorium and to get into, like, we tried to do that very quickly to get into tenants' hands the declaration that they could complete, which would act as a defense against an eviction for nonpayment of rent, but I have to get in touch with our partners, see what the response rate was and devise some other strategies for connecting with those individuals to see what their response rate has been over a period of time.

So when we did this originally, it was really on a very short emergency basis trying to get the declaration in people's hands at a time when we didn't know what the courts were going to do,

if they were going to continue -- if they were going to start to hold cases at the beginning of September and whether or not they were going to hold off on serving writs. We now have a little bit more information about the courts' actions. So I would say two to three weeks for us to work with our partners and come up with a game plan.

COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: Thank you.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you. I think we have to move on to the next panel. I wanted to make an important point of clarification before we move on. We're talking about 2,000 households, right. We're talking about everyone who is in those households including children, so I think we have to be very clear about that.

Okay. Mr. Weiss, will you please call the next panel or witness to testify.

THE CLERK: Sure. Antonio

Bowser, Professor Mike Levy, Brianna Westbrooks, Rasheedah Phillips, Greg Heller and Matt Shumaker.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Okay. Antonio, are you there and connected?

THE CLERK: I think he needs to unmute by hitting star 6.

MR. BOWSER: Hello?

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Hello. Please state your name for the record and proceed with your testimony. And I'll just remind everyone, if you can keep your testimony to three minutes, that will be appreciated.

MR. BOWSER: Good morning. This is Antonio Bowser and thank you for this opportunity to address all of you today. My name is Antonio Bowser. I'm speaking in support of this bill in front of the Committee that has extended parts of the emergency housing project act. These bills would help protect our vulnerable renters and hopefully prevent other people from facing the situation I'm currently in.

My cousin, my sister and I lived in my old apartment together. But after my cousin passed away 2020 January, my landlord decided that he wanted us to move out. Over the summer, he informed us that he was not renewing our lease. We have tried to discuss the matter with him, but his response, we got an eviction notice.

With all of the confusion about whether the courts would reopen and when he -- and when eviction notices was starting -- eviction court was starting again, we decided to move out to try to avoid filing for an eviction because that would make it so much harder for me to find a place to move in into the future. Because of this pandemic, I have not been able to find another place to move into, so I had to double up with some of my family members.

I just celebrated my birthday two weeks ago. Even though it was good to celebrate with family, it would have been better to celebrate in my own

place. So many people are at risk of being kicked out by their landlord with no place to go. Even though I am lucky enough to have a family that was there for me, not everyone is. While I'm asking you to be there for everyone who don't have someone to be there for them and pass these bills. Thank you so much.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you so much for sharing your story today.

Professor Mike Levy, are you there and connected?

MR. LEVY: I am.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Can you state your name for the record and proceed with your testimony, please.

MR. LEVY: I'm Michael Levy, and I'll share a screen. Can you see that?

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Yes, we can see it.

MR. LEVY: Great. So I'm going to give some numbers to what's been

discussed earlier, that evictions can increase the transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19. A lot of evicted families like Antonio just mentioned are able to double up or move in with friends or family, and that creates larger households. And the secondary attack rate, meaning the percent of people become infected by an index case in a household, the sum around 30 percent is high. Contact in household is about 2.3 times more dangerous than contacts outside of households in general.

And larger households have more routes of introduction of the virus into the home and then once inside, more secondary cases in the house. In Philadelphia, as was mentioned, is a city of stark disparities. And Councilperson Gym mentioned both COVID-19 and evictions are clustered in the same poor neighborhoods. So we have a city that's kind of like divided in many ways, and that affects the transmission

of the virus.

Using our best guesses of serial prevalence, around 11 percent in pregnancy women. That's from a study at Penn. And as Dr. Stanford mentioned, cases are rising very quickly right now and projected to rise over the next few weeks. Looking at a scenario of a moderate fall epidemic that might affect about 17 percent, we asked what would have happened if these moratoriums were not enforced and not continued to be enforced.

And this is our model simulation from a -- there's a million people grouped in households in the simulation and it starts out without any evictions. And then you can see in orange what might happen if evictions resume at five times the usual rate with a backlog of four months on September 1st, and blue, what would maybe occur without evictions.

This area here is the additional cases that might be

attributed to evictions or averted by the policy. So if evictions had continued at that rate city-wide, we would expect a prevalence around 20 percent instead of 17 percent. That's an extra 3 percent of the population infected. So the moratorium will avert around 47,500 cases under the scenario. There's lots of different scenarios, and that increases with the fall increase in eviction rate.

And evictions affect everyone. If you have larger households due to eviction and doubling up, the transmission that occurs in those households spreads throughout the City, and we would have households that were not affected by eviction at all would still have an increased relative risk of infection of about 12 percent by the end of the year. I should say a relative increase, I should note.

So evictions lead to a significant increase in infections. That increase is especially profound

when both evictions and contacts, meaning people were not able to isolate occur more frequently in poorer neighborhoods and evictions-increased cases are not just among evicted households, but for all households as increased transmission spreads throughout the interconnected City.

This model is just looking at doubling up. Shelters are very important in the spread of the virus. There's been a number of outbreaks. And when we add shelters to these kinds of models, it gets harder to predict and larger epidemics. And I should note these models aren't meant to predict the course of the epidemic. That's up to what we do individually. And as a City, they just focus on the role of eviction under a variety of scenarios.

This is the team that worked on the modeling. And this is more details and code is available here. Thanks.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you so much for your testimony and thank

you for your work.

MR. LEVY: Sure.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Brianna Westbrooks, are you there and connected?

MS. WESTBROOKS: Yes, I am. Can you all hear me, see me, all of that?

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Yes. Please state your name for the record and proceed with your testimony.

MS. WESTBROOKS: Okay. Good morning, Chairperson Gauthier and members of the City Council Committee on Housing, Neighborhood Development and The Homeless. My name is Brianna Westbrooks and I am the Government Affairs Manager with the Pennsylvania Apartment Association. I am testifying regarding Bills 200414, 420, and 421. These bills would create an eviction moratorium lasting until the end of the year, waive late fees for residents experiencing COVID-19 financial hardships and expand the time frame for mandating payment plans for residents

experiencing COVID-19 financial hardships.

We know that there are Philadelphians who are struggling right now during these unprecedented times. Continued collaboration between all stakeholders is the only way we can effectively address the challenges that we are facing. And we also have to acknowledge that 70 percent of the property owners in Philadelphia own 10 properties or less. So if we are going to emerge from this crisis stronger, we must find policy solutions that ensure that residents and property owners that are also small businesses can thrive.

Rental assistance is a policy solution that unites all of us and we're really appreciative of City Council's support for additional funding for rental assistance. We believe that this is a solution that addresses the long-term ramifications of this pandemic, whereas certain aspects of the proposals in front of you today further complicate

a complex web of policies from different levels and branches of government.

I will start by saying we appreciate the conversations we have had with members of the Committee about housing, and we particularly appreciate conversations we have had with Councilmember Gauthier's office. I will start by addressing the eviction moratorium legislation, which is Bill 200414.

On August 31st, before the expiration of the state eviction moratorium and before the Center for Disease Control issued their version of eviction moratorium, PAA proactively announced that given these specific circumstances that exist in Philadelphia, we would support an eviction moratorium that would apply to residents that have COVID-19 financial hardships.

Governor Wolf's statewide moratorium that ended on September 1st specifically applied to nonpayment rent

and other breaches of the lease were allowed to proceed. In addition, other bills that are a part of this Emergency Housing Protection Act require that residents have COVID-19 financial hardships, so we're requesting that bill be amended to remain consistent with those pieces of housing legislation as well as in the same spirit as Governor Wolf's previous moratorium.

With this amendment, we strongly believe that the vast majority of renters would still be immune to eviction proceedings and property owners would be able to address the residents who are breaching other aspects of leases who are potentially, negatively impacting their neighbors.

Bill 200421, which was introduced by Councilmember Gauthier, as written would extend the duration that residents with COVID-19 hardships qualify for mandated payment plans. We had several amendment suggestions that would clarify some of the problems that

we had with the original bill language. Specifically, we requested that an amendment would specify that established payment plans cannot be retroactively altered, and we appreciate the conversations we've had with Councilmember Gauthier's office in making changes to address our concern.

And then lastly, Bill No. 200420, which was introduced by Councilmember Brooks, as written would extend late fees for residents with COVID-19 hardships until September 2021. So I want to conclude by saying that we do believe that Philadelphia residents facing COVID-19 hardships should have grace periods, but we have concerns about the long-term impacts that these three bills could have on the rental market.

Some property owners have gone for as long as seven months without collecting rent from residents and the status quo and the way things are going right now is simply not sustainable for

these small businesses. So we believe that our suggested amendments, particularly our suggestion for Bill 200414, will help residents who are struggling right now while also balancing the necessity of property owners to safely operate their businesses and maintain financial solvency.

We have to keep in mind throughout all of these policy discussions that property owners are small business owners and this legislation is having an adverse impact on them. But if we continue to have these conversations and to collaborate, we strongly believe that we can help Philadelphians emerge from this crisis without putting further strain on small businesses and creating additional long-term issues for our housing market. So thank you for your time. That's the end of my statement.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you for your testimony.

Rasheedah Phillips, are you on and connected?

MS. PHILLIPS: Yes, I am. Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Please state your name for the record and proceed with your testimony.

MS. PHILLIPS: Good morning. My name is Rasheedah Phillips and I am Managing Attorney of Housing Policy at Community Legal Services of Philadelphia. Thank you so much for the opportunity to testify today.

As you've heard from other panelists, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, evictions impacted nearly 1 in 14 renters. Since the pandemic, the number of people facing housing instability with imminent eviction has continued to rise. And as such, the normal resources that we would have to address it are extremely inadequate.

There are currently over 2,000 pending lockouts that could occur as soon as November 8th. Those 2,000

pending lockouts are households, so that means that's more than 2,000 people. We're talking, you know, that means that over 2,000 primarily Black and Brown women, their children, seniors, people with disabilities, essential workers, low-wage workers will be unhoused with few options at a time when they'll be less credit worthy for an application, unable to gather a security deposit or access their old deposit.

Again, City programs cannot cover the over 2,000 people in households, and many of those programs require that you already be homeless. Reinstating the moratorium is essential at this time as we face a second wave of the pandemic. Again, Pennsylvania statewide percentages of COVID-19 is at its highest since August with over 1100 cases in two weeks. Governor Wolf himself said that the fall resurgence is here. We need to act quickly to prevent these numbers from further spiking.

Again, as you've heard, the

pandemic has hit Black and Brown communities like a sledgehammer and because systemic and structural racism has a predictable set of results, we can expect the toll of the fall resurgence to fall most heavily on those communities again. I won't belabor the point because others have already spoken to his. But just want to, I think it's worth emphasizing that early data from the Reinvestment Fund shows that areas with elevated evictions rates all within zip codes with the highest COVID-19 positivity and hospitalization rates and that zip codes with higher COVID-19 positivity and hospitalization rates have predominantly Black renters. This gives us a very clear of who's most at risk without a moratorium in place.

Evictions create a public health hazard for every single person who gets evicted and their community, not only people evicted for nonpayment of rent or those who are experiencing a COVID-19 hardship. The risk to consider

include people going in and out of the courthouse, people having to use public transportation to get to and from court, the number of the tenants who will be evicted and become homeless or have to double up in housing situations, removal of possessions and moving and the risk of exposure during those processes.

As has been reported by the Philadelphia Inquirer, the lockout process itself includes inconsistent or no notice at all, putting people in a position to be unable to access masks, medications, other essential items and necessities to help them to avoid infection, a large number of pending evictions, the threat of mass reinfection and the threat of a second wave of the virus as the weather gets cold may signal the need to shut down our economy yet again.

Despite the various evictions moratoriums, the diversion programs, the rental assistance, other protections and resources that were created for both

landlords and tenants, many have still been unable to access them due to lack of notice, confusion, inconsistent enforcement, unclear or short timelines, tenants being unable to access various documents or landlords simply refusing to accept rental assistance.

As you will hear from Greg Heller, 44 percent of landlords have not filled out their paperwork or roughly 7,000 tenants have been unable to access the rent relief. This is a mind-boggling number, especially after hearing Brianna Westbrooks' testimony about the landlords' need to collect rent. We need a universal moratorium. We need to work together to stabilize renters. There are other options other than the court system.

We have a new eviction diversion program that you've heard about that began in September 2020 thanks to the amazing work of City Council and DHCD. As a result, renters and their landlords have better options

than they had before, including faster resolutions for most cases, preventing harmful eviction judgments against tenants that will impact their ability to rent into the far, far future, increased support for landlords and tenants through tenants being matched with housing counselors who will help facilitate the rental assistance and clearing the backlog of cases through mediation so that when the court does reopen, it can focus on the cases that are most critical and that need a speedy trial.

We also have a 125 million pool of state funding for rental assistance that goes directly to the landlord. The City is matching those funds so that landlords can receive up to $9,000 to help cover back rent. We need to let the diversion and rental assistance support renters and landlords. It's not enough to just enact a moratorium for those who can provide a COVID-related hardship. By doing that, we're

guaranteeing that people will have hardships, right, instead of fewer. We want to prevent people from having COVID-related hardships.

We already have a patchwork of laws that do that, the CDC Declaration of EHPA Diversion program, but again this patchwork is too confusing for landlords and tenants alike, so most tenants are not actually benefiting from those protections at the moment. The only way to ensure that full protection is with a universal moratorium.

I'm going to skip around because I know we're pressed for time, but I want to just highlight a few other really important things. Landlords who are specifically concerned about their ability to collect pre-COVID back rent have had the ability to file in landlord court since September 3rd when the courts reopened and many of them have. 722 cases were filed in September. 495 have been filed so far in October. That's adding another over 1,000 people

who are at risk of imminent eviction in the next couple of weeks or months.

Landlords will again be able to file complaints that include pre-COVID amounts once the moratorium lifts in January if they have not taken advantage of the other protections. Extending this moratorium or reinstating it gives renters additional time to access rental assistance, diversion and other supports.

And finally, if in fact it's a landlord's concern collecting rent, like let's be honest, the eviction process does not make that happen quicker. It makes the possibility even more remote. As national and local research has documented very well over the years, evictions thrust families into dangerous cycles of poverty, while homelessness ends up costing the City more in shelter costs, medical costs and other social service costs. So let's be absolutely clear here, this isn't about the ability to just collect rent, right. But it's

about the ability for landlords to evict, so let's just be honest about that.

When I testified before this Committee in June, I noted that COVID is working with a vastly different timeline, one that's unpredictable at best. Even knowing that many of us retain hopeful visions that we would be in a far better place come October, but we're not. So this moment causing us to think differently, do differently and to prioritize the protection of human life over capital and over rent collection, compounding the global crisis and its impact on the people who call Philadelphia home does not have to be inevitable. It will be if we don't pass this moratorium. It's within our collective power to prevent a housing and homelessness crisis of ethic proportions at a time where we can say without risk of exaggeration that being unhoused could mean a death sentence for some, so I urge you to vote in favor of

the three EHPA bills before you today. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you, Rasheedah.

Councilmember Gym, did you have a point of clarification?

COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Yes. I just wanted to clarify a comment that Brianna Westbrooks made, about whether the Governor's eviction moratorium was limited to those who only had COVID-related hardship.

Rasheedah, I think you would know the answer to that. But my understanding is, is that it was a blanket moratorium for nonpayment of rent regardless of COVID-related hardship; is that correct?

MS. PHILLIPS: That's correct.

COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And the Governor does endorse this bill, the reinstatement of the eviction moratorium regardless of COVID-related hardship as well. And I just wanted to make that

clear because I think Brianna said that the Governor's moratorium only applied to COVID-related hardship, and I wanted to make it clear that it did not.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you.

Greg Heller, are you on and connected?

MR. HELLER: Can you hear me?

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Yes. Please state your name for the record and proceed with your testimony.

MR. HELLER: Sure. Hi. I'm Greg Heller. I'm Senior Vice-president of Community Investment of Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation. Honorable Chairperson and members of the Committee I'm here to provide testimony on Bills 200414, 200420, 200421 and specifically to speak to the City's efforts to assist tenants and landlords during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The City of Philadelphia and Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation or PHDC have several

programs to assist renters and landlords. As we develop and operate these programs, we've been in regular contact with representatives from HAPCO and the Pennsylvania Apartment Association as well as tenant advocacy groups. We recognize that small landlords are critical to ensuring affordable housing for the City of Philadelphia. Nearly 60 percent of unsubsidized affordable rental units are owned by landlords with five or fewer properties in their portfolio.

We're administering two emergency rental assistance programs right now where payments go directly to landlords. Phase 1 can provide a total of up to $2,500 and Phase 2 can provide a total of up to $9,000. The Phase 1 Emergency Rental Assistance Program has paid out over $8.5 million over 3,600 households and expect to spend out our $10 million in program funds in the next couple of weeks. Because (inaudible) funds available, we've raised over

$80,000 in private donations to supplement our public funds for this program. We are grateful to the generosity of our many donors.

The Phase 2 Rental Assistance Program, which is part of the statewide PA CARES program, has received over 6,000 applications requesting over $23.6 million in funds. We're processing these applications and getting payments out as quickly as we can. The City's committed its local share of federal funds to matching the funding from the state's program so that we can provide more funds to landlords and tenants.

Our Landlord Working Capital program, administered in partnership with Impact Loan Fund, provides low interest loans to landlords city-wide who own 15 or fewer rental units and who are experiencing cash flow challenges due to the pandemic. The Rental Improvement Fund, another program, provides loans to landlords who need help repairing their properties. This

program provides loans under $25,000 to make repairs, cure code violations and address lead paint issues. This program is also administered by Impact Loan Fund.

Our Shallow Rent program provides rental assistance for tenants living in subsidized affordable housing. Programs like the Low-income housing Tax Credit results in rents being capped but at levels that are frequently still unaffordable for many Philadelphians. Currently, we are providing $1.6 million to support 394 tenants. These programs are significant and would not have been possible without state and federal funds.

It's important to remember that the struggle of low-income tenants and small landlords are not new to the pandemic. We hope that after the impacts of the pandemic lessen, that we continue to provide programs to support tenants and landlords on a long-term basis. These efforts are crucial to the

stability of our housing and the well-being of our City. Chairperson and members of the Committee, thank you again for the opportunity to testify today. I'm happy to answer any questions that the Committee may have.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you so much, Greg.

And the last person for this panel, Matt Shumaker. Are you on and connected?

MR. SHUMAKER: Yeah, I'm here. Can you hear me?

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Yes. Please state your name for the record and proceed with your testimony.

MR. SHUMAKER: Sure. Good morning, Council, and thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I'm a homeowner and landlord in Philadelphia and I support extending EHPA and the protections it provides. I'm sure I'm not alone in the thought that 2020 has been one of the most stressful years in recent memory, and that's coming from

someone who hasn't had their entire life turned upside down because of the ongoing COVID pandemic.

Just from a place of concern from my fellow neighbors, I can't imagine the overwhelming stress of being laid off of my job or having hours cut or it drastically changing my lifestyle. To add on top of that, the despair of not knowing whether you'll have a place to sleep in a week or two is cruel and not brotherly love in my opinion. Adding more misery to our communities is the exact opposite of what I'd expect society to do in a time of unprecedented struggle not seen since the Great Depression.

As of now, there's an estimated 112,000 Philadelphians that have lost their job as a direct result of COVID and 2100 Philadelphians are at risk of being evicted, and I believe the City should use all resources they can to prevent this from happening. Putting aside the humanity aspect and looking at

it from the position of being a landlord, I also support these extensions because they are coupled with programs that will provide relief impacting landlords. Including in these programs is an eviction diversion, which creates mediation programs that help tenants take advantage of all government resources available to them, creating repayment plans to pay back rent in a timely manner and PHL Rent Assistance, which can help pay back landlords directly.

These measures provide much-needed relief to landlords and tenants impacted by COVID, which is exactly what needs to happen during the global pandemic. Additionally, landlords will save money in the long run by not having to take their tenants to court, potentially throwing away money on legal fees and any drawn-out litigation.

COVID is obviously still very much a reality and many experts say a

second wave is looming. And having a property sitting there empty when it could be occupied as a repayment plan helps no one. I ask that our City government act boldly and with the seriousness of this terrible situation deserves extended protections provided by the EHPA. Thank you and that's all I have.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you so much.

Are there any questions or comments from members of the Committee for this panel?

COUNCILWOMAN GYM: I just had a clarifying question, Madam Chair. Oops, I'll let Councilmember Quinones-Sanchez go. Sorry.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Councilmember Quinones-Sanchez.

COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: You can let Councilmember Gym go. It might be the same one.

COUNCILWOMAN GYM: For Greg -- I think Rasheedah Phillips talked about

this a little bit -- but could you share how many applications did you receive from tenants versus how many applications were fulfilled by their landlords, request for aid?

MR. HELLER: Sure. So let's see, as of yesterday we had gotten a total of 12,150 applications from tenants; and 7,044 where the landlord had responded.

COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Okay. As that is for what time period?

MR. HELLER: That's since the program opened in early July.

COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Okay. Thank you. And has some of that been an increase? Have you seen an improvement over that because I think you gave us different numbers earlier? And have you seen a change in that because of the changes in the program?

MR. HELLER: We have seen an increase. We don't know specifically what we can attribute it to. As I mentioned, the City agreed to match the

state funds, which allowed us to increase the amount of assistance that can be provided, from $750 a month to $1500 a month. We do think that that was significant. And based on surveys that we've got of landlords, we know that that $750 a month, many landlords felt that that was too low. So we think that increasing the amount of assistance probably had an impact on getting more landlords to participate. But our staff have also been proactive over the last few weeks in trying to reach out to landlords and make sure that they know that their tenant applied and trying to urge them to respond. So I think it's probably a combination of the City committing the matching funds and our increased outreach to landlords.

With that said, the landlord participation rate is still only about 58 percent. So that still means that 40 percent of tenants who apply are left out in the cold because their landlord has not responded and/or is not willing

to participate.

COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Okay. Thank you so much for that clarification. And especially, thank you for emphasizing that it does make a difference for us to be doing some of this education and that sometimes people will respond a little bit better, but we have a long way to go.

Rasheedah, quick question: We're trying to understand these thousands of households who existed, you know, whose hardships existed pre-COVID. You've done so much work in this area and I'm wondering if you could talk a little bit about what it means if we were to narrow the coverage of this eviction moratorium only to those who demonstrate COVID-related hardship? Because when we discussed this before, we've seen difficulties both at the courts with landlords and with others responding or being able to help even when we add on restrictions. And so, if you can just speak a little bit to that

and what you think of the narrowing of the eviction moratorium to only those who have experienced the COVID hardship.

MS. PHILLIPS: Absolutely. I think what we're doing when we limit it is that we're setting up two classes of renters. We're setting up people who we think deserve protection under the moratorium and deserve that extended protection from being exposed to COVID. We're separating from those who we think don't simply because they may have fallen behind on hard times prior to March 1, 2020, which feels really arbitrary, I think. And again, I think it sets up two classes of people.

When we're talking about what those over 2,000 households of people at risk of eviction look like, there's nuance there. These are not people who have just fallen behind on rent. These are people who may have had repair issues, may have withheld rent. Some of the things that Rue Landau talked about in terms of the same issues that were

still happening before COVID are still happening now, so people unable to get repairs made, people being pushed out for various reasons.

And so, also while the courts were closed, many of these cases were able to get into the courts. The courts were still accepting filings. And landlords could get around some of the restrictions by saying, for example, with the CDC moratorium saying, tenants have breached their lease agreement by not paying rent, right, so that allows them to get into the court under a breach instead of under the nonpayment, right.

So we have to think about the nuance of these over 2,000 households and it's not just people who fell behind on rent pre-COVID, like some of these cases include during the COVID emergency period as well. And again, I think we really do not want to set up two classes of renters, one, who's deserving of a protection and others who are not.

COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Councilmember Quinones-Sanchez, do you have a question still?

COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: Yes.

For Greg, I also want to just acknowledge all of the work of the Planning Division around setting up this program with the housing counseling and all of the different components and really appreciate the millions of dollars in staff and effort around this stuff.

Can you speak to me a little bit about who is being denied and why and what we could be doing differently? And then we'll get to the landlord response piece. But who are we denying and why?

MR. HELLER: So the criteria for Phase 1 and Phase 2 are a little different because Phase 1 we designed and it was subject to HUD rules because we were using CDBG funds and Phase 2,

the state came up with the rules. So there were slightly different reasons for denials in Phase 1 and Phase 2.

One big one in Phase 1 was the income restrictions. In Phase 1, we set the income level at 50 percent of area median income. And in Phase 2, the state set it at 100 percent. So some people who were denied in Phase 1 because they were over income were successfully able to apply in Phase 2. In both programs you had to have had a loss of income due to the pandemic, so some people were denied because they didn't have a job at all, no income in the beginning of the year in January and February and therefore did not experience an income loss. And --

COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: Greg, real quickly, when we dephase these, do we have an internal mechanism to refer these over to OHS for the traditional rental assistance program or we're just letting these people fall through the cracks?

MR. HELLER: No. I mean, we're definitely coordinating with other departments and referring people when we feel that they're eligible. We're also working closely with your network of housing counselors and the legal aid agencies, so we are trying very hard to make sure that nobody falls through the cracks.

COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: Okay. As it relates to the landlord and the lack of response when their tenants are applying, what are some of the reasons that you're seeing? Are we having issues with rental licenses, any compliance issues that we should be aware of?

MR. HELLER: Yeah, definitely. In Phase 1 -- so in Phase 2, the City or I'm sorry, the City does not have any requirements that the landlord has to have a rental license, has to be free of code violations. They do make the landlord check off a question verifying that they are current on all taxes,

although there's not any requirement to actually check on that, so the state program is much more lenient.

In Phase 1, one that we were really making sure of is that the landlord did not have open dangerous L&I violations. There are a handful of landlords who are not receiving assistance because they have open and dangerous L&I violations that they've not been able to cure or not pursuing to cure. But in Phase 2, you have much less of that because the state didn't have the same requirements.

COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: So were we able to transfer applications from one to the other, from Phase 1 to Phase 2 where people did have to re-apply?

MR. HELLER: We asked the state that and they would not allow us to transfer people over. They required them to fill out this application that the state created and requires everyone to fill out for Phase 2. So it's

unfortunate, but we have had to tell everyone they have to re-apply because of the state's rules for Phase 2, but many people have.

COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: And then lastly, we've advocating very strongly, we're working around payment plans with the Revenue Department. We're going to have to create a different version of this and we've got hope in the next few weeks if this election turns. What, if anything, from a landlord perspective -- I think the state program allows landlords to apply directly, but our Phase 1 did not, right; am I correct on that?

MR. HELLER: Well, I mean, both programs were the same way, where the tenant initiates and then the landlord has to fill out a portion of information, so they're both similar in that regard. We tried to make Phase 2 a little simpler. This wasn't a state requirement, but Philadelphia and Allegheny County are the only two

counties in the state that accept electronic applications for the state program, and that was just our choice. So we did try to make our electronic system easier for landlords for Phase 2 by making some adjustments that we learned from Phase 1. But again, that's only available in Philadelphia and the rest of the state they have to fill out a hard copy.

COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ: Okay. All right.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you so much.

Mr. Weiss, please call the next panel.

And before we move on, I'm going to be much less generous with time, so I'm going to ask that people please stick to three minutes. I'll have to ask you to wrap up your testimony if you don't. Thank you.

THE CLERK: Next panel is Laura Sharpe, James Wright, Aaron Kreider,

Sonya Nelson and Marcella Joe.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Laura, are you there?

MS. SHARPE: Yes, I am.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Please state your name for the record and proceed with your testimony. Thank you.

MS. SHARPE: Thank you. Good afternoon and thank you for this opportunity. My name is Laura Sharpe. I am a proud Philadelphian. I live in District 8, zip code 19119. Hello, Councilmember Cindy Bass.

And I will begin. In late February, my friends in Manhattan suddenly began dying. And in early March, the whole world suddenly abruptly stopped. As we all know, the initial two-week shutdown and stay-at-home order lasted for several months. My husband is the owner of a successful design business and I work in theater and entertainment events. Obviously, neither industry was deemed essential.

For several weeks, I spent my

time attending Zoom funerals and struggling alongside my husband to try to comprehend the labyrinth of the just freezing, crashing, baffling, ever-changing unemployment site. I had never applied for unemployment before and neither had my husband. And I attended Smith College on a full academic scholarship and I graduated with honors, and the complicated online application process was extremely challenging to me because it was broken.

The unemployment system was simply not prepared for the catastrophic impact that the pandemic created. Even after we were approved for a pandemic unemployment, the funds for both myself and my husband unexpectedly took well over three months to arrive. During those many months while waiting for the financial assistance, we first bled through our savings and through our credit cards until we were officially destitute.

Inevitably, we fell behind on

our substantial rent payments for the first time in our lives. All of a sudden the world collapsed and we had the additional fear of possibly no longer having a roof over her heads, and we're not alone. Many of my friends all over the City were and still are in that same situation, and we are all solidly middle class with college degrees and formerly reliable incomes.

I'm not sure why there seems to be an assumption that all landlords will inherently do the right thing by their tenants, but I can assure you that that is a false assumption. Regardless of the fact that we had always been model tenants, we have paid our rent on time, kept the property clean and we have often done our own repairs, we were immediately told that we needed to pay up or move out. We were repeatedly told that our problems, our problems, unemployment caused by a global pandemic shutting down most of the world and a failure on the part of the government to

disseminate the approved emergency funds, our problems, were not --

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Please do wrap up your testimony. Take the next 20 seconds or so.

MS. SHARPE: Thank you. Were not the landlord's problems. To quote the landlord directly, "This is business so pay up in full or get evicted and have your credit destroyed." Along with thousands of other people in Philadelphia, many of us middle-class formerly engaged members of society and all registered voters, we found ourselves potentially homeless.

And the only thing that saves me, the only thing that gave me the time to collect my pandemic unemployment was the eviction moratorium. That's all we had. The system is still broken. Once again, we are not getting our payments through -- I'm not getting my payments through unemployment and once again, the landlord is telling us he is going to evict us. It's an unprecedented time

and we need the elected leaders of our City to take unprecedented action.

I'm here today to ask you to extend the eviction moratorium because if not, your inaction will lead to homelessness and actual deaths eventually. I'm here today to ask you to please be the leaders that we've elected you to be. I'm asking you to remember that we live in a community and a society, not just in an economy. I'm here today to strongly encourage you to pass the amendments to the Emergency Housing Act. Thank you very much. And if anyone is hiring, I'm available.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you so much, and I'm sorry to hear about your struggles at this time.

James Wright, are you there and connected?

MR. WRIGHT: Yes, I am, Councilperson.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Please state your name for the record and proceed with your testimony.

MR. WRIGHT: My name is James Wright. I am the Director of Community Development at the People's Emergency Center. We are here today to offer commentary on the concerns and challenges that renters face, both small businesses and residential renters.

PEC is a community development corporation, social services -- competent social services agency that has been in existence since 1972. We have over 235 units of affordable housing in West Philly. That housing is emergency housing, transitional housing and some permanent support of housing in West Philadelphia. And we also work with business owners along the Lancaster Avenue business corridor.

I just wanted to underscore some of the previous comments, that this is a crisis that has existed prior to the coronavirus. We already know that we were facing significant challenges in terms of evictions and renters and how they can survive in the changing

economy. And so, I know that Eva underlined some programs that were lined up and that we're trying to put in place, but there's still a lot of work to do. And so, I appreciate City Council addressing these matters so pointedly, and I hope that you continue to take this issue as a major concern going forward.

Prior to coronavirus hitting and the pandemic, there was already counted 5700 homeless Pennsylvanians, and most of them living -- about 1,000 of them living on the street. Sorry, not Pennsylvanians, it's Philadelphians. And then also to prior to coronavirus hitting, COVID-19, the City was not able to support through their prevention program provided by OHS, Office of Homeless Services, not able to support 72 percent of the people that applied.

That means that something like 7,000 people applied but were turned away, even though they went and they said they were in imminent danger of

becoming homeless. 1100 people receive assistance, and that's suggesting that nearly 3,000 people or so that were turned away and possibly ended up in shelters or in their cars or doubling up.

The other thing that is a statistic that I wanted to point out was in 2019 the School District noted that there was 7,112 students that were children in youth that were homeless. And we know that the City's shelter program only supports 2700 or so people --

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: If you can take the next 20 seconds or so to wrap up.

MR. WRIGHT: So the issues are prior to the pandemic and they are much deeper than the pandemic, and there are issues with unlicensed landlords and licensed landlords that are evicting people and chasing the money ball, as Rasheedah pointed out, and we just wanted to underscore the fact that the

need for an eviction moratorium going forward and other programs to support renters is very significant.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you so much, James, for testifying and thank you so much for your work.

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Aaron Kreider, are you on and connected?

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Oh, I'm sorry. Councilmember Jones, question?

COUNCILMAN JONES: Yes. The People's Emergency Center, you mentioned how many units you have?

MR. WRIGHT: Yes, I did. We have 235.

COUNCILMAN JONES: And they are controlled by you?

MR. WRIGHT: Yes. We own them and we lease them to low-income families.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Do you refer people beyond your own inventory to other units?

MR. WRIGHT: We do. We do. We

have relationships with landlords within our service area. And if we cannot help people obtain housing, we refer them out. We also are a part of the City's program that began in the fall with providing resources to renters/landlords to prevent evictions.

COUNCILMAN JONES: And generally, have the landlords been cooperative and patient during the pandemic?

MR. WRIGHT: To be honest, it's about at 50-50 split. We had one landlord that we kind of had to drag to the table. Some other landlords have been a little bit more cooperative.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Primarily, those units that you control are in the 3rd Councilmanic?

MR. WRIGHT: All the units are in the 3rd Councilmanic District north of Market Street.

COUNCILMAN JONES: So something you should consider expanding to the 4th in the future, you know.

MR. WRIGHT: As we are able, we will expand, as we are able.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: PEC is a wonderful organization. I can see why you would want them in the 4th.

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Aaron Kreider, are you there and connected?

THE CLERK: Councilmember, Aaron wasn't able to join, so we should move on to the next witness.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Okay. Sonya Nelson, are you there and connected?

MS. NELSON: Yes, I'm here.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Please state your name for the record and proceed with your testimony.

MS. NELSON: Good morning, everybody. My name is Sonya Nelson. I am a full-time City worker. I have had a hard time receiving a new place of rent. My ex-landlord, she was renting

without a license. She threatened to do an illegal lockout for me and my three daughters. Because of my credit, it was fair, I got turned away from so many places. They didn't care that I have a great job or that I have good income.

I went to the homeless shelter because I thought she could do the illegal lockout, but thank God for the eviction ban moratorium because it protected me and my babies from basically living out on the street, but it was hard. It was extremely hard. And I feel like this moratorium will prevent other people from COVID and from other hardships of being turned down by being evicted. And that's all that I have to say.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you so much. Thank you for sharing your story, and I'm so sorry to hear about what you're going through.

Marcella, are you on and connected?

MS. JOE: Yes, I am. Hello.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Hi. Can you state your name for the record and proceed with your testimony.

MS. JOE: Yeah, sure. My name is Marcella Joe and I am an employee of Tenant Union Representative Network, and I just want to thank everybody today for their testimony and it was very enlightening and thanks for the opportunity.

First off, I'd like to say that TURN is in collaboration with the Philadelphia Eviction Prevention Program, meaning that we are primarily responsible for the majority of the calls that come through a particular hotline to help tenants out who are having issues with their landlord, rental, whatever the case may be.

I have 26 years of experience doing this and I've talked to tons and tons and thousands of tenants throughout the year. This particular year with this pandemic in place has been very devastating for a lot of callers because

they're affected by the COVID-19, meaning that these people have very limited income, have lost household income, have sickness within the home and are unable to pay rent due to limited unemployment or are still waiting for unemployment to come through. They're receiving eviction notices.

We're seeing more and more eviction notices within the last two months. I'm seeing cases where they are now filing for evictions. There are cases in court right now pending in January and February, November and December. These people have no idea where they're going to go, how they're going to pay it. They're using the declaration and all the forms that they're supposed to use, but for some reason they're still getting in the courtroom.

What I'm hearing over the phones and this is every day, and we're doing close to 60 to 65 calls a day and

the numbers are going up, people are panicking about where am I going, I have no place to go. I have no family support. I have no friend support. I have a house full of children. I don't know where we're going to go. The shelters are not accepting people right now. And they think they're going to be on the streets.

So I am pleading to City Council to please support the extension of the moratorium because people don't have money to go anywhere. They don't have any money to pay late fees. Landlords have the audacity to be asking for rent increases, knowing that these people have economic hardship. There's medical hardship, financial hardship, personal hardship, whatever hardship you can name, they're experiencing it.

Landlords are going to the extent where they're evicting people without having court orders, illegally putting people out the property. I get at least three calls a day where tenants

have been locked out of the property or the utilities have been turned off, where landlords are trying to force them out of the unit. And --

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Can I ask that you take the next 30 seconds. Thank you.

MS. JOE: Excuse me?

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Can I ask that you take the next 30 seconds to wrap up.

MS. JOE: Oh, okay. Sure. So again, I'm just asking for the support of City Council to understand that this COVID-19 is affecting everyone of all colors, all income brackets, all tenants in the City of Philadelphia and Philadelphia citizens. And just before I close up, I just got a text message from a family member that a family of five of our church members have been stricken with the virus. Just got that information today. So again, it is real, it is alive and it is spreading.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: So

sorry to hear that about your loved ones and I thank you for your testimony and for your work as well.

MS. JOE: You're welcome.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Mr. Weiss, will you please call the next panel or witness to testify.

THE CLERK: Jacob Speidel, Cynthia Bradford, Paul Cohen, Mylan Marvelous, Nimet Eren.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Jacob, are you there and connected?

MR. SPEIDEL: Hello, yes. This is Jacob Speidel.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Please state your name for the record and proceed with your testimony.

MR. SPEIDEL: My name is Jacob Speidel, and I'm the Director of Tenant Rights at Senior Law Center. Thank you, Councilmembers, for the opportunity to speak. At Senior Law Center, we seek justice for older adults. We're the only nonprofit organization in Pennsylvania whose mission is dedicated

solely to providing legal services for older persons and one of the few in the nation.

In our work, we assist seniors facing eviction and other threats to safe shelter. During this pandemic, we have been especially concerned about our clients and their unique susceptibility to the virus. As an example of what seniors in Philadelphia are facing, I'd like to tell you about Beverly Cobb.

Beverly Cobb is 81 years old and a long-time Philadelphia resident. She lives on her own, has a number of disabilities, some of which require her to use oxygen. Of course this means if she catches COVID-19, her outlook is especially risky. She had hoped to testify and tell her own story, but she wasn't feeling well to talk to you. She asked me to tell you her story. I believe she's watching now on TV. Thank you, Ms. Cobb, for letting me tell your story.

Ms. Cobb's landlord filed an

eviction against her based on termination of term. Ms. Cobbs pays her rent every month. She's on a fixed income. She owes nothing to her landlord. She has not lost income because of COVID-19, but her landlord is trying to evict for good cause termination of term. I am going to quote from the notice that the landlord sent to her and filed with the court. And I'm quoting, "Beverly has to leave due to the construction I have going on, on the premises. The construction workers will not enter the apartment due to Beverly's health issues and she's on oxygen. Since she's on oxygen, they cannot turn off the electricity. In order to fully work on the apartment, it needs to be vacant."

Ms. Cobb's landlord is able to more forward with this eviction only because she is paying her rent and she can afford to pay it. If she had lost income and couldn't pay rent, the federal eviction moratorium from the

Center for Disease Control would prohibit her landlord from moving forward with eviction until after December 31st. She could provide the declaration that she couldn't pay because of COVID-19.

Unfortunately, the federal moratorium has a gap. Philadelphia's courts have interpreted it as not stopping evictions for termination of term. This means that seniors who have a fixed income and cannot safely leave their homes can be evicted because they're not protected by a moratorium based on losing income because of COVID.

This landlord's renovations can wait. The eviction can wait. During a public health emergency like this one where cases are on the rise, where evicted tenants would have to double or triple up or go into crowded shelters is important to protect tenants like Ms. Cobb whose landlords are trying to evict based on termination of term.

During COVID, many tenants with

year leases have had their leases end and landlords simply refuse to renew their leases --

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Can I ask that you take the next 30 seconds to wrap up.

MR. SPEIDEL: Absolutely. Thank you. Or we have seen landlords refuse to renew leases when tenants do not agree to large rent increases. These tenants are subject to eviction for termination of term. They are unable to move to other landlords because of COVID, but they're not protected by a moratorium that only protects tenants who've lost income because of COVID.

The existing eviction moratorium bill does explicitly allow evictions to cease or prevent an imminent threat of harm by the person being evicted, including physical harm or harassment. So a landlord who has a threatening or harassing tenant can evict that tenant. The gap here is for

the tenant who is being evicted based on termination of term.

Just this morning while waiting to testify I received a call from an elderly veteran who had received notice that his landlord is not renewing his lease and plans to evict for termination of term even though he is current and paying his rent. He would not be protected by an eviction moratorium limited to people affected by COVID. For the health and safety of the public, tenants should not be evicted until the pandemic has receded. I urge to extend the protections for all tenants. And again, Ms. Cobb, if you're watching, thank you for letting me share your story.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you so much and thank you to Ms. Cobb as well.

Cynthia Bradford, are you there and connected?

MS. BRADFORD: Yes, I'm here. Good afternoon.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER:
Wonderful. Please state your name for the record and proceed with your testimony.
MS. BRADFORD: Good afternoon. My name is Cynthia Bradford. I'm here today in the representation of myself and others in the world. Today I'm going to start by saying I signed my lease in July of 2019, the 1st. My landlord promised full repairs in my apartment. And yet still until today, I moved in and there is still no repairing done. There was a satisfaction in the home that I wanted to be modified. There was assistance done.
A home allows -- excuse me, my home allowed full use of -- was not even to my satisfaction. The landlord considered to do the repairs. I asked him multiple times. He considered it as a luxury. Now, facing this time it's a hardship for me and others over the world and it's not knowing that there will be even more upcoming issues.

I have chose to remain in my home. When I first walked in the doors, I was told the apartment would be completed. And while still residing in the home, yet and still two months after I lived here, there was still no assistance and my rent was still paid. At this time as of right now, Mr. Presi Israel, my personal assistant representation of the apartment, landlord has undergone a lot of issues and -- excuse me. I have other issues from tenants living under me on the first floor.

I have suffered from bedbugs termites, mice, mold, ceilings cracked, leaking and busted pipes in the basement. I've asked my landlord several times to come and do repairs. He has not attended or more or less, I had to call L&I for assistance. My home has issues and several violation codes and I asked for assistance repeatedly over and over again.

It's been two times me and my

daughter had came into the home, she came into the home one day and a two-by-four had hit my daughter in the head from a piece of plywood. I had asked the landlord to also assist with this matter. Now, I'm writing this letter or speaking to someone for assistance. The winter is now approaching. It's the second time while living in this home the property was still not attended to. My daughter and I need warm water to assist us to survive.

Since the landlord has already not assisted us during the time of July up until now, it is unfortunately -- unfortunately, excuse me, unfeasible for us to live in. I am asking that someone assist us as we apply for a pandemic -- we apply, excuse me, for the assistance during the pandemic of the COVID-19 and we are also being jeopardized from the tragedy that's going on around the world today.

When I asked him to resolve the

matters, he did not assist us. It was a bunch of negligence going on in the routine in all of the furniture of -- that I have brought into my home with me. It's been demolished, infested and we also need assistance to keep a roof over our heads. Now with that being said, we are also going through a trial right now of our life that we have to face the COVID when we are very scared and being forced out of our homes.

We are citizens doing our part to ensure the good public health in wearing a mask and community and social distancing in our homes. But we do not -- but to do that, the City has a part of a lot of -- excuse me. I'm very nervous right now. I apologize.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: I ask that you take the next 30 seconds.

MS. BRADFORD: Yes. That is why we are here today. I urge you, the City Council, to extend the home Emergency Housing Protection Act and the bill, which will allow them to stay in

our homes, the thousand more family members and Philadelphians to remain in their homes as well. I ask that you please do so and vote today because this is an urgent matter.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you so much. Thank you for sharing your story, and I'm really sorry to hear what you've been experiencing.

Let's see. Paul Cohen, are you there and connected?

MR. COHEN: I am.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Please state your name for the record and proceed with your testimony.

MR. COHEN: Good morning, Chairwoman and members of the Committee. My name is Paul Cohen. I am general counsel to HAPCO Philadelphia. HAPCO Philadelphia is the City's largest membership organization for low- to moderate-income private rental housing. HAPCO Philadelphia's membership owns primarily single family and duplex rentals on the streets and neighborhoods

of Philadelphia.

HAPCO basically has a membership of people that are basically what you call your mom-and-pop owners. These aren't rich landlords. These are people just struggling to survive and maybe own one or two rental units, and they are being devastated by what is happening. There's an ecosystem that exists between landlords and tenants. It's like any other ecosystem. And when you start messing with it in a large way, it creates many unattended consequences.

I did submit written testimony. I know I don't have a lot of time this morning. So what I'd like to do is just incorporate that testimony into the record and address a couple of different points.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Sure. Please proceed.

MR. COHEN: Okay. Thank you.

So what we have is a situation of evictions which people don't realize that landlords don't want to evict tenants. It's the last thing in the world that a landlord wants to do. A landlord wants to keep their tenant. They want good tenants that pay their rent.

As a last resort when you have a tenant that's not paying the rent and not doing what they're supposed to do, that's when the landlord seeks an eviction. We're all on the same page with regard to evictions. We want to eliminate evictions. We don't want them to happen. Unfortunately, things and circumstances present themselves where they do have to happen.

The solution, however, does exist. The solution is rental assistance. But you have to make a rental assistance program that works for both the landlords and the tenants. And I think we can all agree, both landlords and tenants, that's the way to go.

Everyone is in favor of rental assistance. However, we need to fix the rental assistance program as it currently exists.

A couple of things real quick that I think we can do to tweak it to make it work for both landlords and tenants. Number one, we need to simplify the application process. It's just way too complicated. Number two, we need to eliminate the compliance issues. So, yes, I understand landlords need to get into compliance, very important. But think about it, if they don't have the money, how are they going to get into compliance. Some landlords haven't gotten paid for 10, 11, 12 months now. If this moratorium is going to continue, they're not going to get paid for a year and a half to two years.

There's no way they're going to be able to get the money to be able to comply. Get them the rental assistance and require that the rental assistance be used toward compliance, that's one of

the things we can do. It's kind of like the chicken and the egg problem --

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Can you please wrap up in the next 30 seconds.

MR. COHEN: Sure.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you.

MR. COHEN: The other thing we can do is with regard to the application process if we can get the landlords to be able to apply for the rental assistance rather than the tenants. The landlords are in a better position to know that they don't have the rental money and are in a better position to apply for it so that they can get the needed funds and then make sure that there's a way obviously that the tenant gets credit for it.

And just one last thing, I know I'm out of time but I do want to address Councilwoman Gym's comments with regard to the CDC, and I can just clarify that with regard to whether or not you have to have a hardship that's related to

COVID-19. In the moratorium, it specifically states that the individual has to certify that they're unable to pay the full rent or make a full housing payment due to substantial loss of household income, loss of compensable hours of work or wages, a layoff or extraordinary out-of-pocket medical expenses. So it doesn't specifically say the COVID-19 hardship, but all of those things basically relate to a COVID-19-related hardship. Thank you for letting me testify. I would be happy to answer any questions anybody might have.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you so much. I think everybody here agrees with you about the importance of rental assistance. I also know from multiple conversations that we have that the Administration wants to hear from landlords on how this program can work better. And so, those are conversations that we should continue to have even after today. Thank you.

MR. COHEN: Thank you.
COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Who's the next person, Matt? Sorry.
THE CLERK: Mylan Marvelous.
MR. MARVELOUS: Yes. Hello. Thank you.
COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Please state your name for the record and proceed with your testimony.
MR. MARVELOUS: Sure. My name is Mylan Marvelous. Thank you for the opportunity to share my views. I've lived in Philly for about 22 years now. I've been a small landlord about 12 years. I did actually benefit from some of the housing assistance that you guys have been talking about. I'm in support of these bills.
I want to tell you a little bit about what it means to be a small landlord in Philly for me. I've renovated about 10 houses so far. Once a house is renovated and leased out, I don't really make much money on it because of loans I have to repay, but

every little bit helps. Every home that I've bought has previously been abandoned and empty. I take great pride in having been able to bring back to life, create homes for people. I'm proud to generate tax revenue for the City, for the Law Department and everything else that comes with a home being part of a neighborhood.

I've never gotten a 10-year tax abatement for investing in my community. I'm a small landlord. I need the money that I make on properties but it's not just about the money or me. Since I own property in the neighborhood I live in, I don't just care about rent. I also care about my neighborhood and I care about my tenants.

Throughout COVID, we've constantly heard people say we're all in this together. And this should be true and I believe this to be true. And I believe it shouldn't mean that landlords get all of their rent all the time and that tenants who have lost their jobs

due to a pandemic have nowhere to live. It doesn't feel like we're all in it together. There's got to be give-and-take and we all have to bear some of the burden.

My tenants -- the way I am, my tenants are my neighbors and I've worked with each tenant that has had a problem with paying. I've got mortgages to pay and I want my rent money, believe me I want my rent money. But it's not right for the City to only insulate the wealthy and fortunate such as myself and allow the poor or unfortunate to suffer, because I don't want to see my neighbors put out of their houses.

I'm also a long-time resident afraid of investors that have deep pockets that come into West Philly. People aren't from the neighborhood or aren't even from Philly but that people, they don't care about the City. They just see Philly as an opportunity to make money for themselves. I hate when I see developers tear down historic

buildings like we see here in West Philly for a profit. I hate when they build ugly new boxes for profit, and I hate that it seems like they're trying to use my reputation as a small landlord who cares about people to make it easier for them to be able to evict people for profit.

I support these bills because it makes it harder for those kinds of companies to call the shots. And as a small landlord, I really don't want my name being used to say that small landlords oppose this kind of thing. Evictions aren't just inhumane to the tenants, but I feel like my neighborhood in the City also loses out, that we throw away human people, we throw away skills and knowledge and we break up the fabric of our communities.

I don't benefit from having mass turnover of neighbors and evictions all over. I don't benefit from losing neighbors that have been part of the City and know how the City works and who

make Philly Philly. And in the long run, I really want to see this bill extend the eviction moratorium despite any financial challenges. As a small landlord who treats his tenants like neighbors --

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: The next 20 seconds or so to wrap up.

MR. MARVELOUS: 20 seconds --

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Yes.

MR. MARVELOUS: -- yeah. As a small landlord, I treated my tenants like neighbors, I've never had to evict someone as far as I know, as far as I remember in the past 12 years. I've had disputes and arguments, but I've always worked it out together with my tenants and we're all in this together. That means we need to get through it together. I want my four daughters to live in a city that makes itself stronger by supporting the vulnerable among us and I feel like that's what this bill is doing. It's supporting people that really need support. So

thank you for your time.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you so much for your testimony and thank you for your compassion and commitment to our neighborhoods.

I hope that I'm saying this correctly. Is Nimet on the line?

MS. EREN: Yes, I'm here.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Can you please state your name for the record and proceed with your testimony.

MS. EREN: Yes. My name is Nimet Eren. Can you hear me?

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Yes, I can. Please proceed. Thank you.

MS. EREN: Great. My name is Nimet Eren and I am the Principal of Kensington Health Sciences Academy, a neighborhood public high school. I am here before City Council today asking that Bills 200414, 420 and 421 be passed. As a neighborhood high school principal, I have seen too many high school children experience homelessness and I've seen how homelessness

negatively impacts their education.

Because of the collective irresponsibility of adults this year, the United States was not able to contain COVID-19. Because of the collective irresponsibility of adults, children lost three months of learning last spring. Now, this fall because of the sustained collective irresponsibility of adults, my students have to begin their school year online. The last seven weeks have been the hardest seven weeks of teaching and learning that I have experienced in my 13 years as an educator.

My school team and our KHSA families have worked relentlessly to make online school work. Teachers have spent hours on the phone teaching children how to log in. Support staff has spent hours in the car delivering hotspots, and students and teachers have spent hours in their homes trying to feel the same excitement about school from their kitchens and bedrooms,

because that is what has happened. Because of the pandemic, school is now home and home is now school.

So if you take away a child's home, you take away their school as well. Again, if you take away a child's home, you take away their school as well. KHSA like many neighborhood schools has a high population of students that are susceptible to homelessness. If these bills are not passed, you will be taking away not only my students' place of shelter, but their place of learning as well.

How can a child successfully participate in online school if they are evicted from their home. Because COVID-19, homeless students could depend -- before COVID-19, I'm sorry. Before COVID-19, homeless students could depend on their school building as a place of stability, a place for food, a place for warmth. Now, as we enter the cold autumn months, if you evict a child from their home, you are essentially

evicting them from their school.

In the past, I have spent hours on the phone trying to find shelter for KHSA students who have suddenly lost their housing. Often even if a student is lucky to get into a shelter one night, there's no promise that the shelter is available the next night, as most shelters in Philadelphia provide housing on a single-night basis. Exactly where will homeless students complete online school during the day if they are evicted --

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Can I ask that you take the next 30 seconds or so to complete your testimony.

MS. EREN: Yes. Children need stability at this time. Children need shelter. Children need regularity. Children need to know even though the world is upside down right now, at least they can connect with their loving teachers daily from the safety of their own home. Please support our youth education and not block it. I stand

before City Council today asking that Bills 200414, 420 and 421 be passed. Do not evict students from their home. Do not evict students from their schools.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you so much for your support -- I mean for your testimony and for your support of our students.

Mr. Weiss, will you call up the next witness to testify.

THE CLERK: Yes. And now it's time for the public testimony portion of the hearing.

Modesto, are you able to call those folks in the hearing now?

COUNCIL TECH SUPPORT: Yes, we can. We get them in one by one or if you would like, we can take a small break and get them all in.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Yes. Let's take a short break and get those folks lined up to speak.

(Brief recess.)

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Good afternoon, everyone.

Mr. Weiss, will you please call the next witness to testify.

THE CLERK: Yes. Theresa Brabson.

MS. BRABSON: Yes, thank you. My name is Theresa Brabson and I'm the Legal Director in the Legal Clinic for the Disabled where we serve clients who are low-income individuals living with mental and physical disabilities as well as the deaf and hard of hearing. Thank you for this opportunity to testify in favor of Bills 200414, 420 and 421.

This pandemic has impacted every member of our community, but we must recognize that it has hit our most vulnerable communities the hardest. All of us have tried to adapt to a new normal over the past few months. But for many low-income renters with disabilities, this normal means an ever-present threat of illness, eviction homelessness and cascading debt.

At the Legal Clinic for the Disabled, we see every day how the

Emergency Housing Protection Act is working to mitigate potentially devastating impacts on our fellow Philadelphians. An eviction moratorium working in tandem with the diversion program and rental assistance affords tenants and landlords critical time to work out tenable solutions to ensure that landlords receive their rent and tenants avoid homelessness.

This package of bills is critical to fill gaps in existing federal protection. The CDC moratorium falls short of protecting all of our community members and its implementation has been marked by uncertainty and confusion. I urge this Council to extend the city-wide eviction moratorium to protect all Philadelphians. Please consider and remember our community members who fall through the cracks far too often. Tenants with disabilities such as autoimmune disorders, mobility issues, cognitive issues or developmental delays, just to name a

few, who need us to pass a broadly applicable eviction moratorium.

Eviction is disruptive to anyone. Right now it can be fatal for an individual with a disability. Protections become meaningless if --

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Can you wrap up --

MS. BRABSON: Protections can become meaningless if the people who need them the most can't access or understand them. As a City, we must do what we can to reduce burdens on our struggling peers, not increase them. These three bills taken together embody Philadelphians commitment to continue to rebuilding in a thoughtful and compassionate way. Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you so much for your testimony.

Mr. Weiss, will you please call the next witness to testify.

THE CLERK: Michelle Shidell.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Please state your name for the record and

proceed with your testimony. Please state your name for the record and proceed with your testimony.

MS. SHIDELL: Hello?

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Hi, Michelle. Are you there?

MS. SHIDELL: Hi, yes. My name is Michelle Shidell. How are you?

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: I am well. Can you proceed with your testimony.

MS. SHIDELL: Yes, ma'am. I'm a resident of Philadelphia and I'm also a landlord in Philadelphia, and I am in favor of extending the emergency housing protections at this time. I think that in the last 10 years, especially Philadelphians, have voted consistently and we have a lot of enthusiasm for representative government which has citizens raise most basic needs as priorities.

Half of Philadelphians rent their homes. And it isn't only indecent to not have protections in place with

regard to the most basic need of shelter, but it's also -- even though there wasn't any way to prevent or predict this crisis, it's not what anyone expects from our current local government here in Philadelphia. So I am in favor of extending eviction moratorium, the mediations, for sure waiving late fees at this time.

One thing that I would like to see maybe after the election stop using all the oxygen is a more robust outreach campaign about the rental assistance program. I was surprised to just learn that private citizens can donate to it, and food banks have had an incredibly increased demand lately, but also have been surprised by the uptick in donations. There isn't any reason to think that a bank to help with their shelter needs wouldn't elicit the same response. I know a lot of people are hurting right now, but there are also a lot of people who are doing quite well and would help and are looking for ways

to pitch in if only they knew how.
That's it.
COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you so much for your testimony.
MS. SHIDELL: You're welcome. I appreciate the chance to give it.
COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Absolutely.
Mr. Weiss, will you please call the next witness to testify.
THE CLERK: William Taylor.
COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Mr. Taylor, are you there and connected? William Taylor, are you there and connected? You may have to press star 6 to unmute yourself.
MR. TAYLOR: Hello?
COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Hi. Can you please state your name for the record and proceed with your testimony.
MR. TAYLOR: Hi. Good afternoon, City Council. My name is William Taylor. I'm currently working at Law School Admission Council. Thank you very much for providing me the

opportunity to testify on ways in which City Council can continue to help ensure that vulnerable renters like myself are protected during this economic health crisis.

I am testifying on behalf of the reinstatement of the Emergency Housing Protection Act. I am currently renting a two-bedroom in Mount Airy with my wife and daughter. Before the pandemic, my wife and I fell on hard times. We went to court, mediated an agreement with our landlord to avoid eviction and began paying accordingly. My wife started a new job in February at a hotel and we knew we were going to be good for 2020 but COVID had different plans. Like many of our renters and homeowners, we suffered a huge economic loss when the pandemic hit.

I was working two jobs before and I lost one as an Uber driver because I wasn't letting anybody in my car. And also, my wife lost her job at the hotel and just like millions of people, she

didn't receive any unemployment benefits. But by the grace of God, we got through the shutdown and continued to strive forward as numbers continue to grow.

I know it's not easy for either side of this mess. Landlords struggle just like tenants. But how much more will it cost to make families homeless. I was very unaware of any of the protections that was really put into place to help the common family like mine during the shutdown. I know I'm not the only tenant with that story.

Some of these bills were passed through the Emergency Housing Protection Act, my landlord did not speak to us about any of these laws. They just gave us some documents in writing and pretty much said these -- and none of the documents said these are the different tools you have to figure out with your landlord or what your situation. That --

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: 30

seconds, please.

MR. TAYLOR: Okay. Pretty much I don't have too much more to say. I really want to thank you guys for giving us the time to speak on our behalf and just giving us the floor to express our concerns. And I just really hope, especially around the holiday time, I haven't heard anything about the holidays, that you will find a way for the families to actually get through and just find the extension so people can live and get back to an ordinary life. Thank you so much.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you so much for sharing your testimony. It's really important that we hear from people who are actually going through this.

Mr. Weiss, can you call the next witness to testify.

THE CLERK: Julie Samasek.

MS. SAMASEK: Hi.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Hi. Can you state your name for the record

and proceed with your testimony.

MS. SAMASEK: Can you hear me?

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Yes, I can hear you. Can you please state your name for the record and proceed with your testimony.

MS. SAMASEK: Of course. My name is Julie Samasek. Thank you to Councilmembers Gym, Gauthier and Brooks for their work on these bills and to everyone for their time today. I'm a community leader in the Lower Moyamensing neighborhood and volunteer with 5th Square. I emphatically support these amended bills.

Nearly half of all Philadelphians are renters. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, our City suffered from an ongoing housing crisis that has impacted our most vulnerable community members. This crisis has only grown more dire with these same individuals disproportionately bearing the brunt of the pandemic. Though City Council and Mayor Kenney created an eviction

diversion program this past spring, there's still thousands of Philadelphians at risk for eviction as we speak. Meanwhile as we've heard from public and medical professionals, the pandemic rages on.

I, therefore, urge City Council and the Mayor to preserve and expand existing funding for eviction prevention and rent subsidies, the priority given to emergency funding for renters. This is the most basic thing we can do for housing security right now during the pandemic, but this work is also crucial in a post-pandemic Philadelphia.

Evictions are not only bad for economic growth, they're also bad for community stability. Workers who are evicted are up to 22 percent more likely to lose their jobs than similarly situated-housed people. Furthermore, we know that many people live in substandard and crowded living arrangements which poses further problems for public health.

5th Square believes that a pro-dense housing agenda should co-exist with pro-tenant consumer protections. Abundant housing should be safe housing. As an organization, 5fth Square opposed Society Hill's exclusionary zoning overlay and has supported policy that makes apartments more abundant. We think that must also be paired with robust consumer protections for renters, like the ones Councilmembers are proposing with these bills. This keeps tenants in their homes and prevent them from eviction not only as a result of economic circumstances beyond their control in the middle of a pandemic, but in the future.

In closing, I support these bills because I believe housing is a human right with vast implications for public health, economic growth and community stability. I applaud the City Councilmembers who are working to make housing more plentiful, successful and secure. Thank you very much.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you so much for your testimony.

Mr. Weiss, can you please call the next witness to testify.

THE CLERK: Yes. Diane Pozzi. Sorry if I've mispronounced your last name.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Diane, are you there? You might be on mute. You have to press star 6 to unmute yourself.

MS. POZZI: Hi. This is Diane Pozzi and I thank you for the opportunity to testify today. While I agree with everything that's been stated so far, I have a unique situation. I own several properties in the West Philadelphia area. I don't live in the Philadelphia area, so I also have a management company that assists me with managing the properties.

I want to first say that my management company has been excellent in providing all the information that the tenants need to get assistance. In

fact, I was informed of a particular situation today where a tenant needed assistance and everything has been provided for them. But I also have a situation where a tenant stopped paying their rent two to three months prior to COVID. And we went through the court system and we were at the very last step for the sheriff lockout when the courts were shut down.

At this point, there's probably close to $11,000 owed to me. The tenant does not reply to any correspondence, any phone calls. We provide them with all the same information that we give to all the tenants and he's living there for free, and I believe taking advantage of the system. So in my particular situation where the next step was the sheriff lockout, I feel that my case should be heard. And so, that's really all that I have to say about that. But I agree with everything else that everyone else has said. And I thank you for the opportunity.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you so much for your testimony.

Jeeva Muhil, are you on and connected?

MS. MUHIL: Hi. I'm --

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Hi. Please state your name for the record and proceed with your testimony.

MS. MUHIL: My name is Jeeva Muhil. I'm a shop steward with UNITE HERE 274 at the airport and a member of the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance. Pre-COVID I was bartending at the Philadelphia International Airport. Me and almost all of my co-workers were laid off because of COVID. We all had to file for unemployment, and I worked on a union hotline helping people access unemployment and PUA.

Many of us were in very, very desperate situations. We were cut off from our job. Money wasn't coming through the government and we couldn't pick up work anywhere else without huge health risk. Even now a lot of my

co-workers are still out of work. And even the ones who are at work, the tips and the money they are making are not the same.

When the $600 expired, many of us fell into debt again after just finding our feet. I know a lot of people who are in really, really desperate situations and on the verge of eviction right now. And I'm calling to support the Emergency Housing Protection Act because it's a lifeline from a public health crisis, because people are very, very close to losing their homes and being on the street in a time when having a home is some of the best protection for the rest of the community to stay safe from COVID and for people to be able to quarantine.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: 30 seconds.

MS. MUHIL: Yeah. The eviction mediation program is really important, especially when people are applying for things like rental assistance, the time

to figure out the funds that they need and to support each other. And then I also because of the situation with the $600 and because people are somewhat going back to work, some of us still aren't and some are back to work but not making the same amount of money, the ability to not be crippled by late fees is really, really important.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Please wrap up your testimony. Thank you.

MS. MUHIL: All right. Take care.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you so much.

Mr. Weiss, will you please call the next witness to testify.

THE CLERK: Samantha Stone Burton.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Samantha, are you there and connected? You may have to press star 6 to unmute yourself.

MS. BURTON: Hello.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Hi,

Samantha.

MS. BURTON: Hello. My name is Samantha Stone Burton. I'm a warehouse worker and community leader. I organize with One Pennsylvania. Thank you very much for providing me an opportunity to testify. I'm here today as a displaced mother of four. I represent many mothers across Philadelphia who are facing insecure housing, including my own mother. She's going through the process of eviction right now. And I am scared that in weeks to come, she'll be mishandled by landlord tenant court and become homeless.

Who will help my mother who's an elderly tenant? We need these protections now. Winter is coming and we need you to secure this City before, during and after the winter season to avoid more deaths in the Black community. Take our lives seriously.

In the Bible, Matthew 24, "Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath." No one

should have to figure out where they're going to live during a global pandemic, especially not during the coldest months of the year. Protect us from eviction through a reinstatement of the Emergency Housing Protections Act. Passing this Act could help my mother to have a repayment plan, could waive fees that are accruing and help to protect her from eviction and if necessary.

We know this already. My story represents thousands of people's stories. I've been here to share my personal story of displacement before and now I'm back to share my mom's. I hope that I don't have to come back in a few months to share another one, because (inaudible) we don't need to increase it. We feel to make history and show that (inaudible). Pass this bill for mothers, grandmothers and children. Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you so much.

MS. BURTON: You're welcome.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER:
Mr. Weiss, can you call the next witness to testify.
THE CLERK: Susan Ann Stromquist.
MS. STROMQUIST: Hello?
COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Susan, can you please state your name for the record and proceed with your testimony.
MS. STROMQUIST: Hello?
COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Hello. Please state your name for the record and proceed with your testimony.
MS. STROMQUIST: Sure. Good afternoon. My name is Susan Stromquist and I've been a landlord in West Philadelphia for eight years. I value my tenants, my neighbors, my community. And as a landlord, I support the EHPA because this crisis is not over. Renters throughout the City are still facing unprecedented levels of unemployment due to factors completely out of their control. They're still hustling every day to meet the most

basic necessities, and people of color continue to be the most affected.

The people who live and rent in this City are the same people who create the culture and embody the spirit that make the City a place where people want to live and rent. Let's honor their resilience and protect those most vulnerable, as we persevere through this collective and we hope once an essential emergency, basic human rights such as housing security are more important than our immediate bottom line.

It is up to us as a City to get through this together. And now more than ever we need to continue to show up for each other. Please do pass extending the Emergency Housing Protection Act Ordinances 200414, 420 and 421. Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you so much.

Mr. Weiss, can you please call the next witness to testify.

THE CLERK: Laurie Fulton.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Laurie, are you there and connected?

MS. FULTON: Yes, I'm here.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Please state your name for the record and proceed with your testimony.

MS. FULTON: Yes. Good afternoon. My name is Laurie Fulton. I'm a singer and voice-over actor. And I've proudly called Philadelphia my home and I've been here and a renter since 1981. I worked in the entertainment industry and it's been completely decimated by the COVID-19 and it's an industry that has no clear future. The coronavirus' deadly impact has permanently closed theaters, venues, restaurants and canceled or postponed events to 2021 with no guarantee that in 2021 the world will upright itself.

My other sources of income have been furloughed. I've worked as a part-time employee, but my employer contracted the coronavirus in late January 2020 and closed his business. I

applied for rental assistance for Phase 1 in May and my landlord rejected the application. In July, I applied for Phase 2. The application was accepted by my landlord. But because my landlord has not received any of the money from the rental assistance program, my landlord has continuously behaved in a manner that makes me very uncomfortable, with sending me notices, billing, recurring rental payments and that they are trying to have conversations with me about eviction in spite of getting the notice that we have, our application has been accepted.

The extension of the moratorium is crucial for Philadelphians, the Emergency Housing Protection Act and the Bills 414, 420, 421 will give Philadelphians a chance to gain some financial footing while we wait for the world to change. Thank you for listening to my testimony.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you so much.

Mr. Weiss, can you please call the next witness to testify.

THE CLERK: Taimier Younger.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Taimier, are you there and connected?

MS. YOUNGER: Yes, I'm here and connected.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Can you please state your name for the record and proceed with your testimony.

MS. YOUNGER: Yes. Good afternoon. My name is Taimier Younger. I'm a community leader and organizer with One PA. Thank you very much for providing me the opportunity to testify. I wanted to testify on behalf of the extension of the Emergency Housing Act. I've been a renter in West Philadelphia for about four years. Due to COVID-19, my partner and I have been out of work and (inaudible), we've exhausted all of our savings and there's no room to rebuild it or for (inaudible) --

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Are you there? I'm having a hard time hearing

you. I don't know if other people can hear.

MS. YOUNGER: Are you able to hear me?

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: I can hear you a little better now.

MS. YOUNGER: Okay. I've been a renter in West Philadelphia for about four years. Due to COVID-19, my partner and I are both out of work and with the minimal amount of support our government has given us, we've exhausted all of our savings and we don't really have any room for (inaudible). Like I said, it's been about four years since I've been living here.

I've seen my landlord twice. I saw him for the third time two weeks ago when he came to my house. I wasn't sure what he was doing here because he lives in Jersey and he never pops up. Of course, I was afraid when he came. I'm trying to figure out what he was doing there. He came to tell me that our building was going to be sold and that

there would be rent increases or to be evicted.

Two weeks later, I'm still wondering how long do I have to be in my place. Will it be an eviction, will it be a rent increase and how are we supposed to deal with the extra money while we're both out of work due to the pandemic. Either way, my landlord basically served us an eviction notice. So we'll either have to leave or we have to get our rent increase. Neither of which we can afford.

I'm testifying because I need another option and I need my representative to think about me and all the people who are forced into new uncertain situations who've had problems already that are just amplified by the pandemic. We can't afford to be forced out of our homes at any time, but especially not now. Please consider us and pass the extension of the Emergency Housing Protection Act in the coming weeks. Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you so much for your testimony.

Mr. Weiss, can you call the next witness to testify.

THE CLERK: Stephanie Dorenbosch.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Stephanie, are you there and connected?

MS. DORENBOSCH: I'm here.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Please state your name for the record and proceed with your testimony.

Stephanie, if you could please state your name for the record and proceed with your testimony.

MS. DORENBOSCH: Thank you. Good afternoon, Committee Chair Gauthier, Vice-chair Jones and Committee members. I'm Stephanie Dorenbosch, an Attorney and Program Manager at TURN, the Tenant Union Representative Network. My colleagues and I appear before this Committee frequently in support of tenants right measures and we would like to thank you for all the work that

you've done in that area.

But the Emergency Housing Protection Act isn't fundamentally about tenants rights. These bills are addressing the public health and safety in the middle of an enormous crisis. If they're enacted, they'll help keep you and me and everyone else in our community, including homeowners and landlords safer from the coronavirus. The only way that's going to work is if it's very clear to both tenants and landlords that people cannot be put out of their homes, and for the reasons that other advocates and attorneys have stated today, if it's as broadly applicable as possible.

An effective moratorium will also stop landlords from taking any steps towards displacement at all until the moratorium is over. Tenants who have received 10-day or 30-day notices from the landlord call us in a panic because they assume their landlord can just lock them out at the end of that

notice period. And so, many of them just get out of there as quickly as possible without waiting for a court hearing.

So if we're trying to prevent displacement, if we're trying to prevent people from being out on the streets and in shelters and living in their cars and crowding into the homes of friends and family, we have to hit pause on the entire eviction process. The thing is a lot of tenants want to move out if their landlord doesn't want them there. But to minimize the public health risk of moving and displacement, they need to be able to do that on their own time so they can find a safe place to stay.

TURN just to be clear, we're an anti-landlord organization. We don't want to see small landlords lose their properties. Some really do need money to survive and we want to see as much rental assistance go out to those landlords quickly. Keeping communities together --

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: 30 seconds, please.

MS. DORENBOSCH: All right. Thank you. Keeping communities together is good for both tenants and landlords and we are in this pandemic together. But one thing that we're hearing from so many tenants right now is that it's not always about the rent money. We have tenants calling whose landlords are refusing to apply for rental assistance or their tenants are paid up on their rent but their landlords want them out anyway.

And in this public health crisis, there's no room for that kind of business-as-usual approach when it could deprive people of having a roof over their head and running water. Everyone's health and well-being is at risk right now and we need strong leadership to keep people safe. So we hope you'll vote for all three Emergency Housing Protection Act bills today and especially on the full moratorium.

Thank you very much.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you so much.

Mr. Weiss, will you please call the next witness to testify.

THE CLERK: There are no other witnesses to testify.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Okay. Councilmember Gym, I know you wanted to make some comments.

COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Yes. Thank you so much, Madam Chair.

And thank you to all of the individuals, the testifiers, the scientists, the researchers, the moms and grandmothers, workers, property owners, organizers, legal advocates, our Administration who came forward and told us a fuller story. Sometimes we don't always know everything that people experience. We can't possibly know. They show that there's always more to understand and more for us to learn as we do the difficult work of legislating in this area.

As the Committee goes into deliberations, I just want to extend my gratitude also to the colleagues who stayed on and listened and considered a wide variety of testimony.

The bill, I think, that is the most challenging for everybody is the one that reinstates the eviction moratorium. It is a public health bill, plain and simple. It's not a bill that tries to draw a line between who deserves to be evicted and who does not. We made a conscious decision last spring when we unanimously passed the bill, that we could not afford to limit who is protected because it dismissed the reality of poverty, of biases and obstacles with our courts, challenges with education and outreach and information-sharing with landlords and tenants and because it undermined the public health goal of the bill.

There are multiple programs that assist individuals facing a COVID-related hardship right now.

There's diversion. There's rent subsidies and more, and more should be created. But the question before us is about whether the public health of our most vulnerable Philadelphians, and that includes our most vulnerable communities, is important than when exactly someone fell on hard times. Philadelphians face hard times. They face poverty. They've struggled to pay the rent pre-COVID. This bill as it stands does not turn our back on them right now as COVID is on the rise.

There was a discussion today and have been in the past that there might be unexpected consequences or unintended consequences of reinstating a moratorium, but we actually know what they are. This is not a mystery. We know what the gaps are. We have 2,000 households that fall outside traditional COVID protections that are established by a random date that we set of March 1st, and we need to get resources to them and their landlords.

We know that our courts have largely not been equal partners with us, helping inform tenants of their rights, for example, ensuring that landlords are communicating and doing their due diligence. Reform needs to happen there. We need to ensure and promise that no landlord, especially a small landlord will be foreclosed upon and indeed we've actually made a ton of progress through the courts on this fund already.

We need resources from the state, from the federal government. No one here is asking landlords to absorb all of this on their own. But the actual unintended consequences occur if we let the flood gates go in the middle of this pandemic. 2,000 evictions are households, not people. There could be two, three or four times the number of people who are impacted.

And as Dr. Stanford and others have said, we as a City are not prepared. There are children who are

out of school. Women, elderly, the disabled and many others who are deeply vulnerable not just to eviction, but to health and housing disparities that land them in the courts in the first place.

Last spring, this body took bold action and I firmly believe that our numbers have not been the worst of the worst because of it. I don't think we can underscore just how much we've been shielded from the worst of the worst, because we have held off on evictions. It's not a matter of winning or losing. It's a matter of the public health.

And when we are finally through this horror, I'm asking us to say what will we as a Council be able to say that we did. This ball lands in our court. The federal courts have determined that we have the right, the responsibility even, to regulate evictions in this pandemic. Will we say that we decided on amendments that appease certain groups, that quite honestly did not

advertise diversion or are confused about existing programs, but have proudly touted their service to help expedite evicting people from their homes.

Will we say that we did something because it was just the middle ground regardless of what doctors, legal advocates and researchers tell us or will we say that we did what was just, what was right, what science told us, what was safe during the most unprecedented public health emergency of our entire lifetime. Will we say that we found alternatives for people or will we say there's simply nothing at all we can do to help you because you were at the wrong time.

I've been proud to be part of a Council that understands the importance of home. None of this is home until all of us is, and ask this Committee to consider the full nature and the testimony that was presented in this hearing, and that we as a Council body

can focus on getting people and landlords the resources they need, rather than debate who does and does not deserve to be at home right now.

Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you so much.

And I am so sorry, but I think we missed one last witness. Sterling Johnson, are you there and connected? Sterling, you might have to push star 6 to unmute yourself. Sterling?

MR. JOHNSON: Can you hear me?

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Yes. Please state your name and proceed with your testimony.

MR. JOHNSON: All right. My name is Sterling Johnson, a lawyer, a housing homeless advocate. I've been here several times. I support the Emergency Housing Protection Act and the bills that go along with it. Specifically, the eviction moratorium needs to be extended until December

31st. And what we're talking about here, the direct intervention because the harm is people being evicted.

For us -- for the work that I do generally, but specifically has been around people that have been unhoused. We had a protesting encampment. I personally interacted with about 350 people that have been in the encampment that have many different stories. Many people have been in Center City experiencing homelessness for a long time. But a lot of other people, I would say about a third of the people, this is their first time experiencing homelessness. So it's very important to see what is happening right now for everybody.

I just want to talk about two issues. The first issue is the fact that we took it very seriously and because we have people like Jen Bennetch and Occupy PHA that have experienced DHS and Child Protective Services taking away people's children, if you evict

people on street, it puts their children at risk of being separated from their families. I understand that that is what you are doing when you are saying let evictions go forward. That is what happens. And we've seen DHS search and search for the children so they can grab them away from their parents. And that is what we cannot have. We have to stop that.

Another thing that I've seen has been people in recovery upon an eviction and that is when the devolution happens and that is the cause of death, especially people that have been being well. But if something happens, especially like COVID and all the forward movement goes south. So I just want us to think about those two issues. They're very near and dear to my heart. And everybody in the camps are all people that are doing their best every single day.

And thank you, Councilmember Gym, and Brooks and Gauthier for this

forum. Councilmember Gym really summed it up. I'm sorry that she wasn't (inaudible). Thank you, everybody.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you so much for your testimony and for all of your work and advocacy, Sterling.

Okay. Is there anyone else present in this hearing whose name we have failed to call and that wishes to offer testimony on any of the bills being considered today?

(No response.)

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Hearing none, I want to thank all the panels and witnesses for your participation today. We value your opinions. I now invite all panels and witnesses to please disconnect from the meeting before we go into our public meeting. We will now pause the proceedings briefly as multiple participants leave the hearing.

(Brief recess.)

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: This concludes the public hearing of the Committee.

We will now recess briefly until 1:40 p.m., at which time we will convene the public meeting to consider the action to be taken on the bills before this Committee today. Thank you so much.

(Brief recess.)

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you so much for your patience. We are now reconvening the public hearing for Bill Nos. 200414, 200420 and 200421. We are going to have to take a longer break before we can begin our public meeting. We're going to recess until approximately 5:00 p.m. Thank you so much.

(Recess.)

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Good evening, everyone. This is a continued public hearing of the Committee on Housing, Neighborhood Development and The Homeless.

Having no further testimony today and not having a quorum for a

public meeting, this concludes this business of the Committee for today. I thank everyone who testified today and I thank everyone who listened in from home. This hearing is now adjourned. Have a good evening.

(Committee on Housing, Neighborhood Development and The Homeless concluded at 5:30 p.m.)

C E R T I F I C A T I O N

I, hereby certify that the proceedings and evidence noted are contained fully and accurately in the stenographic notes taken by me in the foregoing matter, and this is a correct transcript of the same.

_____
TANEHA C. CARROLL
Court Reporter - Notary Public

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