

Special Committee on Gun Violence and Prevention
August 12, 2020

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Remote location using Microsoft® Teams
Wednesday, August 12, 2020
10:00 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILMAN KENYATTA JOHNSON, CHAIR
COUNCILMAN CURTIS JONES, JR., CHAIR
COUNCILWOMAN CINDY BASS
COUNCILWOMAN KENDRA BROOKS
COUNCILMAN ALLAN DOMB
COUNCILWOMAN JAMIE GAUTHIER
COUNCILWOMAN KATHERINE GILMORE RICHARDSON
COUNCILMAN DEREK S. GREEN
COUNCILWOMAN HELEN GYM
COUNCILWOMAN MARIA D. QUINONES-SANCHEZ
COUNCILMAN MARK SQUILLA
COUNCILMAN ISAIAH THOMAS

RESOLUTION: 170609

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3 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Good

4 afternoon, everyone. The Special
5 Committee on Gun Violence is now called
6 to order. I understand that state law
7 currently requires that the following
8 announcement be made at the beginning of
9 every remote public hearing as follows:

10 Due to the current public health
11 emergency, City Council Committees are
12 currently meeting remotely. We are
13 using Microsoft Teams to make these
14 remote hearings possible. Instructions
15 for how the public may view and offer
16 public testimony at public hearings of
17 Council Committees are included in the
18 public hearing notices that are
19 published in the Daily News, Inquirer
20 and Legal Intelligencer prior to the
21 hearing and can also be found on
22 phlcouncil.com

23 Will the Clerk please call the
24 roll to take attendance. Members that
are in attendance will please indicate
are in attendance will please indicate

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2 that they are present when their names
3 are called. Also, please say a few
4 brief words when responding so that your
5 image will be displayed on screen when
6 you speak.

7 Will the Clerk please call the
8 roll.

9 THE CLERK: Councilmember
10 Jones.

11 COUNCILMAN JONES: Present, and
12 we had another one last night.

13 THE CLERK: Councilmember
14 Gauthier.

15 Councilmember Brooks.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Good
17 morning, everyone.

18 THE CLERK: Councilmember Bass.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good
20 morning and I want to thank both Chairs
21 for hosting this hearing, very important
22 information. Thank you.

23 THE CLERK: Councilmember Domb.

24 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Good morning,
25 everyone. Thank you for this hearing

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2 today.

3 THE CLERK: Councilmember
4 Gilmore Richardson.

5 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE
6 RICHARDSON: Good morning, colleagues.
7 Thank you so much to both Chairs.

8 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Joshu,
9 I think I was on mute earlier. Present.

10 THE CLERK: Good morning.
11 Councilmember Gauthier, good morning.

12 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Good
13 morning.

14 THE CLERK: Councilmember
15 Green.

16 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Good
17 morning, colleagues and the public.
18 Looking forward to the second day of the
19 hearing.

20 THE CLERK: Councilmember
21 Quinones-Sanchez.

22 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ:
23 Good morning. Good morning. Looking
24 forward to today's conversation and
25 getting it done.

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2 THE CLERK: Mr. Chair, I
3 believe that's all the members.

4 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: I'm sorry.
5 Councilmember Thomas is here. I
6 apologize for that.

7 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you,
8 Joshu. A quorum of the Committee is
9 present and this hearing is now called
10 to order. This is the continuation from
11 yesterday's public hearing of the
12 Special Committee on Gun Violence
13 regarding Resolution 170609.

14 Will the Clerk please read the
15 title of the resolution.

16 THE CLERK: Resolution 170609,
17 authorizing the creation of a Special
18 Committee on Gun Violence Prevention to
19 address Philadelphia's enduring plague
20 of gun violence by facilitating
21 coordination among stakeholders and
22 formulating a comprehensive gun violence
23 prevention strategy.

24 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Before we
25 begin to hear testimony from the

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2 witnesses we have for today, everyone
3 that has been invited to the meeting to
4 testify should be aware that this public
5 hearing is being recorded. Because the
6 hearing is public, participants and
7 viewers have no reasonable expectation
8 of privacy. By continuing to be in the
9 meeting, you are consenting to being
10 recorded.

11 Additionally, prior to
12 recognizing Members for questions or
13 comments they have for witnesses, I will
14 note for the record at this time that we
15 will use the chat feature available in
16 Microsoft Teams to allow Members to
17 signify that they wish to be recognized.
18 In order to comply with the Sunshine
19 Act, the chat feature must only be used
20 for this purpose.

21 Before we call the first panel,
22 again I just want to thank my colleagues
23 for their commitment and dedication in
24 addressing this issue of senseless gun
25 violence here in the City of

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2 Philadelphia. All of us already know as
3 we all just read this morning, we had
4 another senseless life of a young man
5 taken in Southwest Philadelphia in
6 Councilwoman Gauthier's District, and I
7 saw her out there on the front line
8 yesterday addressing this issue head-on.
9 So again, I don't say this lightly, we
10 are in the state of emergency as it
11 relates to the issue of gun violence
12 here in the City of Philadelphia.

13 As elected officials, we not
14 only have a responsibility to address
15 this issue aggressively, but most
16 importantly a moral obligation to make
17 sure that our children are safe, our
18 women are safe and the whole City of
19 Philadelphia is safe. I also want to
20 thank my colleagues for signing on to
21 the official letter that we sent to
22 Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms requesting
23 an investigative report regarding gun
24 crimes, including illegal gun
25 trafficking, straw purchasing and all

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2 other forms of gun crimes that address
3 the issue of proliferation of guns in
4 the City of Philadelphia. This hearing
5 is not for show or fashion, but it's all
6 about getting solutions, answers and
7 most importantly, recommendations and
8 actions as we address this issue of gun
9 violence here in the City of
10 Philadelphia.

11 So with that being said, I'm
12 going to ask the Clerk to please call
13 the first panel, and I want to give
14 Councilman Curtis Jones an opportunity
15 to wrap up his line of questioning from
16 yesterday.

17 THE CLERK: Theron Pride and
18 Shondell Revell.

19 MR. PRIDE: Good morning.

20 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Good
21 morning.

22 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Councilman
23 Johnson, Councilman Squilla present for
24 the hearing.

25 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you,

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2 Councilman Squilla. And I also want to
3 note for the record in yesterday's
4 hearing, I didn't get a chance to
5 acknowledge Majority Leader Cherelle
6 Parker was also in attendance as well.

7 Councilman Curtis Jones -- I
8 want to also acknowledge, excuse me just
9 for one second, Councilwoman Helen Gym
10 is also present as well and I also want
11 to acknowledge Councilman Isaiah Thomas
12 as well.

13 Councilman Jones, are you
14 there? Okay. At this moment, we'll
15 wait for Councilman Jones to get back
16 on. I don't see any Members in the chat
17 session -- I'm sorry. I would like to
18 acknowledge Councilwoman Jamie Gauthier
19 for questions.

20 Councilwoman Gauthier.

21 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank
22 you. I'm sorry.

23 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: You're
24 welcome.

25 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: This

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2 question is for OVP. In FY20, how much
3 did the City invest in violence
4 reduction strategies noted in the
5 Roadmap to Safer Communities? And given
6 the escalation of the gun violence
7 crisis, how much does the City intend to
8 invest in FY21?

9 MR. PRIDE: Thank you for the
10 question, Councilwoman, and we're happy
11 to give you the specific numbers,
12 because the way we look at this, this is
13 not just OVP's budget in our office in
14 terms of the investments we're making in
15 the Community Crisis Intervention
16 Program and the investments we're making
17 in our Target Community Investment
18 Grants. We also see this as the larger
19 work happening even with the Licenses
20 and Inspections Department. We see this
21 also in the work that's happening in the
22 streets. We see this in Town Watch. We
23 see the investment that's being made
24 through the resources dedicated both
25 from law enforcement and some of the

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2 other social service agencies.

3 So I think it's important when
4 we talk about the Roadmap, that we
5 continue to highlight the fact that this
6 is a coalition, a collective effort and
7 we will be happy to get you more of
8 those specific numbers in terms of
9 investments being made in FY20.

10 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: If you
11 had to define my question just in terms
12 of the programs administered by OVP,
13 what would your answer to that be?

14 MR. PRIDE: So we can get you
15 the specific numbers. We have invested
16 millions in terms of our work directly
17 to the Community Crisis Intervention
18 Program. We also have a Youth Violence
19 Reduction Partnership in FY20, so we
20 have made a sizable investment, but we
21 always know that again the resources
22 that are invested don't always equate to
23 the full effort. And so, we want to
24 make sure people understand when we talk
25 about dollars, we don't necessarily

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2 equate that to just the full force and
3 effect of what we're doing.

4 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: This is
5 a hearing, so I would expect that some
6 of that information about the money that
7 flowed through your department be pretty
8 readily available. But sure, if it's
9 not available today, then that's fine.

10 The PPD made it clear yesterday
11 that they think they need more than
12 their current allocation of \$727 million
13 to fully implement their goals -- to
14 fully reach their goals and implement
15 their plan. In an ideal situation, how
16 much would our City be devoting to
17 policing as compared to violence
18 prevention efforts?

19 MR. PRIDE: So if I understand
20 the question, Councilwoman, and thank
21 you for that, you're asking to see what
22 the balance would be in terms of the
23 right ratio overall?

24 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Yes.

25 MR. PRIDE: So what we've also

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2 started within the Roadmap is a
3 framework of prevention, intervention,
4 enforcement and re-entry. So we see
5 this again, we want to make investments
6 across that continuum. So we would not
7 want to see everything in terms of the
8 money invested in this work to be solely
9 into law enforcement and the work that
10 we've been trying to put forward that's
11 evidence-based, that's based on what
12 research shows can have an effect and
13 can make an impact, shows that again
14 you're going to have a mix and a range
15 of things that you're going to do. It's
16 going to be a layered approach. And so,
17 again with law enforcement is one key
18 component because you do need
19 enforcement, but also prevention,
20 intervention and re-entry efforts also
21 have to be supported.

22 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: And
23 would there be an ideal balance in terms
24 of how much we're spending on policing
25 in comparison to how much we're spending

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2 on violence prevention?

3 MR. PRIDE: Well, we looked at
4 work even by Professor Patrick Sharkey
5 out of Columbia who has talked about
6 this in regards to the importance of
7 also recognizing a community can also do
8 policing and that you can make
9 investments in community organizations,
10 you can make investments in grassroots
11 organizations that do violence
12 prevention and that's just as important.

13 And so, we are trying to
14 continue to right-size that as that
15 conversation goes forward, as the City
16 looks at police reforms and the larger
17 work of reconciliation. We're trying to
18 get to that point where again, there is
19 an adequate investment in that work as
20 well, because that work is shown through
21 the research that's out there that, that
22 also can have an impact in a way to also
23 undue harm that we know that in some
24 ways communities that felt overpoliced
25 have felt very harming damage. If we

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2 want to repair that, we absolutely have
3 to rethink how we make those investments
4 in a balanced way.

5 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Okay.
6 We recently rolled out the Group
7 Violence Intervention initiative. How
8 will we know that GVI is working? What
9 metrics will we use to measure our
10 effectiveness? And how frequently will
11 we communicate our progress to the
12 public?

13 MR. PRIDE: Well, thanks again
14 for those questions and they are
15 absolutely timely because as you said,
16 we just rolled this out and we know it's
17 incredibly important for the City to be
18 transparent as we do this. We think
19 that's a way to also communicate clearly
20 that this is an intervention that's just
21 not law enforcement but really about
22 social services supports, so we want the
23 community to be a partner with us on
24 this, so we do want transparency and we
25 want to communicate this on a regular

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2 basis.

3 One thing that we are trying to
4 do is work with securing a contract with
5 an independent evaluator who will help
6 us lay out the evaluation plan. We feel
7 so very confident about where we are in
8 that process and that we will be able to
9 come back to this Committee and soon
10 give that update in terms of who we
11 have. We think that will be very
12 helpful in terms of us clearly setting
13 up the metrics and laying out a way to
14 communicate what is happening.

15 We also do want to do the
16 communication with the community and
17 with the community regularly, as we set
18 up an Advisory Committee for the Group
19 Violence Intervention, which includes
20 many of the electeds here on this
21 Committee, so that we can continually
22 check in and talk about the adjustments
23 needed. And of course, the homicide and
24 shooting data will feed into this
25 evaluation as well as the outcomes we're

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2 seeing from those who have chosen to
3 take up the services and supports. So
4 we are tracking individuals who, in
5 fact, reach out, who we encourage to
6 take the services and who, in fact, are
7 connected to services. We want to see
8 those outcomes, and that will feed into
9 the evaluation as well.

10 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: When we
11 will have the independent evaluator on
12 board?

13 MR. PRIDE: We're working very
14 quickly to have it as soon as this
15 month, if not, by next month to have
16 something in place. Of course, with the
17 contract process we always know there's
18 some hurdles there both on our side and
19 with the institution that we're working
20 with, but we are trying to move as
21 quickly as we can because we see this is
22 incredibly important and in our
23 communication around GVI, we want to
24 continue to stress that we want to be
25 transparent. We want people to know

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2 that this is a true partnership and this
3 is not where we're trying to hide the
4 ball. We're not trying to do anything
5 that brings harm to the community. It
6 really is about trying to just do this
7 in a way that we are all on the same
8 page working together.

9 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank
10 you. Research has shown that GVI is
11 most effective when there are real
12 social services to offer participants as
13 opposed to relying only on aggressive
14 law enforcement tactic. This was a
15 criticism of the last iteration of the
16 program here in Philadelphia. Can you
17 describe with specifics the network of
18 social supports that we have in place
19 for the program?

20 MR. PRIDE: So thanks to the
21 support of City Council, we certainly
22 have \$750,000 in the budget for this
23 fiscal year to support this work. That
24 money goes to support not only the
25 evaluation and the positions needed to

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2 connect people to services, but there is
3 a little over \$500,000 directly
4 available that we have now to support
5 funding slots and existing programs
6 across the City and City departments
7 that obviously range across things that
8 we know are needed for folks who are at
9 highest risk of this violence, of course
10 including things in the space of jobs
11 and mental health, behavioral health,
12 looking at emergency funding.

13 Sometimes it's the big small
14 stuff as we refer to it. People just
15 need help getting food. They might need
16 clothing. We're also looking at options
17 for again if someone needs a chance to
18 go somewhere where they're out of harm's
19 way. We want to be able to support them
20 in terms of getting transportation or
21 getting to a place where they can be
22 safe and secure.

23 Shondell can certainly speak
24 more to what we're doing on the case
25 management side of this work to try to

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2 actively engage people, but those are
3 some of the things that we have as a
4 result of funding that the City has
5 given us. And this funding is
6 supported, again the social services
7 aspect of this work, with law
8 enforcement is able to deliver the
9 message without using additional funds
10 or needing additional funds to do this
11 aspect of the work.

12 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you
13 very much. Next --

14 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: I have
15 one last question. I'm sorry. I think
16 it's a quick one.

17 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Go ahead.

18 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Would
19 you be able to share the budget to back
20 up how much we are going to spend on
21 social services?

22 MR. PRIDE: Yeah. We're in the
23 process right now itemizing that budget
24 based on what has been made available,
25 and we can give you that because we're

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2 taking a close look at really making
3 sure that we have some flexibility
4 obviously for the contracts that were
5 already in existence in the City to see
6 where we need to put the money most
7 based on of course what people are going
8 to ask for. So we are in talks with our
9 partners in the City right now in terms
10 of what they can do with existing
11 funding and how our funding can be
12 leveraged to further make sure there's
13 opportunity for individuals. As it has
14 been said before, we know that people
15 need access to opportunity in order to
16 have a safe alternative out of this gun
17 violence.

18 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: When
19 would you be able to share a budget with
20 this Council?

21 MR. PRIDE: So I think with the
22 GVI Advisory Committee, that's something
23 that we're quickly working to do. And
24 so, I would again sooner rather than
25 later we will make sure we get that to

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2 you because we don't want to have a
3 delay in that, and that's something we
4 actually want to discuss with the
5 Advisory Committee as we continue to
6 move forward in terms of how best to use
7 those dollars.

8 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank
9 you.

10 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you,
11 Councilwoman Jamie Gauthier.

12 As we move forward, I'm going
13 to be monitoring timing just so we can
14 get through our panels and making sure
15 everyone has an opportunity to do their
16 line of questioning. And if we have to
17 come back for Round 2, we will.

18 But I do want to say this as a
19 follow-up to Councilwoman Jamie
20 Gauthier's questioning, I'm just being
21 upfront, I don't feel the level of
22 urgency. Meaning, if we have this level
23 of gun violence that we're seeing in the
24 City, and I'm an ally and I work with
25 you guys, right --

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2 MR. PRIDE: Yes.

3 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: -- but we
4 had a whole pandemic where really
5 nothing was going on where all this
6 could be flushed out, right. Like the
7 soft services, we already know that
8 people are going to say this program,
9 GVI, which is a basically a new focused
10 deterrence, people are going to say,
11 well, it was heavy on law enforcement
12 before and that's why it didn't work and
13 this time we need to have a social
14 service component helping people, so I
15 would think that the team would already
16 have some things in place.

17 Why are we -- the Mayor, he has
18 strong relationships with Building
19 Trades, are they a part of this
20 conversation? The Chamber of Commerce,
21 are they at the table in terms of
22 helping young people with jobs? Are we
23 utilizing public-private partnerships to
24 say, okay, here's a list of social
25 service agencies that we're going to be

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2 providing support for the people who are
3 participating in GVI?

4 It just seems like you all are
5 still working through this. I'm just
6 being upfront with you. And I was
7 talking about this earlier this morning;
8 some people were saying on the phone
9 yesterday, well, COVID-19 kind of slowed
10 things up. But to be honest with you,
11 the homicides and shootings were going
12 up since January. COVID-19 didn't start
13 all of a sudden an increase and a surge
14 in gun violence. It's been taking place
15 around January, February and March. So
16 we've seen the trend going up prior to
17 COVID-19.

18 And so, I would just, you know,
19 for me I would be thinking that there
20 would be a level of urgency prior to
21 COVID-19 as it relates to putting these
22 things in place. That's just what I'm
23 getting from what you're saying, because
24 it seems like we should have more
25 answers in terms of putting things in

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2 place on the structure standpoint than
3 what I'm hearing coming from you.

4 MR. PRIDE: And, Chair Johnson,
5 if it's possible, could I respond then?

6 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON:
7 Absolutely.

8 MR. PRIDE: I appreciate the
9 comment and the chance to clarify. And,
10 yes, we share that concern and we
11 absolutely saw the time where we were at
12 the height of the pandemic as a time to
13 still stay focused on the issue. With
14 the Roadmap, we have already a social
15 services team in place because of the
16 tactical team meetings that we do as
17 part of that work.

18 We have the agencies that have
19 existing support services available, the
20 leadership from those agencies around
21 the table. We have begun to talk
22 through who has what, what slots are
23 available. People need to already start
24 to work through understanding what
25 bureaucracies are in their own agencies

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2 or departments that we need to move
3 through quickly in the event we have a
4 person who is ready and willing to avail
5 themselves to the services that we have,
6 so we have a menu of services already
7 that are in existence in the City and
8 we --

9 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Can you
10 all provide that to the Council asap,
11 give us a status update?

12 MR. PRIDE: Yes, we will get
13 you that. And because of that work that
14 we've done with the additional money
15 that we have, we do feel like we are in
16 a better position to further go and
17 leverage what you're suggesting in terms
18 of the other partnership that exists in
19 the City. But make no mistake, yes, we
20 hired up, we have our GVI coordinator in
21 place. We have a case manager coming on
22 board. We already have again work under
23 way to make sure these individuals --

24 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I'm not
25 trying to be smart and I support you

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2 all. But why are we just getting a case
3 manager? That's where I'm coming from.
4 It's like at what point -- again, gun
5 crimes and shootings started early, way
6 before March, COVID-19, right, or
7 whenever we stopped as a government
8 because of COVID-19. And you all rolled
9 out GVI, I guess, last week so I would
10 think case managers would have already
11 been in place on the ground running. I
12 mean, help me out if I'm missing
13 something.

14 MR. PRIDE: No. We are --

15 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I'm not
16 trying to be smart, but we're here for
17 answers. And we all have a whole lot of
18 other things we could be doing right
19 now, but this is serious so help me
20 understand.

21 MR. PRIDE: No. And again, I
22 appreciate the question and I appreciate
23 the sustained attention and focus on
24 this. We were in the middle of our
25 hiring when the pandemic hit. We had

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2 people scheduled coming in for
3 interviews and then we went to virtual.
4 So we were moving to do the hiring even
5 before the pandemic. But as we went
6 through that, we had the stay-at-home
7 order. We had people who could not come
8 in and do the interviews. And so, those
9 things unfortunately stalled, but we
10 picked them back up. We recognized this
11 is not at the pace we wanted it and we
12 were doing what we can to adjust and
13 adapt to make sure that we got those
14 folks on board.

15 There was a hiring freeze put
16 in place once we had all the concerns
17 around the shortfall that we were going
18 to be facing in the FY21 budget. But
19 the Administration certainly waived, and
20 moved on making sure we were able to
21 hire. And again, we already have a lot
22 of staff that is committed to this work
23 even before we have a coordinator and
24 before we have case managers. We have
25 people at the Office of Violence

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2 Prevention who are already able to do
3 this. This just gives us more capacity.

4 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Okay.

5 Thank you.

6 Councilman Curtis Jones.

7 MR. REVELL: Council Chair, can
8 I add something? Can I add something
9 before --

10 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yeah,
11 sure, Shondell.

12 MR. REVELL: I'm looking at it
13 like this, we didn't have a case manager
14 for GVI, but we had the Social Service
15 Department for PAAN, the crisis team
16 which we used across the board. I
17 understand your frustration. People
18 were identified. We were on top of the
19 interviews. But as Theron said, things
20 did stall a perspective where people
21 weren't actually pushed through the
22 system. But any time a need came up, it
23 was met either with our office or with
24 our resources at PAAN or City resources,
25 so there wasn't any time that someone

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2 needed a resource that we weren't there
3 to provide it for them.

4 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Okay.
5 Thank you very much.

6 Councilman Curtis Jones and
7 then Councilwoman Cindy Bass.

8 COUNCILMAN JONES: All right.
9 Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you
10 for your questions and thank you, Member
11 Gauthier, for your questions. As I
12 listen to them, I didn't really get good
13 answers. So I'm going to try to be a
14 little more specific, a little more
15 succinct.

16 What date did your department
17 announce the plan in Chambers to say we
18 have a plan? How long ago was that?

19 MR. PRIDE: The Roadmap was
20 announced in January of 2019.

21 COUNCILMAN JONES: All right.
22 So we are at least a year and a half in,
23 right. How many people who were likely
24 to shoot or likely to be shot have you
25 put through a process?

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2 MR. PRIDE: A process for any
3 service? When you say put through a
4 process, Councilman --

5 COUNCILMAN JONES: How many
6 have you saved?

7 MR. PRIDE: How many lives have
8 we saved?

9 COUNCILMAN JONES: How many
10 people have you identified, put through
11 a process that chose to defer their
12 activities, criminal activities, to do
13 something correct? How many people did
14 you identify through this process and
15 that you have given some type of
16 resources to and they put up their guns?

17 MR. PRIDE: So thank you for
18 the question. I think the way we would
19 want to look at this is across the --

20 COUNCILMAN JONES: You ain't
21 saying nothing slick to a can of oil.
22 Answer the question. Just how many?

23 MR. PRIDE: Councilmember
24 Jones, honestly I want to answer your
25 question and I want to make sure I

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2 understand it, and I'm not at all trying
3 to evade your question. I think it's a
4 fantastic question. I think people want
5 to know what the Roadmap is doing in
6 regards to our programs to prevent and
7 reduce this violence and with the
8 Community Crisis Intervention Program,
9 that is a program that we have where
10 they have absolutely engaged a number of
11 high-risk individuals --

12 COUNCILMAN JONES: How many?

13 MR. PRIDE: Shondell, do we
14 have some numbers that we can share with
15 the Councilmember?

16 MR. REVELL: We can get numbers
17 to him. But let me reiterate, let me
18 add this, if we're looking at 2020,
19 2019, we had Youth Violence Reduction
20 Partnership. We had over 600 and still
21 service 600-some odd youth who are high
22 risk. And over 90, 98 percent of those
23 individuals are still not incarcerated
24 and are still being serviced. Meaning,
25 they haven't picked up a gun, they

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2 haven't shot anyone and they haven't
3 committed offenses.

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: So you're
5 saying this program, not programs that
6 existed before you, identified how many
7 individuals?

8 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Point of
9 information, Councilman Jones. So we
10 have two different programs that I think
11 are being intertwined. What Shondell
12 Revell is referring to is AVRP,
13 Adolescent Violence Reduction Program --

14 MR. REVELL: YVRP.

15 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: -- which
16 is totally separate from the question
17 that you're asking, Councilman Jones,
18 which is GVI. And that recently has
19 only been implemented if I'm correct,
20 correct me if I'm wrong, this last
21 weekend; is that correct?

22 MR. PRIDE: Yes, August 1st.

23 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: So just
24 point of information, Councilman Jones,
25 just for clarity.

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2 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: So in a
3 year and a half you were tooling up and
4 now you started this weekend. I'll
5 repeat the question. How many people
6 have you identified through that
7 particular program?

8 MR. PRIDE: So thank you again
9 for the question and we do want to
10 clarify and make sure it's clear on the
11 record. With the Group Violence
12 Intervention, as First Deputy
13 Commissioner Singleton said, we will
14 provide how many folks have been
15 identified through the shooting reviews
16 and now have been placed in our queue
17 for a custom notification, which is a
18 conversation with law enforcement and
19 our partners with Group Violence
20 Intervention that includes the social
21 services piece and the community. We
22 will get you that number in terms of how
23 many numbers have been identified for
24 that.

25 But I understand again what

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2 you're asking in terms of the Roadmap
3 that was rolled out in January of 2019.
4 There have been a number of individuals,
5 as Shondell mentioned, through a variety
6 of programs that we have that have
7 absolutely been touched, whose lives
8 have been changed. So with --

9 COUNCILMAN JONES: Please --

10 MR. PRIDE: Go ahead, sir.

11 COUNCILMAN JONES: So please
12 provide to the Chair the names, not
13 right now, we can keep it moving because
14 I don't want to -- there are other
15 people with questions. Provide the
16 names and then provide how you
17 identified them, what the criteria was,
18 all right. And if you need to redact
19 the names, don't wait a month and then
20 say, oh, privacy, juvenile. You can
21 redact the names, but make sure they're
22 verifiable, all right.

23 Secondly, if you've identified
24 how many individuals and the shooting
25 stats are still going up, what are we

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2 doing wrong? What can we do better?

3 Because, you know, everything today must

4 be evidence-based, must be weighed and

5 measured and then evaluated. The

6 federal government often when they're

7 trying something new will take 10

8 different entities, nonprofits,

9 for-profits and say, do your prototype

10 on how you address this problem. Out of

11 that 10, maybe 2 of them get it right

12 quantitatively. And then they narrow

13 down the scope of what that contract is

14 to those two types.

15 We have to follow those kinds

16 of processes because if it isn't

17 measured, it isn't managed. So if

18 you're saying you identified all of

19 these people and you're saying they ran

20 through all of these programs and still

21 we're getting shot up, we need to do

22 something and evaluate, adjust the dials

23 so that we can have the desired results

24 we want.

25 So I'm going to need to know

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2 how you identified them, whether it's
3 individual files, a combination of
4 geography like I showed you Simpson
5 Street. Whatever that formula is,
6 please share it. But more importantly,
7 measure it to see if it's having the
8 desired effect because right now, we
9 can't tell.

10 MR. PRIDE: Yes. Councilman
11 Jones, thank you for that comment. And
12 also again, a chance to clarify. We
13 will work to get you that information.
14 We will look at the programs again and
15 explain again the individuals that we've
16 touched. And from my time in the
17 federal government at the Department of
18 Justice during the Obama Administration,
19 you're absolutely right. I was trained
20 in that method. I understand exactly
21 what you're talking about in terms of
22 the need to evaluate and we have funding
23 that we have set aside to help with
24 these formal evaluations. It's not
25 enough for us to just do it. We want

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2 this to be done independently, so we are
3 looking at that.

4 But with Operation Pinpoint, as
5 we said we are finding ways to collect
6 the data, to track and see whether or
7 not in the hotspots and with the people
8 that we've engaged whether or not we're
9 having an effect. And you're absolutely
10 right, we will be thoughtful about how
11 we share the information because we
12 don't want to violate privacy, but we
13 will get you information about the
14 programs that are servicing these high-
15 risk individuals, including what was
16 formerly known as the Youth Violence
17 Reduction Partnership which is now the
18 Violence Prevention Partnership that
19 still engages these individuals, we will
20 get you that.

21 And what we said all along too
22 is that we're also talking about
23 bringing more things to scale because
24 you can reach a lot of individuals, but
25 if you're still not at the right scale,

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2 you can't make the impact that we all
3 want to see.

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: So way
5 before Member Thomas got elected, he
6 runs a wonderful summer camp for urban
7 kids, high-risk kids that get to have
8 mentors and basketball and scholastics
9 all combined in one. I had a
10 conversation with Member Thomas and I
11 said, Councilman, can you identify early
12 on in your coaching who's going to have
13 a problem, who's going to be a problem
14 in the future? And he said with
15 confidence, yeah.

16 So if coaches and teachers and
17 social workers can identify these
18 high-risk individuals, to the Chairman's
19 point, yes, we should use scientific
20 method but sometimes we need to fly a
21 little bit by the seat of the pants and
22 just eyeball our way into making some
23 good decisions, because Councilmember
24 Gauthier last night again had to go out
25 and deal with the reality of analysis,

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2 paralysis, which is we're studying this
3 thing and studying it, but people are
4 still dying.

5 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you,
7 Councilman Jones.

8 Before I call Councilwoman
9 Bass, Deputy Commissioner for Violence
10 Prevention Criminal Justice Vanessa
11 Garret-Harley would like to go on the
12 record and respond.

13 MS. GARRETT-HARLEY: Good
14 morning, everyone. I just wanted to try
15 to address some of the questions that
16 Council has raised, because I think
17 they're absolutely appropriate questions
18 and we should have additional answers
19 for you.

20 First of all, with regard to
21 the social services, there is a menu of
22 social services that we will certainly
23 send you over in writing in more detail.
24 That menu includes everything from
25 Community Legal Services who are there

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2 to help folks who may be feeling some
3 housing insecurity. Sometimes because
4 of the situation that is involved,
5 housing may or may not be secure so we
6 can use them for that. They will also
7 help in terms of there's a contract
8 around connection to service benefits.
9 Many of the folks that are involved
10 sometimes in the violence are doing it
11 because of a lack of economic means and
12 there are benefits that are available to
13 receive that they don't know about, so
14 they will help in that connection as
15 well.

16 Department of Behavioral
17 Services is involved. They will provide
18 anything from cognitive behavioral
19 therapy to anger management and whatever
20 other evaluation, including substance
21 abuse if that is relevant or whatever
22 the evaluation deems necessary. We have
23 already set up the partnership in
24 contract with Municipal ID. Many of the
25 young people that we come across and

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2 from studying other jurisdictions have a
3 problem with getting identification.
4 They need the identification often in
5 order to set them up on the right path
6 for career and skill building.

7 So Municipal ID, we're starting
8 there because some of them do not have
9 the requisite paperwork, birth
10 certificates or other things that they
11 need. Municipal ID, you can get your ID
12 even if you have nothing but your Prison
13 Identification No. You can then use
14 that picture to help you get your
15 nondriver's ID or driver's license or
16 whatever else you need.

17 We also have services set up --
18 now, the job piece is one of the most
19 important pieces and we do recognize
20 that. We are in the midst of continuing
21 to work to develop the transitional jobs
22 program. However, working with some
23 folks out of the Commerce Office, we
24 have -- and also working with Philly
25 Works, we do have some opportunities set

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2 up. With some of the folks that we
3 connected with already and although GVI
4 has only been launched for approximately
5 maybe two weeks at the most, right, we
6 can have -- there were folks and that
7 was the first thing that most folks
8 asked for and we are linking them to
9 whether it's a job readiness program or
10 an actual unemployment program.

11 We are leveraging connections
12 that we have across the board,
13 everywhere from connections that the
14 Department of Probation has around
15 employment to connections that
16 Philadelphia Anti-Violence Anti-Drug
17 Network has. We are leveraging all of
18 these things together so that we
19 increase the employment opportunity.
20 But we will also be using some of that
21 \$500,000 that Theron talked about in
22 social services. We are in the midst of
23 working with CEO and --

24 COUNCILMAN JONES: Point of
25 information, Mr. Chair. Point of

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2 information.

3 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON:
4 Acknowledged.

5 COUNCILMAN JONES: We are
6 getting ready to hire 100 sanitation
7 workers. How many of them are going to
8 be those high-risk individuals,
9 Mr. Chair?

10 MS. GARRETT-HARLEY: I don't
11 know --

12 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: My
13 understanding is the Administration is
14 using the civil service list to allow
15 those individuals first priority,
16 because it was also asked of me from
17 members of the community, will
18 ex-offenders have an opportunity to
19 participate in these temporary positions
20 as well as should there be a
21 relationship with GVI regarding this
22 very same thing.

23 MS. GARRETT-HARLEY: So let me
24 just say that we do hire ex-offenders,
25 that many of the positions, if not all

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2 of the positions that came under the
3 Department of Licenses and Inspections
4 and CLIP that were connected to the
5 violence prevention work that came out
6 of the Roadmap were specifically spots
7 that we used for folks with lived
8 experience. So the crews involving that
9 were folks who were ex-offenders, and we
10 do again hire ex-offenders at the City.

11 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you
12 very much, Vanessa.

13 Councilwoman Cindy Bass. Then
14 Councilwoman Gilmore Richardson.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good
16 morning. Good morning and thank you,
17 Mr. Chairman. As I said yesterday,
18 Councilman Johnson, you've been on the
19 forefront of this issue for a very long
20 time as well as Councilman Curtis Jones
21 who has been a warrior in the streets
22 for a very long time.

23 And I have to say just a couple
24 of things in hearing from everybody
25 today that it sounds like we have a

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2 whole lot of programs that probably are
3 with the best of intentions. But behind
4 those programs, I don't have any
5 numbers. I don't have any numbers of
6 how much we're spending. I don't have
7 any numbers of how much we're helping.
8 I don't have any impact numbers. And
9 so, it just feels like we're just
10 spending money and creating programs.

11 And I have to say I don't know
12 what kind of data the Administration has
13 prepared that they want to give us, what
14 numbers you do have, but I would like to
15 give you the opportunity to do that now,
16 because as a member of Council when I
17 show up for a hearing or when I call for
18 a hearing, I have to be prepared. I
19 have to have my facts, my figures.

20 I have to make my case, lay it
21 all out. I'm not an attorney, but I
22 feel like an attorney because I have to
23 lay out a case. I have to convince you
24 as to what I'm doing and why it's the
25 right thing and why we should stay the

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2 course. And I just really feel I have
3 to say disheartened by the lack of
4 information that's provided today.

5 And as Councilman Jones said
6 and Councilman Johnson said, there is
7 clearly a lack of urgency in terms of
8 dealing with what we're dealing with,
9 and it feels like it's a -- and I'm just
10 going to speak openly and honestly,
11 which is the only way I know how to get
12 down, but it feels as if this is a bunch
13 of academics sitting around having
14 conversation and that academia talk does
15 not translate, it's like a foreign
16 language, to the people in the
17 neighborhood that we need to talk to.

18 The people that we deal with in
19 our communities, listen, you all can
20 talk about all these programs and
21 services and we help a lot of people.
22 Well, what's a lot, because the people
23 in my District don't want to hear it.
24 They want the numbers. When I go back
25 into my District, they want the numbers.

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2 That's what I have to produce. So we're
3 relying on you guys to produce the
4 numbers. And the lack of urgency that
5 I'm feeling right now is just stunning,
6 it's just stunning and the scope of it.

7 Just yesterday we had a
8 conversation with our District Attorney,
9 and I have to say I'm terribly
10 disappointed that after the
11 conversation, that a District Attorney's
12 Office staffer went on Twitter and made
13 light of my comment related to drug
14 sales in relationship to homicide.
15 Well, what's funny about that? What's
16 cute about that? I just thank goodness
17 that they have G. Lamar Stewart over
18 there because otherwise, I wouldn't know
19 what would be going on over there.

20 I just really need for those
21 who are responsible for law enforcement,
22 and I'm going to say the Administration
23 and I'm going to say the District
24 Attorney's Office, and I know that
25 Commissioner Outlaw is working on her

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2 plan, we heard from her yesterday as
3 well, but I'm going to ask specifically
4 for the DA's Office and the
5 Administration to put some urgency
6 behind the lives of our kids so that
7 when they walk out on the streets,
8 you're not worried about them and
9 wondering are they coming back. Is this
10 the last time I'm going to see them
11 because the streets of Philadelphia are
12 just so off the hook right now.

13 So I'm going to be quiet and I
14 would like to hear whatever information
15 you came prepared to detail with us in
16 terms of what the numbers are, what
17 we're spending and what we are solving
18 because the data makes the difference.

19 Mr. Chairman, I'm going to just
20 leave it at that and wait for a response
21 from the Administration.

22 MS. GARRETT-HARLEY:

23 Councilwoman Bass, this is Vanessa
24 Garret-Harley. Your points are right on
25 point and accurate. I can tell you

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2 that. But I do want to clarify one
3 thing, please don't mistake the fact
4 that we did not have the numbers or you
5 haven't been given numbers as of yet as
6 a lack of urgency or caring because
7 that --

8 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Vanessa,
9 not to --

10 MS. GARRETT-HARLEY: I just
11 want to give you a number or two if I
12 could.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Well, hold
14 on. Hold on.

15 MS. GARRETT-HARLEY: Okay.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I want to
17 stop you right there. I appreciate you
18 being on the call. But not having
19 numbers is exactly a lack of urgency,
20 because I will bet you as Councilman
21 Curtis Jones said yesterday, if there
22 were a bunch of whales washing up --
23 impossible, but like on the Schuylkill
24 let's say, for example, right. Every
25 marine biologist in the world would be

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2 here and they would have the data. They
3 would have the facts. They would be
4 studying the information. They would be
5 able to pinpoint exactly what is
6 happening and why it's happening.

7 And so, there can be no excuse
8 for a problem that has gone on --
9 listen, homicide didn't just start in
10 2020 or 2019 or 2018, okay. So this is
11 nothing new. I'm not new to the job.
12 I've been in Council for eight years.
13 Mayor Kenney isn't new to the job. He's
14 been the Mayor for over five years now
15 and was a member of Council for a long
16 time before that. So none of us are new
17 at this. So to approach it as if we
18 don't have numbers or there's no serious
19 reason to present numbers, I think
20 speaks volume. So I'm going to be quiet
21 for real.

22 MS. GARRETT-HARLEY: I'm not
23 trying to -- in the FY20, the budget for
24 OVP, to go back to a question that I
25 believe one of the other Councilpeople

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2 asked, for the Office of Violence
3 Prevention and the few programs that
4 came directly out of that office was
5 10.9 million. In FY21, the budget is
6 9.4 million, so the budget was reduced
7 somewhat. We tried to make and we did
8 make -- we understand that the pandemic
9 caused an unprecedented amount of strain
10 on the financial budget and we had a
11 deficit of 750 million. We anticipated
12 that there might be some cuts so we
13 tried to regroup and adjust on the basis
14 of those cuts.

15 Out of that in FY20, the detail
16 in terms of how the money was spent, \$1
17 million went to Targeted Community
18 Investment Grants. Approximately, 4 to
19 5 million of it went to the YVRP or
20 Youth Violence Reduction Partnership.
21 There was another couple of million that
22 went to CCIP. Now, I will get you a
23 detailed budget and submit to Council by
24 tomorrow that will get the numbers out
25 because we do have them in terms of

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2 where the additional funding went to.

3 I do want to emphasize as
4 Theron said, the Roadmap came out in
5 January --

6 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

7 RICHARDSON: Mr. Chair, point of
8 information.

9 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON:

10 Acknowledged.

11 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

12 RICHARDSON: This is Councilmember
13 Katherine Gilmore Richardson. For the
14 knowledge of the general public, can we
15 just say out these acronyms because
16 everybody doesn't know what all of that
17 means.

18 MS. GARRETT-HARLEY: I'm sorry.
19 I apologize. TCIG is Targeted Community
20 Investment Grants. Those were the
21 grants that we gave to many of the
22 organizations in the community. They
23 were grants that were anywhere from \$500
24 to \$20,000, and it was just to support
25 those baseline community organizations

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2 that were really out there already doing
3 work with regards to violence
4 prevention, to provide them some
5 additional financial support.

6 The YVRP is the Youth Violence
7 Reduction Partnership. It was a program
8 that was being run out of a contract
9 with the Urban Affairs Coalition in
10 partnership with PAAN, the Philadelphia
11 Anti-Violence Anti-Drug Network, which
12 addressed those youth that are between
13 the ages of I'd say 14 to 25 who were at
14 the highest risk of either killing or
15 being killed, so it was a very specific
16 program. And it was for those youth who
17 were on supervision as we call it or
18 probation or parole as many would call
19 it.

20 And then CCIP is the Community
21 Crisis Intervention Program. I call
22 them the boots on the ground. That is a
23 program that really just started in the
24 summer of 2018 I believe, like July 2018
25 with nine people. But with the help of

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2 Council, we have scaled it up. We're
3 currently at 51 in the hiring process
4 and will be taking the full hiring
5 numbers to 64.

6 In many of the neighborhoods,
7 people know this team of folks because
8 they're the ones out there canvassing.
9 They try to de-escalate tensions. They
10 try to head off violence to the extent
11 that they can. We believe that they've
12 been successful from talking to the
13 police in terms of there were districts
14 where they really made a difference in
15 some of the shootings, and also talking
16 to some of the community members, it is
17 difficult to some extent to quantify how
18 many lives they may have saved because
19 it's often difficult to go back and
20 figure out what you say, but we can get
21 numbers in terms of the number of folks
22 that they've impacted and the number of
23 households --

24 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Vanessa --

25 MS. GARRETT-HARLEY: -- that

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2 they've been involved in.

3 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Vanessa,
4 also I know I asked the Mayor last year
5 for 10 million for additional funding to
6 address the issue of gun violence, and
7 the Administration responded by
8 providing 5 million. Can you break down
9 what that 5 million was used for?

10 MS. GARRETT-HARLEY: The
11 additional 5 million I believe gave us
12 the second round of the Targeted
13 Community Investment Grants, so we put
14 out a total of \$2 million for the
15 Community Investment Grants that I
16 talked about. So we've got some of the
17 money was in that additional 5 million
18 that you gave us. It also had some of
19 the funds that allowed us to scale up
20 the Community Crisis Intervention
21 Program, bring on additional staff.

22 I'm sure you know, because
23 you've been working with us, Community
24 Crisis Intervention started with them
25 working from 6:00 a.m. to 4 -- 6:00 p.m.

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2 to 4:00 a.m. because that was the time
3 of night where we identified the bulk of
4 the shootings were happening. But as
5 the shootings unfortunately started to
6 happen all times of the day and
7 different days of the week, we needed to
8 scale up to be able to have teams on
9 board seven days a week. So a lot of
10 the funding went towards that as well.

11 In addition, we added social
12 services to that CCI Program and there
13 is sort of a transitional job readiness
14 connection that the money went to. It
15 also went to adding an additional crew,
16 if I'm correct, to Licenses and
17 Inspections and to CLIP that were
18 directly focused on the violence, so we
19 were working in conjunction with the
20 Police Operation Pinpoint. And when
21 they would identify neighborhoods often
22 sometimes where there might have been a
23 shooting or something, they would also
24 say it was dark in this area so we would
25 work with our Streets Department. Some

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2 of the funding went there to provide
3 additional lighting. Some of the
4 funding went to board up abandoned or
5 unsafe homes. Some of it went to
6 graffiti removal, so there was a myriad
7 of programs that it went to.

8 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I just
9 want to say this before I call on our
10 next Councilperson. Can your team put
11 together -- you talked about the
12 dollars. But again, when you talk about
13 leadership and evidence-based
14 programming, we should have in front of
15 us or we're requesting for you to give
16 us an update with basically an impact.

17 And so, for instance if we know
18 we have a Crisis Intervention Team
19 that's on the street, right, they should
20 be able to have numbers saying we went
21 to X, Y, Z community meetings, we
22 engaged X, Y, Z young people, we had so
23 many contacts with job training for X,
24 Y, Z individuals trying to get help, we
25 engaged in resolving X, Y, Z conflicts.

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2 Just so we can see that it's
3 quantifiable from an impact statement.

4 And I think that adds to when
5 you talk about -- I know you talked
6 about the dollars that were spent,
7 right. If you're saying, okay, some of
8 this went to L&I, well, L&I should have
9 a list under your particular program
10 saying we put up bright lights from a
11 public safety standpoint in these
12 particular areas, we sealed off this
13 many abandoned houses if that's how the
14 money is spent. So if you all can work
15 on a report for members of Council,
16 quantify and qualify exactly what the
17 money was spent on, I think that would
18 be helpful.

19 I want to take a point of
20 personal privilege and look at the order
21 of individuals who actually had
22 questions, so just be patient with me.

23 Councilman Allan Domb, I want
24 to call on you. Then I want to call on
25 Maria Quinones-Sanchez. Then Katherine

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2 Gilmore Richardson and Isaiah Thomas. I
3 apologize for the mix-up in the order.

4 Councilman Domb.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Councilman?

6 I'm sorry. This is Cindy Bass.

7 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yes.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I just
9 wanted to say one thing real quick just
10 to wrap up, and that is a point that
11 Councilman Jones made yesterday in
12 reference to the amount we're spending
13 on bike lanes and such here in the City
14 of Philadelphia. And as a supporter of
15 bike lanes, I went back and just
16 double-checked to see what are we
17 spending.

18 And the most recent information
19 I found was from two years ago, which
20 said that in 2018 we had a commitment of
21 \$60 million over five years. Now, I
22 know that those numbers have probably --

23 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: How --

24 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: That's a
25 very robust commitment to safe streets

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2 and bike lanes. And so, I have not seen
3 anything close to that from the
4 Administration on gun violence. And I
5 just wanted to make that point for the
6 record, Mr. Chairman.

7 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Excuse me.
8 For the record, did you say 60 million?

9 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: 60 million
10 is the number I found in an article by
11 PlanPhilly, which I will be happy to
12 forward to you.

13 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: And Black
14 and Brown children are dying on a
15 day-to-day basis. And how much is our
16 budget as it relates to violence
17 prevention?

18 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I just
19 heard Vanessa mention something around
20 10 million. Vanessa, is that correct,
21 that it was 10 million this year?

22 MS. GARRETT-HARLEY: That's
23 correct. It was just 10.9 million in
24 FY20. That's just the Office of
25 Violence Prevention's budget. There is

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2 other additional funds that are being
3 spent that come out of the Department of
4 Human Services and that may be
5 inclusive -- there are other agencies
6 within the City who have components of
7 violence prevention. But around 10
8 million is what was coming out of the
9 Office of Violence Prevention.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I think
11 without a comprehensive look at it, out
12 of all of the money that we're spending,
13 it really does not connect. It doesn't
14 help us at all if everybody's working in
15 silos, and we know how much we had
16 planned in 2018 to spend on making
17 streets safer and calmer and all of
18 that. But it feels obviously very
19 disjointed when we're talking about
20 Black and Brown lives and saving those
21 in the community.

22 So thank you, Mr. Chairman.

23 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Before I
24 call on Allan Domb, I want to try to
25 keep this flowing but I'll just follow

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2 up on this one last thing.

3 Vanessa, I do remember when you
4 were hired, and I played a major role in
5 advocating for this office, there was
6 supposed to be a report done. When you
7 say that there are other programs
8 besides the Office of Violence
9 Prevention, which you are correct, I
10 remember that there was supposed to be a
11 report of all the funding that's spent
12 as it relates to violence prevention
13 because folks would say, oh, it's
14 Department of Human Services and so
15 forth and other agencies, and it was
16 supposed to be an outside consultant
17 that was supposed to come in to actually
18 do a study on where the money is coming
19 from and how the money is being spent.
20 Can you follow up on that, please,
21 because I remember that was a part of
22 the process?

23 MS. GARRETT-HARLEY: You are
24 correct, there was a report done that
25 was issued. I will make sure that you

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2 get another copy of it that did include
3 the list of all the programs that we
4 were able to determine based on what was
5 there. That was something that was
6 worked on and we have provided it. I
7 will provide it again and we can go over
8 it again.

9 We will also get you the other
10 detailed information you're asking for
11 in terms of where the money is spent
12 programmatically and how we can quantify
13 what services have been rendered to
14 date. We will get that to you as soon
15 as we can.

16 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you
17 very much.

18 Councilman Allan Domb.

19 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
20 Chairman Johnson. And I just want to
21 echo my colleagues' sentiments around I
22 guess accountability.

23 And I just have a few questions
24 for you, Mr. Pride. And, that is, in
25 Fiscal Year '21, the office got about

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2 9.3 million down from 10.7 in Fiscal
3 Year '20. The detail that I found is
4 that 3 million was in personnel cost
5 which are 10 members in the office, and
6 the remaining amount goes to the DA's
7 Office and the courts, and 6.2 million
8 in contracts largely going through Urban
9 Affairs Coalition. And the only
10 performance measure I could find is one
11 related to Youth Violence Prevention
12 program and the stated goal in the
13 budget is reducing the number of youth
14 homicides in each district.

15 So I guess the overall question
16 I have is it's important to have the
17 accountability, but it might be even
18 more important before we go down the
19 path of accountability is that we have
20 goals for every area where we're
21 spending money. As an example, do we
22 know the goal -- every time we have a
23 contribution and put in a program, is
24 there a goal, is there targets and
25 measures of success before we do it so

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2 we know how we can measure it?

3 Right now we're asking you for
4 the measurements of what happened, but
5 it should happen in the beginning before
6 we even put the money into the program.
7 What is our goal there? What's the
8 target? What are we looking for? How
9 do we measure that money that we invest?
10 I will say this, if this was all of our
11 personal money, no one would be spending
12 money this way, no one. We have to view
13 it that way. So can you provide that
14 answer for me? This isn't just your
15 department. I would say that this is
16 across the board that we don't do this
17 the right way.

18 MR. PRIDE: Councilmember,
19 thank you. And again, that's a timely
20 question and it goes back to again what
21 Councilmember Bass was asking about in
22 terms of accountability. And we are --
23 as Vanessa said with the report that we
24 released around the community-based
25 violence prevention funding back in 2018

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2 of December, we highlighted that as a
3 major concern and one that would help us
4 advance our efforts if we came together
5 and really identified what are the best
6 metrics to use to set performance
7 measures for our violence prevention
8 funding.

9 With the money that we have at
10 the Office of Violence Prevention, with
11 our Community Crisis Intervention
12 Program, much like Councilmember Chair
13 Johnson just mentioned in terms of the
14 need to collect data around what those
15 outreach workers are doing, who they're
16 contacting, that is something that we
17 are looking at, not only for our
18 Community Crisis Intervention Program,
19 but for our other violence prevention
20 programs. We want to have more of a
21 systematic way that we go about setting
22 measures and seeing performance.

23 And so, certainly the shootings
24 and homicides are front and center on
25 any of the programs that we have. We

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2 want to see that for the lives touched
3 by those programs that those individuals
4 are not in harm's way. We obviously
5 want to see that if they're operating in
6 a particular area of the City, that
7 they're contributing to reductions in
8 the violence. But we want to go about
9 this in a very systematic way. We
10 staffed up in terms of having an inhouse
11 criminologist and data manager who is
12 helping us think through building
13 relationships with the appropriate
14 institutions and thinking through the
15 evaluation plans.

16 We are going back over that
17 2018 report and looking at the funding
18 that we identified across the
19 Administration and working with now to
20 further flush out the evaluation plan to
21 get our arms around how we're investing
22 money in regards to really making sure
23 that we're getting the outcomes that we
24 all want to see.

25 And so, I will personally tell

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2 folks again that we want to do more, we
3 want to provide more information. But
4 this was something coming into the role
5 in 2018, both Vanessa and I noticed was
6 a major concern and one that we needed
7 to get on top of, but there is a lot of
8 money that is being spent across the
9 Administration that has real value. We
10 want to do some more evaluation of it in
11 a systematic way so that we can really
12 highlight what the value is.

13 COUNCILMAN DOMB: I have a
14 question for you. Is there someone from
15 the Administration who is coordinating
16 this between all of the departments,
17 because there needs to be a
18 coordination, not just your department
19 which I appreciate, but it needs all
20 departments to work together?

21 MR. PRIDE: And that's
22 exact -- yes, so Office of Violence
23 Prevention, our office is certainly
24 helping with that. Again, we're using
25 Operation Pinpoint in the meeting that

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2 we have with our respective partners
3 across the Administration to formalize a
4 score card to kind of systematize the
5 data that we're collecting in regards to
6 the people and the places that we're
7 serving so that we can actually map in
8 realtime where are those services taking
9 place, where are they clustering, are
10 they clustering around the spots where
11 we see the rates of homicide and
12 shooting to be the greatest and are we
13 seeing as a result of that clustering of
14 services and supports a reduction. For
15 the individuals that we're working, are
16 we able to do some linking between one
17 agency serving someone and another
18 agency also having contact with that
19 individual.

20 And as Vanessa mentioned, when
21 we think about the Department of
22 Behavioral Health and the services that
23 they offer, we know that there's
24 limitations in regards to information
25 that can be shared, but we are trying to

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2 look at where our services and supports
3 are being offered so we can see again in
4 more realtime are we making the impact
5 that we want. And we don't want this to
6 be academic.

7 We feel the pain of this. We
8 want this to be real. We want this to
9 be impactful. We want to measure it.
10 We know if it's not measured, it's not
11 managed. But the reality is there was a
12 number of programs that's already been
13 mentioned that were kind of doing good
14 work, but it wasn't in a way that we
15 would compare apples to apples and
16 oranges to oranges.

17 We are trying to build out a
18 plan now in a way through our data
19 collection and our work to better assess
20 these in a way that really tells us what
21 we get for what's invested. And so, we
22 will continue to push on that and get,
23 Vanessa said, you all more of an update.
24 We publish a quarterly update right now
25 on the Roadmap.

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2 Obviously, with the last one in
3 January, we need to put out another one.
4 We need to show more of those numbers.
5 We post that information on our website.
6 We need to make a better job and give
7 that to Council directly so you have
8 more of that information in terms of
9 everything that's done in terms of
10 gridding our plots and our addressing
11 environmental concerns as well as the
12 individual services and programs that
13 are offered in addition to the numbers
14 that are served directly by the programs
15 that we manage like the Community Crisis
16 Intervention Program.

17 And again, there is numbers
18 there that we have and we will able to
19 provide you a full report. And my
20 personal apology for not having more of
21 that for you today.

22 COUNCILMAN DOMB: I appreciate
23 that. Look, I have two last comments
24 and I need quick answers from you. Who
25 is the person in the Administration that

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2 is coordinating all these efforts among
3 all the different departments?

4 MR. PRIDE: Well, it's a team
5 effort, but I'm certainly one of those
6 individuals along with my colleagues
7 here to do that work through the Office
8 of Violence Prevention and really the
9 public safety and criminal justice
10 cluster has really been tasked with that
11 assignment of coordinating all these
12 efforts. And again, we use the
13 structure that we have in place in terms
14 of the Executive Implementation Team
15 that has the heads of the departments
16 and agencies that are involved in this
17 work, and that's laid out in our Roadmap
18 in terms of government structure. And
19 we also have a weekly tactical team
20 meetings of senior leadership that stay
21 on top of this work. But again, that is
22 really tasked to Office of Violence
23 Prevention, Public Safety, Criminal
24 Justice cluster.

25 COUNCILMAN DOMB: I have no

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2 idea -- if I want to pick up the phone
3 and call someone and say to them, what
4 we're doing is not working, who is that
5 person?

6 MR. PRIDE: Well, you're
7 talking to one of them. We hear you
8 loud and clear on that in terms of, you
9 know, it's not that it can't work. But
10 we know that the numbers are not turning
11 in the direction, so we would certainly
12 say that it's not working as of now.
13 But what we have in place -- and the
14 City of Philadelphia has a lot to be
15 proud of in terms of the programs and
16 the institutions that are here. There
17 is good work here. We need to tell the
18 story of what is working. We have seen
19 some of the success in some areas. But
20 we know right now it's not going in the
21 direction that it needs to be.

22 Councilmember, I am one of those people.

23 COUNCILMAN DOMB: I appreciate
24 that. And let me just say this, I would
25 like to see you come back to this

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2 Council with a new coordinated plan that
3 shows all of the things we're talking
4 about, because I don't believe what
5 we're doing now is working that well,
6 okay. We need a new plan that shows
7 targets, goals, measurements and then
8 come back to us with that group and let
9 us know who's in that group because what
10 we're doing now is just not working, and
11 we want to work with you.

12 Look, this is a team approach.
13 Together everyone achieves more. We
14 have to stop this. This is important
15 stuff. We need to stop this now. So
16 I'll stop there and thank you for being
17 here today.

18 Thank you, Chairman, for having
19 this so important meeting that we need
20 to have.

21 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you,
22 Councilman Domb.

23 Councilwoman Maria Quinones-
24 Sanchez and Councilwoman Katherine
25 Gilmore Richardson. Then Councilman

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2 Isaiah Thomas and then Councilman Mark
3 Squilla.

4 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ:

5 Thank you so much to the Chairs and to
6 all my colleagues.

7 And to Vanessa and the entire
8 team, what you hear is a sense of
9 frustration because those of us who have
10 to go face these families every single
11 day after every strategy, it is hard to
12 explain to them the nuances and the lack
13 of intersection between the different
14 departments. Just to put this into
15 context, this is exactly how the
16 challenges we saw when we were working
17 on the Poverty Plan, departments
18 operating in silos and not being held
19 accountable to what their goals are
20 around poverty and how they're impacting
21 neighborhoods which is at the root of
22 what we're discussing today.

23 To Vanessa and her entire team,
24 if you do not have the ability to hold
25 departments accountable for these

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2 additional services and programs, if
3 those departments are not held
4 accountable, \$10 million is a drop in
5 the bucket for the 750 million we spent
6 on police, for the 250 million we spent
7 on prisons. As long as these
8 investments -- and folks we have to
9 start changing the terminology about how
10 we talk about this.

11 These are not expenses. We are
12 filling the gap for the lack of
13 investment in people and education and
14 our neighborhoods, and that's what we
15 are living now. This violence is a
16 result of our lack of investment in
17 people. And today we feel -- I did
18 interviews yesterday with the press and
19 I couldn't say with all confidence that
20 we had our hands wrapped around this
21 situation, that we had a clear path. I
22 couldn't say that to the press when
23 asked what do I say to my constituents.

24 What we're trying to get to is
25 a place where we have a shared agenda

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2 about the types of investments we're
3 going to make. I did not hear police
4 realignment yesterday from the
5 Commissioner. We have the Police
6 Department doing a million different
7 things, trash, this, neighborhood
8 quality-of-life issues. And I didn't
9 see a focus investment on clearance
10 rate, on policing which should be their
11 job, and I have not heard the
12 Administration talk about that
13 realignment.

14 What we have here is, and the
15 Violence Office cannot isolate itself
16 from departments. How many of the
17 people that you're servicing are in
18 other systems? How many are
19 DHS-related? How many are in our CUA
20 system? How many of them are in our
21 Behavioral Health system? Because your
22 inability to provide more assistance to
23 these people is a failure of those kids,
24 those young people and families already
25 in other systems that are failing them.

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2 So we cannot hold you responsible. The
3 Administration, and I think to
4 Councilman Domb's point, to all of my
5 colleagues' points, if gun violence is a
6 priority for this Administration, then
7 every department has to talk the talk.

8 Focused deterrence by itself is
9 not going to deal with gun violence.
10 It's going to pinpoint where certain
11 investments and gaps are, but it
12 requires federal intervention at a
13 level, that again I did not hear that
14 yesterday from our public safety
15 officials saying, we're going to hold
16 the federal government responsible for
17 those cases, the state. And I know
18 Attorney General Shapiro and other folks
19 have been doing stuff. But I didn't
20 hear enough clarity, right, that at
21 those tables we were going to share the
22 responsibility around some of these
23 things.

24 And we have to be clear that
25 \$10 million, whatever we put in this

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2 office, it should be for coordination of
3 services we are providing. I didn't
4 hear there's going to be money set aside
5 for rental assistance, clear cut, that
6 if we have to move these families caught
7 in these situations, that that money is
8 going to be at the table. I want to
9 hear that from Liz when I talk to Liz.
10 I want to hear it from Cynthia Figueroa
11 when we talk to Cynthia Figueroa.

12 I want them telling us that
13 those departments are prioritizing this
14 like they should be prioritizing
15 poverty, because we will sit here a year
16 from now and we will have a discussion
17 where we know focused deterrence success
18 is based on us providing different
19 interventions, not a police intervention
20 to what's going on in the street. And
21 so, that is not Vanessa's responsibility
22 or this team's responsibility.

23 The Administration has to
24 empower Vanessa to make sure that those
25 departments -- because you can produce a

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2 data-driven report, but who's going to
3 hold DHS responsible for a kid in their
4 system that ends up getting shot? Who's
5 going to hold Behavioral Services
6 responsible for a kid in trauma services
7 who didn't get the services they needed,
8 that intervention, who then ends up
9 being a victim of violence?

10 Folks, we got to think about
11 this differently. Our terminology has
12 to change. It has to be about investing
13 in people. It has to be about
14 recognizing the institutional and
15 structural racism and disparity and
16 investment by every single department if
17 we're going to tackle this. But to sit
18 here and say that a \$10 million-funded
19 office, that the entire circle is based
20 on criminal justice and that we're then
21 investing in people, we're setting
22 ourselves up for failure from the
23 beginning. So you're going to have this
24 kind of frustration amplified a year
25 from now if Vanessa and her team doesn't

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2 have real access to those resources to
3 provided the kind of intervention these
4 families need.

5 And so, I want to hear from
6 Vanessa who is not at her table that she
7 knows, because she was DHS Commissioner,
8 Vanessa, I'm going to put you on the
9 spot here a little bit. You were DHS
10 Commissioner. What are the one or two
11 or three things right now that are out
12 of your control that you know are
13 critical to happening and how do we help
14 support that? And that includes the
15 courts. We talked about the courts
16 yesterday and their lack of
17 accountability. But where else, because
18 I did not hear a realignment from the
19 Police Commissioner yesterday. I did
20 not hear a realignment strategy with the
21 DA's Office. And here we are now having
22 a conversation, creating another silo
23 when it has to be all-hands-on-deck
24 approach.

25 So, Vanessa, what do you need

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2 so that you can connect these dots and
3 these numbers and we know who to hold
4 accountable moving forward?

5 MS. GARRETT-HARLEY: So I think
6 collaboration is the key, you're
7 absolutely right. We have to do a
8 better job of working on all of this
9 stuff together, and that means all of
10 our law enforcement partners.

11 Obviously, we work very closely with
12 Police. We are definitely trying to
13 align around Operation Pinpoint and the
14 new strategy that Commissioner Outlaw
15 has detailed we're working there. But
16 it has got to be working together, the
17 Police, the District Attorney's Office,
18 the Courts, everybody, all of us,
19 Probation, all of us.

20 I think you pretty much have
21 invited everybody who would be a part of
22 this puzzle or Councilman Johnson has
23 done a good job in inviting them to
24 speak at these hearings today, but we do
25 have to get a synergy. The Group

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2 Violence Intervention that we're talking
3 about is one of the places where we do
4 all come together and we're trying to
5 work on this, but that's very new.

6 Quite frankly, most of the
7 interventions we're talking is very new.
8 I took this job along with Theron at the
9 end of 2018, so to speak. So in about
10 two years we've been trying to build the
11 department up which was very small. The
12 Office of Violence Prevention didn't
13 start until 2017 and tried to get these
14 programs and things on board, but it is
15 about bringing in all City services.

16 As part of the Roadmap, we do
17 have the leadership of all of the
18 various City agencies at the table. But
19 again, we're still working on
20 coordinating those efforts and trying to
21 get everybody where you stand. You're
22 right, we do have to do a little better
23 job of laying out what the metrics are
24 in terms of goals and metrics for
25 individual agencies and how they all

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2 come together in terms of working on the
3 gun violence --

4 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ:

5 So, Vanessa, what you see today with the
6 young people that you are working with,
7 how many of them are receiving other
8 services from our other departments? If
9 you don't have concrete numbers,
10 anecdotally -- young people who get in
11 trouble, when they get in trouble with
12 the Police Department, they've been in
13 other systems.

14 How many and how are you going
15 to be able to hold those systems
16 accountable to the right intervention
17 strategies to those young people?

18 MS. GARRETT-HARLEY: I don't
19 have concrete numbers. I can say
20 anecdotally you're right, many of these
21 young people have been in trouble
22 before. Often, many of the people who
23 are no longer considered juveniles but
24 they had juvenile-justice issues, so to
25 speak, before they graduated to the

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2 level of crime that they're in, we
3 definitely want to intervene with them.
4 We certainly are trying to do more
5 efforts and will be doing more efforts
6 coming out of the public safety cluster
7 to work on more of the juvenile justice
8 issues, because you're right, it is a
9 trajectory sometimes these kids are on.
10 Many of these kids have received
11 services or their families have from the
12 Behavioral Health system as well.

13 We do try to do some mapping
14 and overlay in terms of trying to see
15 what other touchpoints people have with
16 the system. It's one of the reasons
17 that I created the Office of Re-entry
18 Partnerships because we do understand
19 that can we look at these and see why
20 didn't we do a better job and could we
21 have done a better job at other
22 touchpoints that people had with the
23 system throughout.

24 And one of the keys to this
25 violence as far as I'm concerned is also

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2 what we do with re-entry. Most of the
3 people who shoot, it's not their first
4 time having done so. Most of these
5 homicides are not committed by people,
6 that this is the first time that they
7 committed a crime. And so, what were
8 the interventions that we took while
9 they were involved in the other systems
10 is very important. And so, that is some
11 of the work that we're trying to do.

12 We're just beginning to work
13 with the Department of Human Services
14 around doing evaluations around some of
15 the violence prevention programs that
16 they have, and those are dollars that
17 are not counted in the 10 million or so
18 I told you for Office of Violence
19 Prevention, but it is to see how
20 effective they are. We really do have
21 to do a better job of determining what
22 is an effective program and what is not
23 an effective program. And some of that
24 is also about holding the private
25 providers accountable in terms of what

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2 we're providing. But in fairness to
3 them, we have to let them know from the
4 beginning what the expectation level is.
5 So you're right, it is about setting
6 goals and it is about setting metrics
7 and then try to see how we meet them.

8 We're also trying to work with
9 the academic institutions in the City to
10 do a better job of bringing in
11 independent evaluators. We are at final
12 negotiations stage for an independent
13 evaluator for our GVI. We also have
14 funding set aside this year to have a
15 community crisis intervention evaluator.
16 We're working with Cure Violence who
17 actually offered the model out of
18 Chicago, who has come and done a
19 preliminary audit of our program and
20 they are pointing out ways that we need
21 to change or improve, so it is
22 collaboration. These agencies have got
23 to work together. And we, as a system,
24 meaning the entire criminal justice
25 system and that includes everybody,

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2 District Attorney's, Courts, Violence
3 Prevention, Police, all of us have to
4 learn how to work in synergy together
5 and we are trying to work with our
6 federal and state partners as well.

7 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I just
8 want to chime in and just take a moment
9 of personal privilege, somebody has
10 asked me when I see a state of emergency
11 as it relates to the City of
12 Philadelphia, what does that look like,
13 right. And for me, a state of emergency
14 is this, right. And I'm not the guy
15 running the whole ship, but I'm just
16 going to be upfront, right, because we
17 are seeing so many young people dying on
18 a day-to-day basis. A state of
19 emergency is marshalling, right, every
20 major senior City agency, right, in a
21 war room, right, and we meet once weekly
22 with metrics, benchmarks, what's
23 working, what's not working because it's
24 a state of emergency, right.

25 Similar to when we just had

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2 this pandemic, it was a press conference
3 every single day, we need to stop the
4 looting downtown, we need help. People
5 called to give credibility to the
6 Administration to try to stop the young
7 people from tearing up the City. But
8 that's the level of urgency of
9 marshalling all of our resources
10 together to address this issue, and I
11 think that's what we're looking for.
12 That's the type of leadership the City
13 needs right now as it relates to young
14 people that we're seeing dying, women
15 that we're seeing dying on a day-to-day
16 basis.

17 And so, it has to be -- and I'm
18 going to be quite frank when I say this,
19 we'll have to have a higher level of
20 conversation about the direction we're
21 going into as it relates to the City,
22 because at the end the day, we're on the
23 front line doing what we're supposed to
24 be doing. But we don't feel the overall
25 level of urgency when it comes to

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2 addressing this issue with everyone.

3 At the end of the day, we
4 provide the budget so there's no reason
5 that the DA, the Police, if they're not
6 going to work together and everybody is
7 going to work in silos, then at the end
8 of the day if people don't fall in line,
9 right, then they should be held
10 accountable, because we're measured. So
11 I just wanted to put that out there for
12 the record. It's not all on the Office
13 of Violence Prevention. I just want to
14 say it's just not all on the Office of
15 Violence Prevention. We're talking
16 about overall, the whole system.
17 Everybody that receives funding in their
18 budget from members of Council and from
19 the City, they all should be at the
20 table marshalling all of their resources
21 so we can address this issue, because we
22 have to talk to the mothers and fathers,
23 we have to talk to the children who have
24 lost their loved ones on a day-to-day
25 basis, and it's constant.

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2 For the most part, I think most
3 of us on here still live in the
4 neighborhood so we can't get away from
5 it. We all got to go and address it.
6 And so, I just wanted to say that just
7 for the record.

8 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ:

9 Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't want to
10 take up any more of the time. But I
11 will end with this, again this is not
12 going to be successful if we are not
13 investing in people. Those departments
14 are not part of the Public Safety
15 cabinet and they should not be part of
16 the Public Safety cabinet, but they have
17 to be held accountable to making the
18 right investments and interventions with
19 our families. And if you, Vanessa, and
20 your team do not have real access to
21 that, you're not going to be successful
22 and they're setting you up for failure.
23 Thank you.

24 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

25 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you.

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2 Councilmember Katherine Gilmore

3 Richardson.

4 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

5 RICHARDSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

6 I quickly want to echo the
7 sentiments of my colleagues and put on
8 my Councilmember Jones' hat and say we
9 can't continue to do the same things and
10 expect different results. And also, an
11 ounce of prevention is worth a pound of
12 cure. So I want to focus and pivot to
13 talk about the workforce development
14 aspect in coordination of your work,
15 primarily because when I'm in the
16 streets talking to young people and as a
17 former teacher who is still connected to
18 a lot of my young people, the one thing
19 that I hear all the time no matter what
20 section of the City I'm in they say, you
21 got a job for me, can you hook me up
22 with a job. Everyone asks for a job
23 opportunity.

24 So how are you working within
25 the framework of the Roadmap to Safer

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2 Communities wherein some of the
3 recommendations were focused around
4 connecting youth and young adults at
5 high risk for violence with education?
6 That includes adult education, paid
7 training and employment opportunities.
8 And I know that that's not the short-
9 term solution, but it is a longer-term
10 solution that I think we need to focus
11 on because a lot of this is that a lot
12 of our young people have been
13 unsuccessful in connecting with those
14 family-supporting and job-sustaining
15 opportunities that will keep them
16 hopefully out of these situations.

17 So can you speak to how your
18 office works with other offices, and if
19 you've seen any results from your
20 Roadmap to Safer Communities around paid
21 training and employment opportunities
22 for young people?

23 MR. PRIDE: Thank you for the
24 question. And, yes, workforce is
25 something that's key to the work. As

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2 you all know, unfortunately our Office
3 of Workforce Development was cut, but
4 they were at the table helping us think
5 through a transitional jobs program that
6 was also cut as a result of the budget.
7 But we have retained some staff from
8 that office who continue to help us
9 think through the partnerships in the
10 City to look at what Vanessa alluded to
11 in terms of CEO Philadelphia Works,
12 CareerLink and other providers that will
13 help us piece together opportunities for
14 individuals 16 to 34, who we know are
15 most likely to be the victims of
16 violence or the perpetrators, and we are
17 focused on trying to find ways to help
18 them be job-ready and also find them
19 employment opportunities as Vanessa said
20 through both the Group Violence
21 Intervention and with our Community
22 Crisis Intervention Program. We're
23 always concerned about trying to get to
24 the highest-risk individuals and offer
25 them opportunities.

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2 And if I can just say too, that
3 is also why we are revising the plan.
4 We are updating it to reflect the fact
5 that we know that we have to change
6 because the Office of Adult Education is
7 no longer in existence. And so, we're
8 again working our way through how to
9 pivot and build in the support that we
10 already identified in the Roadmap and
11 make sure we still have the capacity to
12 stay focused on all of that work.

13 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

14 RICHARDSON: So my question to you then
15 is how are we tracking this data and
16 information specifically around the
17 coordination that your office is doing
18 around how many young people have been
19 able to receive employment opportunities
20 as a result of your office's level of
21 coordination, which I think is in
22 partnership but it's different than some
23 of the other workforce development work
24 that is happening with a CareerLink or
25 CEO or some of the other organizations.

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2 So how are you all tracking the work
3 that you actually coordinate and how
4 many people you're able to assist?

5 MR. PRIDE: So with the
6 Community Crisis Intervention Program
7 and that partnership we have with the
8 Urban Affairs Coalition and the
9 Philadelphia Anti-Drug Anti-Violence
10 Network, we are working with them to
11 track again the engagements that CCIP
12 has and we need to do a fuller job of
13 looking at the outcomes of those
14 referrals but we are looking at who they
15 contacted, what's been offered.

16 And in regards to our Group
17 Violence Intervention which was recently
18 launched, we've built out a tracker so
19 that we can again see who was notified
20 as part of the intervention, what
21 service they requested, did we get them
22 connected, and if we got them connected,
23 we plan to look at the outcomes of
24 whatever agency we connected them to, to
25 see whether or not they in fact had

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2 their needs met.

3 So we're building out a tracker
4 to do that out of Group Violence
5 Intervention. And as part of our work
6 in terms of going back to the
7 conversation about accountability, we
8 are doing just that to build out a very
9 clear set of data that we want to track
10 across the program. It's not only in
11 OVP but into the other agencies so that
12 we can get a better handle on that
13 because that is absolutely important.

14 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

15 RICHARDSON: So just for the record
16 though, it's more of a referral service
17 out of our office as it relates to
18 workforce development and employment
19 opportunities; is that correct?

20 MR. PRIDE: That is correct,
21 yes.

22 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

23 RICHARDSON: Okay. So I definitely want
24 to follow up offline because I think
25 there's a synergy around coordinating

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2 with the Office of HR within the City
3 and there's additional things that we
4 can do to ensure that we are creating
5 more of a pipeline for direct employment
6 opportunities within the City and then
7 other positions across other
8 organizations.

9 My next question is, and I
10 heard this at Councilmember Johnson's
11 rally at City Hall the other day, and I
12 was listening intently to what some of
13 the young people were saying. And one
14 thing I heard is that we are not
15 listening to the dialogue on the ground
16 and really hear and coming out of our
17 offices and getting out of City Hall and
18 MSB and wherever your office is, to
19 listen to young people and let them have
20 their voices heard on exactly what they
21 need.

22 What I heard was that we are
23 all academics and have gone to school
24 and have studied and we're utilizing our
25 academic background and anecdotal

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2 evidence to try to come up with
3 solutions for young people who are
4 living this each and every day. So how
5 do you interface with and get those
6 first-person accounts and on-the-ground
7 dialogue with young people who are
8 living through this violence each and
9 every day, and we all are, we're all in
10 the neighborhood, we're all in the
11 community like Councilmember Johnson
12 stated? But how are you talking to
13 young people who are affected on the
14 ground?

15 MR. PRIDE: Well, first of all
16 in my career, I started off as a social
17 worker at the schools before I was even
18 a lawyer. And I've heard directly in a
19 lot of this work myself in terms of
20 those concerns. But Shondell can speak
21 again to what we're doing with the
22 Community Crisis Intervention Program
23 and even his time out in the community.
24 Shondell?

25 MR. REVELL: What we try to

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2 focus on is being out in the community
3 building relationships. So my office is
4 out there, I'm out there constantly, not
5 just to have a rally, but just to kind
6 of talk to the individuals in the
7 community and hear what they have to
8 say. But through the Crisis
9 Intervention Program, we set up a number
10 of interactions as we call them with the
11 youth. It can be a simple conversation
12 on the corner or it can be a structured
13 focus group just to kind of hear what
14 they have to say.

15 From that conversation, then we
16 try to address their needs, whether it's
17 employment, whether it's a simple
18 conversation with their home life. Just
19 the other day at the rally, we met a
20 young man who was homeless so we were
21 able to get him into some type of
22 housing, so it's that type of
23 interaction, I think, that goes a long
24 way. And if we don't follow up on the
25 youth and don't have that support piece,

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2 it's not going to work. So you have to
3 be out there touching people.

4 I'm in the community
5 constantly. I do follow-ups to
6 ride-outs 2:00 in the morning with the
7 Crisis because I want to keep that feel
8 of the community. I don't want to be in
9 the office and not know and not feel
10 what the community is saying so I can
11 make the adjustments for change. So
12 thank you for the question. I think
13 it's very important, and we can
14 definitely get those touchpoints to you.
15 We have them. We can get the
16 touchpoints that the Community Crisis
17 Intervention workers make and also
18 Social Services Department through PAAN
19 make as well.

20 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

21 RICHARDSON: Sure. And that's what I
22 was going to ask, how do we track those
23 touchpoints to ensure that they are not
24 only meaningful, but successful, because
25 you're just one individual. But how are

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2 we tasking these organizations that your
3 office supports with ensuring that
4 they're actually on the ground and
5 working with young people in these
6 most-affected communities and throughout
7 the City of Philadelphia?

8 I think that's a large issue
9 that I continue to hear no matter where
10 we go, is that young people are feeling
11 like they're not being heard. There's a
12 certain level of frustration and pent-up
13 energy because they feel as though no
14 one is listening to them. So I wanted
15 to point out one recommendation in your
16 report that speaks to that around hiring
17 credible messengers to execute your
18 communication strategy.

19 Can you speak to that point in
20 your Roadmap to Safer Communities and
21 how you've implemented that strategy and
22 any results that you see as a result of
23 it?

24 MR. PRIDE: Well, at this
25 point -- thank you for the question. At

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2 this point our communications side, we
3 have not been able to directly hire
4 anyone as a credible messenger for that
5 communication, so we need to figure out
6 a way to use our social media to further
7 engage --

8 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

9 RICHARDSON: Pardon me for interrupting
10 you. But what I want to ask you is do
11 you have a communication strategy? What
12 is the communication strategy because in
13 your report that was released in January
14 2019, it states that one of your goals
15 is to hire a credible or hire credible
16 messengers, plural, to execute a
17 communication strategy. Because another
18 thing that I'm hearing from young people
19 is they're not listening to us. They're
20 not following our social media pages.
21 But they will listen to Awalo 267. I
22 saw people walking from Dilworth Park at
23 Councilman Johnson's rally the other
24 day, and I heard someone say, I only
25 came over here because I heard him. So

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2 they will listen to people like Awalo
3 267 and other influential members of our
4 community who have credible voices
5 around these issues.

6 So how are we working to try to
7 hire credible messengers to get out this
8 communication strategy, because it's one
9 thing to roll it out and put it on our
10 social media and access to share it.
11 But if the young people don't see, it's
12 not effective.

13 MR. REVELL: I think one thing
14 we have done is we work with our
15 community partners, so the Daryl
16 Shulers, the Ricky Duncans that have
17 different organizations and they help us
18 get our message out and they also check
19 us sometimes too, you know, this is not
20 going to work, what can we do different,
21 to try to keep the information new and
22 credible in the neighborhoods.

23 So in doing that, we are
24 looking to try to develop a strategy
25 where we can hire someone full-time that

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2 they can kind of deal with our social
3 media presence. But for now, we have
4 several partners out there, not only the
5 grant participants that we have, but
6 several community partners, trusted
7 partners, to help us get the message
8 out, to help incorporate their message
9 with our message to make sure that it's
10 aligned with the community.

11 MR. PRIDE: And this is also
12 something that the Public Health
13 Department is helping us with, so this
14 dates back to some things that they did
15 around the You Shoot Now What Campaign
16 and further building out messaging that
17 they know is impactful in terms of
18 behavior modification that speaks to the
19 audience that we know wanted to hear
20 this, so really figuring out what's that
21 message. And so, this is not just
22 something exclusive to the Office of
23 Violence Prevention, but that's a very
24 good point that you raised. And we want
25 to figure out a way that obviously

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2 connect with those influencers.

3 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

4 RICHARDSON: Thank you for your

5 responses. And I just want to circle

6 back around employment opportunities and

7 workforce development. I think that

8 will be a real piece of the puzzle that

9 we need to focus on because that's the

10 one thing that I continuously hear no

11 matter where I am in the City of

12 Philadelphia, that young people need

13 employment opportunities. We have to

14 cut through the barriers to ensure that

15 we are connecting them with employment

16 opportunities so we can get them in the

17 pipeline to employment and out of this

18 system and pipeline to prison. So thank

19 you so much and I will be following up

20 with your office.

21 MR. PRIDE: Thank you.

22 MR. REVELL: Thank you,

23 Councilperson.

24 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you.

25 Councilman Isaiah Thomas. Then

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2 Councilman Mark Squilla.

3 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank you,
4 Mr. Chairman. I can imagine how we're
5 doing on time, so I'm going to try to be
6 as brief as possible.

7 I just want to start with where
8 we left off yesterday. Councilmember
9 Jones had what I thought was a powerful
10 slide that talked about specific
11 incidents that were taking place on
12 Simpson Street. And so, for me I knew
13 that coming in today that we weren't
14 going to have a lot of positive
15 conversation. And if you listen to a
16 lot of the feedback from the public
17 based on our hearing yesterday, it
18 wasn't necessarily optimistic.

19 So I'm just trying to put
20 myself in your shoes and recognizing
21 that you have a very difficult job, and
22 I agree with a lot of my colleagues that
23 this isn't 100 percent on you, but you
24 had to come into today knowing that it
25 was going to be this type of atmosphere,

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2 and we haven't heard anything positive.

3 So I'm just wondering if you can just
4 take 30 seconds of my time to just tell
5 the public who are watching, who are
6 viewing this, who are looking for
7 solutions, you know, what it is that
8 you're doing that can give them some
9 level of hope so that they know that
10 this works.

11 I know Councilmember Bass
12 talked about specific numbers and
13 Councilmember Gauthier asked for those
14 specific numbers as well, so I get that
15 you don't have them. But I do recognize
16 that you had to have coming into today
17 knowing that this would be somewhat of
18 the atmosphere and have some type of
19 what we're doing, Philadelphia, so you
20 can have hope.

21 So can you take 30 seconds just
22 to tell us what that is that you came
23 with today? And then I just want to ask
24 a few yes or no questions before my time
25 is up.

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2 MR. REVELL: Well --

3 MR. PRIDE: Councilmember,
4 thank you for the question.

5 MR. REVELL: I'll start off by
6 saying this, in regards to the Simpson
7 Street shooting and all shootings across
8 the City, we try to mobilize our Crisis
9 teams, we try to contact the
10 organizations that are in the community,
11 like I said, I mentioned Daryl Shuler
12 and a couple of other organizations.
13 But we try to correspond with them to
14 see how we can mediate between the
15 organizations, groups, individuals that
16 are having these beefs.

17 We try to put more services in
18 the community as well. So not only
19 through DBH, but also through our Social
20 Service Department, we go door to door
21 sometimes, set a resource table up, give
22 out food. We try to really find out
23 information, the small things that's
24 happening on the corners, what's
25 happening on the block. Because if we

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2 can get to the small things and build
3 that relationship, then maybe we can
4 stop the next shooting from happening.

5 We try to look at it from a
6 perspective where I know there's
7 mistrust for the City, I know
8 communities need some help so how can we
9 build that relationship where they can
10 talk to us and we can find out exactly
11 what they need. Theron?

12 MR. PRIDE: So again, yes, and
13 I think you're absolutely right. And we
14 see this as a very important Committee
15 to have this platform and we thank you.
16 And we know people are looking for hope.
17 We know people are looking for guidance
18 around this. And we think it's a
19 collective effort. We don't see this as
20 just the Office of Violence
21 Intervention, but we think we've moved
22 the ball still further down the road
23 even though our homicide and shooting
24 numbers are not where we want them to
25 be. But we have been able -- because of

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2 the support and leadership from this
3 Committee and across the Administration,
4 we have been able to get to a place
5 where we're more coordinated, we're
6 talking about more evidence-based
7 programs, we're talking about more the
8 ability to be nimble and to be quick.
9 We know that we're not there.

10 We're not pleased at all with
11 the progress. But with the Group
12 Violence Intervention, we have a real
13 opportunity based on the work that we've
14 already done of bringing agencies
15 together to be more responsive to the
16 needs of the individuals who are at
17 highest risk. We've talked about this
18 in our Roadmap repeatedly, that the City
19 made investments in prevention but there
20 needed to be more done to really engage
21 those individuals who are at the highest
22 risk of this and through this work, we
23 are seeing a more narrowing of the focus
24 on that 16- to 34-year-old population,
25 particularly young and Black men who are

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2 often at the front and center of this
3 work, and that's a result of all of us
4 coming together to do this.

5 This is not easy. This is not
6 an easy lift. Since the Special
7 Committee on Gun Violence Prevention has
8 started, it has been pushing and moving
9 people closer and closer together to get
10 more of a coordinated plan. And as it's
11 already been mentioned, we're revising
12 and further updating based on the
13 knowledge that we're gaining. And this
14 is not just academic. This is people
15 who are on the ground, who are credible
16 in communities, informing the plan and
17 informing the work so that we build out
18 to more of a solution, but I absolutely
19 feel where people are coming from.

20 And again, going into this
21 conversation, we know this is a
22 difficult conversation but it's one that
23 we have to have, and we are going to
24 continue to keep pushing. And I will
25 keep coming before this Committee with

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2 better and better answers and results of
3 the work that we're doing as a hope
4 that we'll get to that point where we
5 see more of the progress, but this is
6 not something that we knew -- we knew
7 going into this work, we would not solve
8 this overnight. But we all have an
9 urgency to solve it.

10 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank you.
11 And again, I don't know if anyone feels
12 better after listening to that. I'm
13 just not sure.

14 Just a series of yes or no
15 questions: Number one, again just
16 referring back to Simpson Street, just
17 from being out there myself, has there
18 been any jobs that's provided to any
19 young people? I was out there and I
20 talked to a number of young people out
21 there. And like Councilmember Gilmore
22 Richardson, the number one thing I heard
23 from young people out there was jobs.

24 Has there been any follow-up
25 with the young people who were out there

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2 on Simpson Street last week who
3 requested jobs and some type of
4 employment support?

5 MR. REVELL: There has been.
6 Let me pull the numbers up. The numbers
7 I see, we met with six individuals who
8 requested jobs and we're in the process
9 of matching them up to services. I can
10 give you a follow-up in writing if you
11 need that, but those are the numbers I
12 have.

13 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Sure. I'll
14 follow up with the folks too, because I
15 hired somebody from Simpson Street
16 myself last week, so I'll be sure to see
17 what their assessment is of the work
18 that's being done so I would love to
19 hear from the people, so thank you.

20 One of the other things that
21 was said on Simpson Street that they
22 felt like would prevent some of the
23 issues that they're facing is speed
24 bumps. I'm wondering has there been any
25 progress with the people on that block

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2 as it relates to speed bumps? And I'm
3 also wondering, and you can say just yes
4 or no, and then in writing because I'm
5 sure you don't have the numbers right
6 now, can you also let us know other
7 areas across the City of Philadelphia
8 where people say that they have small
9 operational issues like speed bumps and
10 things of that capacity, that they feel
11 like will help the gun violence in their
12 neighborhood but has there been any
13 progress on that block as it relates to
14 the speed bump request that they had?

15 MR. REVELL: Councilman, I
16 can't answer the speed bumps question
17 yet.

18 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank you.
19 I appreciate it. You talked
20 about people ages of -- somebody talked
21 about 16 to 34. I'm thinking about the
22 fact that schools have already decided
23 that they're going to go all virtual and
24 that includes a lot of our local
25 universities. I'm wondering, again yes

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2 or no because we're short on time, have
3 there been any conversation as far as
4 coordination with maybe Cynthia Figueroa
5 or anybody from the Office of Children
6 and Youth to figure out what do we do to
7 make sure our young people's time is
8 occupied in a positive way?

9 This summer we knew the gun
10 violence was going up. And we can give
11 ourselves an F. You can put me on that
12 list as well too as it relates to how we
13 prepared our young people to have
14 positive activities during the
15 summertime, specifically thinking about
16 a pandemic. And so, I'm hoping we don't
17 make the same mistake again. September
18 can possibly be Summer 2.0, so I'm
19 wondering has there been any
20 conversation with you and any other
21 folks that's in this world of gun
22 violence prevention, specifically with
23 Cynthia Figueroa or the School District
24 around services that we can provide
25 youth during this pandemic?

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2 MR. PRIDE: Yes, we were part
3 of those conversations.

4 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: What are
5 the services?

6 MR. PRIDE: The services --
7 they're working on that right now in
8 terms of looking at what we have
9 available to make sure folks have a safe
10 space and structure while we know that
11 these kids are going to be doing virtual
12 learning.

13 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: So you're
14 telling me that you've been working with
15 Cynthia Figueroa/School District to make
16 sure that the young people have positive
17 spaces, I'm thinking about young people
18 specifically 13 and up, that they can
19 participate in come September because
20 there will be no school and no
21 athletics? So you're telling me that
22 there's already a conversation that has
23 taken place that's going to assure that
24 young people have positive activities to
25 occupy their time?

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2 MR. PRIDE: That is front and
3 center of the concerns that we have
4 going into this school year and that is
5 something that the coordinating body is
6 working on, yes. I don't have a
7 definitive in terms of what all that
8 will be, but those conversations are
9 happening, yes. That is a concern.

10 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Okay. So
11 my last thing, I just want to again echo
12 the sentiments of my colleagues around
13 the sense of urgency. I don't know if
14 you hear it from us. I don't know if
15 you hear it from the general public.
16 But I'm just going to be honest with
17 you, that's not the energy that we're
18 getting right now. I'm hearing a lot of
19 words like we're thinking through and
20 we're evaluating. And when you think
21 through and evaluate, there is no sense
22 of urgency, right.

23 When I'm in the midst of an
24 emergency, it's instincts. It's not
25 think through and evaluate. It's my

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2 instincts that take over that put me in
3 a position to respond in a way that's
4 going to save me and anybody around me
5 that's in a sense of urgency. So again,
6 this isn't personal at all. I promise
7 you it's not. But we've talked to folks
8 on a consistent basis. People are upset
9 and honestly so are we.

10 My last question before I
11 leave, I hear that there was a video of
12 the 7-year-old young man who was
13 essentially killed on his block. Have
14 folks actually watched that video? I
15 mean, because if you see that video, I
16 don't understand how the lack of energy
17 and information that we're receiving
18 right now translate to the pain and
19 suffering that those people went through
20 who witnessed that firsthand honestly,
21 as well as everybody else who had to
22 unfortunately watch that video and see
23 what happened to that young man. So
24 just again, yes or no.

25 And at this point, I'm done,

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2 Mr. Chairman, thank you for my time.

3 But please answer the question,
4 I'm wondering if folks actually watched
5 the video of what happened to that young
6 man?

7 MR. PRIDE: Thank you for the
8 question. I personally have not.

9 MR. REVELL: No.

10 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you.
11 Councilman Mark Squilla.

12 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you,
13 Mr. Chairman. And thank you,
14 colleagues, too. I'm not going to beat
15 a dead horse here. A lot of questions
16 have been asked.

17 I think two of the main things
18 that we heard, especially at the rally,
19 was that we're not listening to the
20 people that are on the street. And I
21 think that's the main thing, Colleague
22 Richardson said that, Thomas said that
23 and Councilman Johnson said that. I
24 think by listening to those young folks
25 speak at the rally really hits home to

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2 what we're missing. And I think the
3 collaboration coordination is just not
4 there. And we have to reach people
5 where they are.

6 And as elected officials, a lot
7 of times they don't want to hear these
8 things from us and they're not going to
9 listen to us. But they will listen to
10 these other young folks that are out on
11 the street trying to do the right thing.
12 I think we need to do a better job like
13 what Councilwoman Sanchez had said about
14 collaboration with these other groups
15 and organizing. If we're going to go
16 out there and really set the tone of
17 what violence prevention is, we need to
18 engage those folks too.

19 And just from listening to that
20 rally and hearing the passion of these
21 young people who really want to help,
22 let's use that energy. We know we have
23 a lot of work to do. You heard all of
24 the questions here. We have all of
25 these concerns. No, we're not going to

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2 beat the horse over and over again, but
3 we need to actually go there, get in
4 touch with these folks and have them in
5 the streets with these guys who will
6 listen to them.

7 And they may not listen to us,
8 but they will listen to them because
9 they know and they see what's happening
10 out there and they want to do the right
11 thing. So this is really just a comment
12 and I don't need many answers, but I
13 just hope that from this hearing we get
14 the passion and the energy to go there,
15 listen to these young folks, listen to
16 their concerns and needs, and then
17 include them in the process to help us.
18 So thank you for your time, and
19 hopefully, we'll continue to work on
20 this.

21 And thank you both, Chairs
22 Jones and Johnson, for bringing this to
23 light and keeping this process moving.

24 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you
25 very much.

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2 So before we wrap up, I'm going
3 to give Councilwoman Gauthier an
4 opportunity to ask her additional
5 questions as well as Councilwoman Cindy
6 Bass. If there's anyone who has any
7 last pressing comments before we go on
8 to our next panel, let me know. But we
9 also have some other very critical and
10 important panels that need to be
11 addressed, including the Office of
12 Probation and Parole as well as the
13 Philadelphia School District as well as
14 the Department of Behavioral Health as
15 well as the Health Department as well.
16 And most importantly, we also have the
17 public that have to testify today as
18 well, so I just want to state that for
19 the record.

20 Councilwoman Gauthier.

21 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank
22 you. First, I want to say that I
23 completely agree with you, Mr. Chair, on
24 how our City would be approaching this
25 if we thought this gun violence was an

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2 emergency. We would be mobilizing all
3 agencies toward solving this issue. We
4 would have frequent transparent update
5 to the public and we would be constantly
6 measuring our effectiveness. But I also
7 think it's very important to name that
8 that is a directive that can only come
9 from Mayor Kenney. He's the only one
10 that has the ability and the
11 responsibility to bring about that type
12 of response and I don't think it's going
13 to happen otherwise.

14 My question is around GVI. GVI
15 relies on identifying people who are a
16 part of groups involved in gun violence
17 activity. How are group members
18 identified and how can someone extract
19 themselves if they are mistakenly
20 identified?

21 MR. PRIDE: So we're working
22 with a National Network for Safer
23 Communities out of John Jay College of
24 Criminal justice who are the developers
25 of this model. They have that outlined

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2 in their implementation guide in terms
3 of the group audit and the individual
4 assessment and review of the incidents.

5 And the Police Department and the Law
6 Enforcement Group have been working on
7 that process, and that's also something
8 the Police Advisory Commission has
9 stated as a concern and an issue, and
10 the Commissioner has been clear in terms
11 of saying that they are going to work
12 with the PAC to make sure that there is
13 a clear process on how to handle that.

14 I don't have that information.
15 But again, thank you for the question.
16 But that's something that the police are
17 working on.

18 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: From a
19 civil rights perspective, I think -- I
20 want us to try GVI, right, especially in
21 my area. From a civil rights
22 perspective, I think it's important for
23 us to have those clear guidelines on how
24 people can extract themselves from being
25 identified as a part of a group. What

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2 is the timing on that?

3 MR. PRIDE: I'm sorry. I don't
4 have the timing. You would have to
5 follow up with Commissioner on that.
6 But I can tell you that the Law
7 Enforcement Work Group, that is
8 something that is a concern. And for
9 the reiteration here, this new launch of
10 GVI, we've made it a concerted effort to
11 make sure before law enforcement
12 actually is taken, that there's a review
13 of who are the members of that group, so
14 as to avoid precisely what you're
15 talking about.

16 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Okay.
17 And my last question is for you, Theron.
18 During your time with the Department of
19 Justice, what evidence-based models for
20 violence reduction have you seen that
21 you would bring to Philadelphia and what
22 could be the timeline for implementation
23 around those models?

24 MR. PRIDE: Well, thank you for
25 the question. And absolutely at the

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2 Department of Justice we saw that Cure
3 Violence and those violence interruption
4 models are effective, so that is
5 absolutely why we're partnering with
6 Cure Violence with our Community Crisis
7 Intervention Program. We saw
8 hospital-based intervention programs as
9 effective. That's always something that
10 Philadelphia has by way of Drs. Ted
11 Corbin and John Rich out of Drexel with
12 Healing Hurt People, you'll hear the
13 Department of Behavioral Health speak to
14 that, and jurisdictions that have an
15 office to help coordinate this work.

16 We found as a comprehensive
17 approach viewed by the OJJDP's, Office
18 of Juvenile Justice Delinquency
19 Prevention comprehensive model, was
20 something that again is what we
21 patterned in the Roadmap in terms of
22 this strategic plan. So there are
23 things there and we will continue to
24 again base what we do on the science and
25 evidence that departments like the

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2 Department of Justice put out.

3 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Is it
4 your opinion that we can go further on
5 bringing evidence-based models here and
6 fully rolling them out beyond pilot
7 phases?

8 MR. PRIDE: Yes. And the thing
9 about it is, no one wants to hear think
10 through and evaluate, but we also want
11 to be data-driven. And so, that's one
12 thing that we've learned even at the
13 federal level. Going back to
14 Councilmember Jones' point, you do have
15 to make sure that before you take
16 something to scale, you can see that it
17 is going to be worth that investment,
18 and so that is why there is some
19 thoughtful deliberative actions being
20 taken as we roll these things out. But,
21 yes, we can do this.

22 This is possible work for us to
23 do and there's already evidence-based
24 strategies that are on the ground that
25 we can begin to scale up, but we had to

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2 have the structure in place and this
3 Committee has been absolutely important
4 to that. You need a place where
5 everybody can come together and we can
6 get to a point where we're all
7 accountable and this Committee is
8 helping with that.

9 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank
10 you.

11 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you.
12 Councilwoman Bass.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you,
14 Mr. Chairman. Thank you, everyone.

15 I just have two things really
16 quick. I just want to go back to the
17 last statement about just really
18 thinking things through and we take our
19 time, we want to make sure that things
20 happen and before we launch a program to
21 scale, we want to make sure it's going
22 to be effective.

23 I guess my response to that is
24 that we didn't just get here yesterday.
25 And so, while we're still thinking and

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2 trying to figure this out, like I said
3 earlier there was a plan for how we're
4 going to reduce accidents and how we're
5 going to make streets calmer and safer
6 and how we're going to put bike lanes
7 into effect and all those kinds of
8 things, there was a plan. And it just
9 feels like there is no plan. There is
10 no way forward, no path forward for us
11 to address this. But I'm not going to
12 beat that dead horse any longer because
13 we just kind of keep going in circles
14 and in circles.

15 I did have a question for our
16 Chairman, and that is the First Judicial
17 District. And I didn't know if there
18 was going to be testimony or
19 conversation, and I know that their
20 conversation is likely limited because
21 they can't say what you would do in this
22 situation and what you would do in that
23 situation. But I do get the feeling
24 from the word on the street that there
25 are a lot of people who are on the

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2 streets who shouldn't be on the streets
3 for a lot of different reasons. And so,
4 is that going to be a part of our
5 conversation or can we add that?

6 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yes, we
7 have a representative from the
8 Department of Probation that deals
9 directly with juveniles, those who carry
10 guns, and he works specifically for the
11 First Judicial District so we do have a
12 representative here.

13 And also just for the record,
14 this is only the beginning, so I have a
15 follow-up date which we're going to be
16 doing callbacks so I'll make sure that
17 everyone has the date for the callbacks
18 and that we need to bring in additional
19 people to the Committee for an update
20 and also information, because we are in
21 a state of emergency. We have to
22 address this, it's urgent, so we want to
23 do a callback as well. But we do have
24 someone on the panel who can also speak
25 to what's taking place under First

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2 Judicial District.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. I
4 think that will be good. I think also
5 if we can include someone who is
6 directly responsible for sentencing, so
7 maybe the President Judge of Common
8 Pleas Court --

9 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON:
10 Absolutely.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: -- might be
12 someone that we could include. I think
13 that might be helpful to us.

14 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you,
16 Mr. Chairman.

17 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: So with
18 that being said, we are going to call
19 the next panel if there's no more last
20 pressing comments from any of my
21 colleagues.

22 (No response.)

23 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Okay.
24 Thank you for your participation,
25 Shondell, Theron and Vanessa.

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2 MR. PRIDE: Thank you.

3 MR. REVELL: Thank you.

4 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: And,
5 Joshu, can you please call the next
6 panel.

7 THE CLERK: Darlene Miller,
8 Faustino Castro-Jimenez, Kevin Bethel.

9 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Please
10 state your name, your position and begin
11 your testimony. I'm going to start with
12 ladies first so, Ms. Miller, can you
13 please start.

14 MS. MILLER: I sure can. Good
15 morning. My name is Darlene B. Miller
16 and I am the Chief of the Philadelphia
17 County Adult Probation and Parole
18 Department that is also known as APPD.
19 I thank you for this opportunity and it
20 gives me joy to be able to present to
21 you some information and I hope it
22 brings some clarity and answers some of
23 your questions. May I begin?

24 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yes, you
25 can.

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2 MS. MILLER: Okay. Thank you.

3 The Adult Probation and Parole
4 Department, also known as APPD, closed
5 its doors as a result of the COVID-19 on
6 March 16, 2020 at approximately 2:30.

7 As the Chief, I continued to work as our
8 building was closed to the public, but
9 the courts and APPD remained
10 operational.

11 As you know, there was a
12 tremendous push to have clients released
13 from custody, so detainer hearings which
14 are also known as Gagnon 1 hearings were
15 held and releases occurred for those who
16 were incarcerated. Our APPD staff
17 worked in CJC to address the Gagnon 1
18 hearings so that the proper entries
19 could be included into our case
20 management system so that we would be
21 able to report what actions were taken
22 on each individual case.

23 Directors and supervisors
24 worked to prepare these Gagnon 1
25 summaries, both from the office of 714

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2 Market Street as well as remotely, so
3 that the sitting judiciary had the
4 pertinent information to make their
5 decisions regarding those hearings. We
6 had staff working at 714 Market Street
7 because case initiations continued in
8 the office for those who were paroled so
9 that the proper notifications could be
10 made.

11 We have had staff present in
12 our building so that letters could be
13 sent to those clients that were being
14 released so that they could be informed
15 as to who their probation and parole
16 officers were and they would receive
17 instructions as it pertained to
18 reporting during this pandemic. There
19 were two types of letters sent during
20 this time. One letter was for those who
21 were completing a state confinement and
22 were now going to be under County
23 supervision. This letter notified the
24 client as to who their officer would be,
25 included their phone number, stated that

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2 the office was basically closed to the
3 public, but that the officer would be
4 reaching out to them.

5 The second type of letter that
6 was sent were those letters for
7 individuals who were paroled from County
8 custody incarceration, and we sent those
9 same exact letters to those individuals
10 as well. When many of our staff
11 returned back to the office in June, I
12 directed that a contact letter be sent
13 to all of our clients and those letters
14 gave instructions to what the reporting
15 of instructions would be and noted what
16 the COVID compliance requirements would
17 be once our officers, our clients began
18 reporting back.

19 I want you all to know that
20 voicemails were being addressed by
21 officers. There was a need for a
22 continuous update because during the
23 pandemic as we all know, there was also
24 the civil unrest that occurred. In
25 addition, our offices -- because our

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2 office at 714 is not owned by the
3 courts, it is a privately owned
4 building. And so, we're still having
5 safety measures installed into our
6 building. Safety measures such as
7 plexiglass and things of that nature to
8 ensure the safety of our clients as well
9 as our employees.

10 I also would like to note that
11 I personally worked every day and
12 fielded many calls and emails and
13 addresses and put that information into
14 our case management system. We have
15 many staff that continued to report to
16 work every day which includes myself the
17 Chief, the Deputy Chief, the Directors,
18 Supervisors, some noncase-carrying
19 Probation Officers, our Cognitive
20 Behavioral Therapy Trainers and our
21 Clerical staff. Our part-time staff has
22 been furloughed and they continue to be
23 furloughed at this point.

24 So that this esteemed group
25 will know, there's a total positions --

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2 we have 395 positions; 275 are probation
3 officers; 248 of those are case-carrying
4 officers; and we have 20 pre-sentence
5 investigators. Our current population
6 for your information, we have 22,882
7 active clients. We have 7,906 clients
8 in absconder status. If you combine
9 those numbers, we have a total
10 population of 30,788.

11 I would like to update you that
12 our probation and parole officers are
13 reporting to work in teams. We have
14 three teams, Team A, Team B and Team C.
15 These officers are working one to two
16 days a week and the other days they are
17 working remotely. They have access to
18 our case management system. Officers
19 are maintaining contact with clients via
20 phone calls, emails, texts and videos.

21 To date, our data shows that
22 from the period of March 2020 to the end
23 of July 2020, there were 59,157 entries
24 made into our case management system for
25 client supervision. There were 25,428

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2 contacts. 20,292 were phone contacts.

3 3,585 were text messages and 162 were

4 videos. When we moved towards talking

5 about the shootings which is so

6 important to each and every one of us,

7 our WRISS Report, which is a report,

8 it's W-R-I-S-S, and it's a report that

9 we get and it details shootings that are

10 non-suicidal and have no police

11 relation. They're not police shootings.

12 But the information that we get

13 shows that from January 1, 2020 through

14 August 9, 2020, there were 1,130 people

15 shot in Philadelphia County; 198 of

16 those which represents 17.5 percent were

17 fatal. There were 195 people shot that

18 were on probation that were victims.

19 They were the victims. That was 195

20 that were on probation were the victims.

21 42 of those which represents 21.5

22 percent were fatal. There were 152

23 people shot that had open bill, but not

24 everyone who has an open bill is under

25 supervision.

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2 For the period of March 20th to
3 July 2020, there was a total of 1,697
4 arrests. There were 163 for serious
5 charges and there was 1,534 for
6 nonserious charges. There was a total
7 of 2,342 warrants issued during this
8 pandemic. Because clients were not
9 reporting, precautions were taken and
10 warrants issued, which would be
11 addressed at the Gagnon 1 or what is
12 also known as a detainer hearing for
13 lifting or to be held. Clients released
14 were contacted by the supervising
15 officer for continued remote
16 supervision.

17 During this same period, there
18 were 141 clients that were victim
19 shootings. And 28 of those on probation
20 were fatal. I would like to let you
21 know in relation to APPD, which is the
22 Adult Probation and Parole Department,
23 understanding the seriousness of these
24 shootings and gun violence, the courts
25 and particularly APPD collaborated with

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2 GVI, the Gun Violence Intervention,
3 under the direction of Vanessa Garrett-
4 Harley.

5 On 8/1/2020, that was the first
6 day that the Customs Notification Team
7 went out. And I would like to report to
8 you all, my esteemed audience, that this
9 Chief went out personally with the
10 Customs Notification Team. We were out
11 in the community. I had the opportunity
12 to meet with two of the individuals who
13 were under direct supervision with the
14 Adult Probation and Parole Department.
15 We were able to provide information. I
16 did return back to my office and send
17 them job information. They have a
18 company, it's called J.P. Mascaro &
19 Sons. They hire sanitation workers
20 regardless of their criminal record. I
21 personally came back and contacted those
22 individuals and gave them that
23 information about positions that were
24 available.

25 We remain committed to this GVI

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intervention and I have two directors
and two supervisors who are also on the
teams. On that day when we were out
there in the various neighborhoods. I
got a call at approximately 6:50 that
evening from G. Lamar Stewart, who
informed me that we were right around
the corner doing our customs
notification from the shootings where
unfortunately Zamar Jones from Simpson
Street was killed, so we were directly
right around the corner. And we were
out in there and I'm happy to report
that I was a part of that.

When we go back to the
information, I'd like you to know from
the period of 12/5/2018 to July 18,
2020, there were 1,793 individuals
released at the Gagnon 1 or, if you
will, detainer hearing which represents
2,918 warrants being lifted. From the
period of June 20th to August 7th of
2020, there were 928 warrants issued.
That represents 492 individuals. At the

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2 Gagnon 1 hearings, 743 warrants were
3 held. 193 were lifted.

4 From the period -- just so that
5 you know that we did continue to work
6 through this pandemic contrary to
7 popular belief, it's not only important
8 to address warrants, we have cases that
9 were to expire because they were either
10 past expiration or on their natural
11 expiration date. I'd like to report
12 that during this period from March to
13 June, there were 1,295 cases that were
14 passed expiration and 27 natural
15 expiration and they were closed.

16 Now, our past expiration just
17 so that you know, when a case has a date
18 that is getting ready to expire, we wait
19 just a couple of days to ensure that we
20 can do an NCIC to make sure there are no
21 outstanding arrests that would turn out
22 to be a potential direct violation, but
23 those cases were closed. When we
24 reopened back in June, June 8th to July
25 31st, we continued to close cases. We

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2 closed 2,031 cases for natural
3 expiration and this is important so that
4 when we close these cases, warrants
5 cannot be issued if someone happens to
6 get arrested and we didn't get an
7 opportunity to close the case before the
8 arrest occurred. So we're really
9 pleased there's a record of us
10 continuing to close out these cases.

11 We have not reported full staff
12 back. Clients are not able to come into
13 the building as of yet. Our building --
14 we will reopen when the courts reopen to
15 the public. And as I stated earlier,
16 our building is not owned by the courts.
17 Our building is privately owned so we're
18 still waiting for -- our Administration
19 is doing their due diligence to ensure
20 that our officers are outfitted with the
21 necessary precautions to allow the
22 public for their safety and the safety
23 of our clients to come back into the
24 building. So we're working diligently
25 on that. Material is continuously being

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2 delivered. As a matter of fact, we are
3 having an expectation of more plexiglass
4 being delivered tomorrow. So we
5 continue to move forward. And I just
6 wanted you to know that through this
7 pandemic, Probation continued to work
8 and we're still working. That ends my
9 introduction and I'm available for any
10 questions.

11 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you
12 very much. I just have one question,
13 Ms. Miller. Can you just reiterate and
14 just clarify for me currently right now
15 during the pandemic how are we
16 monitoring those who are most violent to
17 carry a gun or commit a crime with a
18 gun?

19 I just want to get an idea from
20 you just for the record because it was
21 mentioned yesterday by the District
22 Attorney's Office that there was a
23 significant period of time there was no
24 interaction with Probation, Parole from
25 my understanding of the statement

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2 yesterday. And so, I also wanted to get
3 an idea because we have a pandemic and I
4 know usually the client would have to
5 come in, give a --

6 MS. MILLER: Yes, sir.

7 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: -- give a
8 urine. There's monitoring. There's
9 maybe other ways that they could be
10 helped. What does that look like right
11 now?

12 MS. MILLER: Thank you for that
13 question. It's unfortunate that in our
14 collaborative efforts with all of our
15 stakeholders, that finger-pointing
16 continues to occur and information be
17 presented that is not factual. Due to
18 the pandemic, it is true we do not have
19 individuals physically coming into the
20 building, again because we're not
21 equipped to do that. But we are
22 maintaining contact with all of our
23 clients and specifically as you know
24 with our high-risk individuals, so that
25 even during the pandemic when we were

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2 closed, supervisors and directors were
3 reaching out to the clients via phone,
4 via video, reaching out to family
5 members and their conversations were in
6 part, how are you doing, what's going
7 on, are you remaining crime-free, what's
8 happening.

9 One of the things that I
10 continue to state to my staff, this
11 pandemic has had a major impact on us,
12 can you imagine what it is doing to
13 those individuals who have found it
14 challenging to operate within the
15 criminal justice system. So we're
16 focused on trying to do what we can do
17 in what some would call a limited
18 capacity.

19 But it's totally untrue, sir,
20 that we are not reaching out, that we're
21 not doing things. True, we're not
22 bringing individuals in. We don't have
23 the capacity to bring anyone in to do a
24 urine test. We don't have the capacity
25 to meet anyone physically face-to-face,

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2 but we have not lost contact.

3 Unfortunately, sir, if there's an arrest
4 occurring, what we do is lodge a warrant
5 and when that person gets in before the
6 judge, if a decision is made to release
7 the detainer and allow that person to
8 get back on the street, that's more of a
9 contact that we're doing. We're having
10 weekly contacts with them, expressing to
11 them what do you need, what services do
12 you need.

13 We can contact treatment
14 referrals to see what they're doing. We
15 have to make sure that any referrals
16 that we're making, are you receiving
17 people remotely, are you receiving them
18 via Zoom, how can you get this
19 individual connected. We're doing all
20 of those things, but we don't have the
21 ability to do that -- and we're lodging
22 detainers on gun cases. We're
23 definitely lodging detainers on gun
24 cases. We understand the severity of
25 that. We understand the importance of

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2 our lives in our community. And so, the
3 Probation Department has always been
4 focused on safety. Did I lose you?

5 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I'm sorry.

6 I had to take it off mute. Can you
7 provide to myself as Chair and to
8 members of this Committee this data on
9 those who are detained as it relates to
10 carrying a gun and gun crimes as it
11 relates to detainers? And I was also
12 following up on saying that my colleague
13 Councilman Curtis Jones zeroed in on an
14 issue that everyone is talking on the
15 streets of Philadelphia regarding if
16 we're doing a significant amount of
17 arresting individuals for guns, then how
18 are so many people still getting out and
19 still on the street with guns. So we're
20 going to begin zeroing in on those who
21 are detained with guns, those who are
22 arrested with guns, those who are
23 prosecuted with guns, what happens to
24 them, how do they end up in the street,
25 are they doing time, are they detained.

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2 That's the next level of this
3 conversation that we want to have,
4 because we see again and again when a
5 person gets arrested, we look at their
6 record and they've been involved in a
7 variety of different other gun-related
8 incidents and if we catch this hopefully
9 from a preventive standpoint from the
10 beginning, then hopefully we can save
11 another person's life.

12 MS. MILLER: Absolutely. I can
13 definitely work on the gun stats as long
14 as -- I don't have attorney behind my
15 name and I don't know charging. But
16 sometimes if there's a weapon as a
17 charge, if it's not charged as a gun and
18 it's charged as a PIC, that's not going
19 to come up as a gun charge. But
20 anything that I can come up with that is
21 a definite gun charge, I can definitely
22 work on getting that information to you,
23 sir.

24 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you
25 very much.

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2 Councilman Curtis Jones.

3 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
4 Mr. Chairman.

5 So I'm going to say something
6 that probably flies contrary to some of
7 the opinions of people listening at this
8 moment and from the testimony we've
9 heard thus far. I absolutely am
10 convinced after this hearing,
11 Mr. Chairman, that 95 percent of the
12 ingredients we need to address gun
13 violence we actually have.

14 After Member Thomas went
15 through his litany of questions and the
16 lack of answers, if you listen well
17 after your testimony -- so I'm not one
18 of those 50,000 foot in-the-air
19 academics so I don't go by the Gallup
20 polls, but I do go by the barbershop
21 poll. And when I walk in the
22 barbershop, and Councilmember Green
23 knows one of the barbershops I frequent,
24 when I walk in there, they care about
25 their probation officers. They're

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2 paying attention. They may not like
3 you. They may not really want to
4 comply, but you are doing some of the
5 job maybe parents failed to do, schools
6 failed to do, religious institutions may
7 have failed to do. You are then the
8 authority in their life that they
9 really, really have to listen to.

10 And in a lot of the
11 alternatives to incarceration, whether
12 you're talking about Red Hook, whether
13 you're talking about other places that
14 we have frequent, the job description of
15 the perfect person to address some of
16 these likely-to-shoot and
17 likely-to-be-shot is if a social worker
18 and a probation officer had a baby,
19 that's what you really need. You need
20 somebody with a firm hand, mean what
21 they say but care about the individual
22 more than just being a number or someone
23 they can send back to jail.

24 So what I'm asking is, and I
25 heard your testimony when you said you

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2 were around the corner from the incident
3 when the young man was murdered on
4 Simpson Street. I've heard testimony
5 several times, one-on-one conversations.
6 I've never heard -- this is the first
7 time I've heard you were in that kind of
8 close proximity. And so, could you
9 elaborate on what exactly you were doing
10 and how we could have contacted those
11 people who were the shooters to try to
12 dissuade them?

13 And what Member Johnson talked
14 about, when our next shooter falls on
15 this, we're going to look at the last
16 group of shooters in the City of
17 Philadelphia and we're going to say who,
18 what, where, why. Who are they, where
19 did they come from, why did they shoot
20 and were they on probation, parole, did
21 they have prior gun charges and why are
22 they out on the street. Not so much in
23 not trying to do a restorative justice
24 model, but to say in that process who's
25 letting them go and why.

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2 So if you could help us by
3 elaborating first on what you were
4 doing, with whom you were doing it near
5 Simpson Street and if that could have in
6 any way saved a life.

7 MS. MILLER: Thank you for the
8 question, sir. As I stated, I was out
9 there with the Customs Notification. We
10 had received notice that there were five
11 individuals that they wanted to address
12 through the Customs Notification. This
13 was the first time that this GVI
14 initiative was being implemented. We
15 initially met at the 18th District. It
16 was two police officers, two
17 representatives from the District
18 Attorney's Office, one of which was
19 G. Lamar Stewart. It was myself from
20 the Adult Probation Office and then
21 there were representatives from PAAN and
22 OVR who were dealing with the resources
23 that would be available that they wanted
24 to talk to individuals about, and we had
25 a mother who had lost her child to gun

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2 violence.

3 And so, as I'm sure you've
4 heard, I wasn't able to hear the
5 testimony yesterday, I had a medical
6 situation, but I believe you all were
7 talking with Gun Violence. We were
8 going out there to meet individuals to
9 let them know, first of all, especially
10 from Probation's standpoint, there were
11 two that we physically met with. I was
12 able to address the young gentlemen, let
13 them know that I was out here because
14 I'm committed not only to the
15 department, but I'm committed to the
16 population in which we swerve.

17 And in each instance, both of
18 those young men were on probation. They
19 had an open matter and one of them was
20 going to be sentenced in another matter
21 in December. My conversation with that
22 particular gentleman was that still does
23 not have to end your story. Now, you're
24 going to have to face the consequences
25 of the situations that you have. You

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2 still have an open occasion and you're
3 going to be sentenced. Don't know what
4 the resolution or disposition of that is
5 going to be. But even when you have to
6 deal with that, you have the opportunity
7 to still make a better decision.

8 His daughter was sitting on the
9 step. I said, this is who you're here
10 to live for, this is who you're here to
11 change your life for, you have to make a
12 better decision. And this is what I
13 said to him, contrary to popular belief,
14 the Probation Department is not the bane
15 of your existence. We are not here just
16 to lock you up. We do care. And under
17 my Administration, we care. We want to
18 make sure that there are other things
19 and other avenues that you can have
20 available to you. But the message has
21 to also be clear, we're here to provide
22 services. Everyone on that team did a
23 fantastic job.

24 And when that mother told the
25 story about losing her child to gun

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2 violence, I tell you, Councilman, you
3 could see the impact not only in the
4 parents who were there, but of the
5 person. And when she told it she said,
6 I don't ever want a mother to have to
7 look down on their child, and I don't
8 want you to be the child they're looking
9 down on.

10 And so I said to him, once you
11 address this, what is it that you need.
12 The one gentleman told me, I need a job.
13 And I said to him, you know what, that's
14 always a common denominator, you need a
15 job. Now, we can commit here today and
16 tell you that we're going to help you
17 find a job. But finding you the job is
18 not going to be the sustainability if
19 you don't have in your mindset that
20 you're going to go to work on time,
21 you're going to go to work dressed
22 properly, you're not going to roll over
23 one day and say, nope, I don't feel like
24 going today, and you have to understand
25 that you're going to have bosses and

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2 rules and regulations you have to comply
3 with. When you change your mindset to
4 understand it's not just getting a job,
5 but being committed to the job and
6 understand that this little girl is who
7 you're living for, you can make a
8 difference. But if you so choose not to
9 do that, then the consequences are going
10 to be swift and certain.

11 It was really a joy for me to
12 be able to have this conversation, and
13 I've been told that it was impactful.
14 Now, I don't have the data because it
15 was only two people that we met with.
16 The only thing I can see is try to
17 follow them after they go for sentencing
18 and deal with their other open cases.
19 But the other point that we made to them
20 was tell your friends, tell the people,
21 your peers that you are associating with
22 that when we came to your door, we were
23 not coming from law enforcement, we were
24 not coming from a negative fashion. We
25 were coming because we're trying to

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2 provide assistance. We only can make a
3 difference if you help us. We're
4 giving. You got to give. So that's why
5 we were out there to do that custom
6 notification.

7 And to tell you the truth,
8 Councilman, it didn't even dawn on me
9 that we were around the corner from the
10 shooting until, like I said, G. Lamar
11 Stewart called me last night and said,
12 Chief, you need to know we were right
13 around the corner. And here's the other
14 thing that was really good, when you're
15 coming in an individual's neighborhood,
16 the neighbors are out. They see you.
17 And one of the things that I was really
18 impressed with of all of the individuals
19 that were on that team, when we came
20 into the neighborhood, it was good
21 morning, how are you today.

22 G. Lamar Stewart was amazing.
23 He just had the ability to go in and
24 just tell them, we're not here for any
25 punitive measures, we care about the

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2 community, we're just trying to offer
3 resources. So it was very informative
4 about the good work that we're trying to
5 do to try to change the trajectory so
6 that people aren't continuing to do the
7 violence.

8 And we also stated, we
9 understand peer pressure. But at some
10 point, you have to make a decision as to
11 whether or not this peer pressure is
12 going to influence your life, so that's
13 why we were there. That's why I was a
14 part of it, because the Probation
15 Department was committed and I was
16 appreciative of my judiciary who
17 approved me to participate in that. And
18 that's why I am so pleased that we still
19 have directors and supervisors who are
20 also going to be a part of this team.

21 COUNCILMAN JONES: For the
22 first time I'm hearing more drilled-down
23 other than the book theory, but the
24 practical application of intervention.
25 And the right hand of fellowship or the

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2 left hand of punishment both will be
3 swift. And when you do that and are
4 honest to not only those individuals but
5 an entire community, you create hope.

6 MS. MILLER: Yes, sir.

7 COUNCILMAN JONES: When we
8 walked down Simpson Street a month and a
9 half ago, there was a certain degree of
10 cynicism and we were telling them that
11 this program is coming. It is going to
12 change fundamentally how this block will
13 live. And then when that happened, I'm
14 just encouraged this is -- and that's
15 why I said it before I started talking
16 to you.

17 I absolutely believe having sat
18 around the CJC, Criminal Justice
19 Coordinating Committee, that the
20 ingredients to solve or at least the tip
21 of the spear to solve some of this
22 problem is within our grasp, the
23 coordination part, the right hand
24 knowing what the left hand is doing.
25 People are not operating in silos.

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2 People are willing to be kind of
3 transparent and open about this is what
4 I can do, here's where my problem might
5 lie, can you help me with this problem
6 intergovernmentally is important.

7 We're going to hear from -- and
8 I'm going to stop now. We're going to
9 hear from my former Co-Chair. In one of
10 the hearings, Mr. Chair, he was working
11 with you. We were talking about fines
12 and fees and he went on a 10-minute
13 tyrade. I sat through the whole 10
14 minutes. And he changed how DHS
15 administers fines and fees because of
16 the urgency he had about the issue, and
17 what he saw it was doing to not only the
18 young people that were fined, but the
19 families that couldn't pay. Before you
20 could put your bill through,
21 Mr. Chairman, DHS decided to change
22 their whole policy. So these kinds of
23 hearings are important and can have a
24 significant change on public policy.

25 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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2 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you
3 very much, Councilman Jones.

4 Thank you, Ms. Miller. I want
5 to also commend you for just being on
6 the front line. I appreciate your
7 passion as well.

8 Any other questions from
9 members of the Committee for Ms. Miller?

10 (No response.)

11 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Okay. I
12 will next call on -- I still call him
13 Deputy Commissioner -- for the School
14 District in the City of Philadelphia,
15 Captain Bethel.

16 MR. BETHEL: Again, I thank
17 you. It's a tough act to follow when
18 I'm behind Darlene. She --

19 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: It is a
20 tough act, Bro.

21 MR. BETHEL: -- has amazing
22 energy. And everything you see is what
23 she is. And so, I appreciate also being
24 on this panel with Castro. He's got a
25 great name when you hear it pronounced.

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2 I'd love to have that name. I actually
3 chopped up my -- so I'm not going to
4 give a formal statement because I've
5 been listening over the last two days.
6 And so, you know my passion. It doesn't
7 come out on paper. It comes out from my
8 heart.

9 Yesterday I listened to the DA,
10 and in particular Commissioner Outlaw
11 kind of showed some graphics that really
12 shocked me, right. We know that we have
13 a system with the COVID and with all of
14 the other underlying issues.
15 Communities are already challenged,
16 right. And so, we just kind of put fuel
17 on the fire because you know what you're
18 hearing on the streets. Councilman
19 Jones and I, we know what we hear on the
20 streets. There's this indication that
21 you can do what you want to do. We have
22 to have a real conversation about that.
23 The beefs that normally would get
24 neutralized in the courtroom and I would
25 arrest someone because they had a gun

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2 and would quiet things down, so those
3 beefs are just banging off the chart,
4 because there's really no one that
5 neutralized any of that. The policing
6 was always considered that place that
7 come in to keep those anomic communities
8 from going at it.

9 We know we have a city that's a
10 wash in guns, and that predates COVID
11 and predates any of that. And the
12 acquisition of those guns seems to be
13 getting easier and easier. But what we
14 do know -- and I'm talking about both
15 sides. I'm going to talk about my
16 school work because I know that's what
17 I'm here for. But I know my
18 conversation with your staff, Councilman
19 Johnson, they kind of told me to talk
20 about my policing space as well.

21 And so, in New York City they
22 made the decision that guns were not
23 acceptable. It was a systemic strategy
24 and wanted to follow through that
25 strategy and it's been like that for

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2 decades. And so, when I saw
3 Commissioner Outlaw outline, and I think
4 many of you have referenced, the sheer
5 number of guns that the Philadelphia
6 Police Department is taking off the
7 streets, I just fell back on my seat.

8 I said, even during the COVID,
9 even during the marches and the protests
10 and all of the issues, the men and women
11 in the Philadelphia Police Department
12 are still out there on the streets
13 trying to take the guns off the streets
14 to save our kids. So when Zamar Jones
15 and all of those kids, over close to 100
16 kids have been shot this year, and you
17 sit there and say, so what is going on.

18 There was a time when I ran --
19 as you know, I was Deputy Commissioner,
20 for your audience, for the Philadelphia
21 Police Department. I retired in 2016
22 and I ran the Patrol Operations which
23 Joel Dales is running now, who was a
24 phenomenal choice. The Commissioner has
25 assembled a phenomenal team. And so,

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2 I'm biased. I don't have no questions
3 about that. When it comes to the
4 leadership that I see that Commissioner
5 Outlaw has put together, it's
6 phenomenal. But what I'm also sitting
7 here and saying, there was a time when
8 we were all in sync.

9 I never ever during my time as
10 a Deputy Commissioner believed that
11 guns, somehow guns would be marginalized
12 to a place where a guy could go out
13 there and have multiple arrests with
14 guns and still be able to walk the
15 streets. I've never been in that place
16 where -- we were aligned with the DA's
17 Office. I've been on the road with many
18 of you, Councilman Jones, all of you,
19 Councilwoman Bass. I can go through all
20 the names of the people I see on the
21 screen around how we used to walk those
22 streets with peace, not guns and saying
23 guns were not acceptable.

24 I watched these videos that
25 have been played on T.V. every day and

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2 watching these guys just shooting down
3 the street randomly, and then hear that
4 they may be charged with a PIC,
5 possessing instrument of crime, and not
6 a gun. I think that's what Darlene
7 said, that guys are being charged with a
8 PIC. And we have officers running up
9 and down these streets, putting their
10 lives on the line and they're not
11 shooting these guys. They have reduced
12 their numbers in shootings,
13 police-involved shootings, and we turn
14 around and they walk out the door. Do
15 you know the message that sends to these
16 guys on the street? That I can carry a
17 gun whenever I want to carry a gun, and
18 that's just not acceptable.

19 When you talk about a time of
20 emergency, emergency. You remember,
21 back in the prior Administration when
22 Commissioner Ramsey came in the door, it
23 was an emergency. And you know what, I
24 think Councilman Jones and many of you
25 already raised that, it felt like one.

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2 We felt like -- I didn't have to fight
3 with anybody to have ask what I wanted
4 to do about a gun arrest. I didn't have
5 to fight with anybody about what we're
6 going to do around guns.

7 You can't turn around -- when I
8 was in the Police Department, guess
9 what, my academies were not shut down.
10 I had 100, 200 men and women coming out
11 of the Police Department. And many of
12 you, I'm looking at the screen, I put
13 those foot beats in some of your
14 toughest neighborhoods. I didn't get
15 one single complaint from the folks in
16 those communities. As a matter of fact,
17 they would applaud me, call me. I had
18 people crying thanking me for putting an
19 officer on their street and for that
20 first time, they could come out and play
21 on their block.

22 My mother-in-law and my mother
23 live in the heart of North Philly. My
24 mother's passed now but my mother-in-law
25 still lives. The first thing they ask

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2 me, what happened to those foot beats
3 because I used to feel safe on the
4 block. So I didn't worry about being
5 cut with policing, and we went through
6 that earlier iteration of having
7 challenges because we went through a
8 downfall with the economics across the
9 nation. But once we got back online, I
10 had overtime. Many of you called me,
11 hey, listen, Deputy Bethel, we need some
12 help over here at Malcolm X Park.

13 Listen, I was able to draw on
14 those resources to make sure that we had
15 enough resources to do what we wanted to
16 do. Yes, we had data-driven strategies.
17 We used evidence-based strategy, hotspot
18 policing. We used foot-beat
19 deployments, offender-focused,
20 evidence-based focus. And, listen, I
21 know this is a hot topic around
22 defunding of policing and I understand
23 the message around that, but you can do
24 both.

25 You can take money and move it

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2 to those mental health services and
3 those homeless services and all the
4 things that all of you I know have
5 championed, and I know that. But
6 there's also a balance. We have our
7 communities that are unsafe right now.
8 So, yes, we can build all these
9 strategies that we talk about and we
10 know they're important. And I heard
11 Councilman talk about people investing
12 in people, absolutely. And you know my
13 work, I made that transition in my life,
14 the restorative work and working with
15 marginalized communities and
16 underscoring the systematic racism in
17 that system and carrying that work after
18 I left the department, but I'm also a
19 realist.

20 I look on T.V. and I say, oh,
21 my God, we can't have that. If you want
22 to carry a gun, you do two things
23 illegal. You get the gun illegally and
24 you use it illegally or you have it on
25 you for two purposes; I'm going to do

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2 something with it or protect myself, but
3 something's going on. And so, we really
4 need to dissect this.

5 So I appreciate the
6 conversation around focusing on the gun
7 because that is the root of all of our
8 challenges, from the conversations
9 around kind of part of the reason -- I
10 know many of you are talking about
11 bringing this all together. From the
12 straw purchaser, there was a big push.
13 So there was a collective push going
14 after the straw purchaser. But some of
15 our guns, the crime offenses, are three
16 or four years old. So the Police
17 Department gets guns off the street that
18 are four years old. We haven't even
19 gotten to the new guns yet. And so,
20 part of that is really a unified message
21 across the entire City, from the DA's
22 Office and Police Department, they're
23 already doing theirs so I'm not
24 defending.

25 But if you're making 3,000 gun

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2 arrests or whatever the number they had
3 last year, I think the Commissioner said
4 they seized almost 75, 78 guns a week.
5 That sent a message. What happens with
6 those 78 men and wom -- those folks with
7 guns. If only a third of them or a
8 quarter of them stay in jail, you know
9 what the word on the street is. You get
10 caught with a gun, man, you got a 1 in 4
11 chance but you can be back out. So I
12 just really wanted to share that.

13 You know, Councilman, I get my
14 passion and I get going. But I feel my
15 passion about the City and I know how
16 passionate you all feel about this work
17 as well, and I know this is done on a
18 purpose but I just wanted to share that
19 with you. So I really just quickly want
20 to pivot into my School District work
21 and just really understanding that this
22 is impacting --

23 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: You work
24 for the School District?

25 MR. BETHEL: I work for the

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2 School District. How do you like that
3 now --

4 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: That's --

5 MR. BETHEL: I love my kids,
6 man. My God is taking me in a different
7 direction as you know, and I love my
8 kids.

9 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON:
10 Absolutely.

11 MR. BETHEL: And so, at the
12 School District, we're impacted by that
13 violence every day, right, because first
14 and foremost, we did 116 lockdowns of
15 our schools this year for gun violence
16 in or around those schools, where we
17 take our babies -- we don't go into a
18 full lockdown. We don't put them into
19 an active shooter mode, but we close the
20 doors and shut it down and keep them in
21 their classrooms because gunshots have
22 gone off around those schools, and
23 that's not acceptable. Schools are
24 supposed to be our safe place.

25 And so, part of what we do and

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2 fortunately and sometimes, it's a
3 struggle for me because every day we get
4 those calls for our kids being
5 arrested -- I mean, being injured by gun
6 violence and in some cases, murdered.
7 That information comes into my office.
8 We get that information realtime. We
9 cross-reference those names with our
10 database with our active students, and
11 then we notify the systems (inaudible),
12 and then Karen Lynch's team who offers
13 school support do a really, really
14 effective job through their prevention
15 and intervention liaison.

16 They contact the principal.
17 They bring a counselor and offer
18 counseling and support services to the
19 needs of the family and often times,
20 there's other siblings who are school
21 students. The support that's provided
22 connect the student and family with a
23 mental health community support,
24 providing grief support to the students
25 and families, and in a way to continue

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2 that path of really supporting them and
3 making sure we're there for them. And
4 we do that with our kids -- because even
5 some of our gun violence comes from kids
6 who have picked up guns and used them.

7 As you know maybe, Councilman
8 Jones, it might be your area where we
9 had the kid who shot his brother or
10 killed his brother because he had a gun,
11 so those are challenges. We have lost
12 kids through auto accidents. So we
13 really, really champion that. And I
14 think, Councilman Thomas, I think you
15 raised the issue around what the School
16 District is doing with Deputy Mayor
17 Figueroa.

18 There is a lot of work that's
19 going to be -- I don't want to get ahead
20 of an announcement, but there has been
21 multiple meetings held with Cynthia
22 around, you know, we're going to be
23 setting up some sites for schools, rec
24 centers, libraries, PHA and others that
25 are really involved to create a robust

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2 environment for the kids to be able to
3 have some place to go during that time.
4 And I think there's going to be an
5 announcement coming up so I don't want
6 to get ahead of anything. But there is
7 some more robust information coming out.
8 There are multiple meetings with the
9 School District and the City around
10 those areas. So I've gone long, so I'm
11 going to slow down because I'll give you
12 time if there's any questions, and I'll
13 stop there.

14 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Councilman
15 Isaiah Thomas.

16 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank you,
17 Mr. Chair. I appreciate it.

18 And, Mr. Bethel, thank you for
19 your passionate testimony and your
20 continued work as it relates to all of
21 the communities, but especially
22 communities of color. I think that
23 you -- just taking a couple of steps
24 back, I do have one question about
25 schools but I want to put my teacher hat

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2 on for a second. And to be honest, you
3 said a couple of things that I'm sure I
4 don't know exactly what they mean and
5 I'll bet a couple of people in the
6 listening audience don't know what it
7 means.

8 You talked about people getting
9 arrested with a gun and you talked about
10 the charge that they get. You said
11 police officers get upset that they only
12 get charged with, I believe the term you
13 used was, PIC and you said what the
14 acronym stood for real fast. Can you go
15 back to that component right there where
16 you talked about that, because I think
17 that's very important to the testimony
18 that we're hearing over the last 24, 48
19 hours.

20 MR. BETHEL: So I want to
21 preface all of this as I don't have any
22 data and all of this is anecdotal, so I
23 just want to make it clear that I'm not
24 in the Police Department and I respect
25 their lane --

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2 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: You just --

3 MR. BETHEL: -- so you heard I

4 think Darlene, maybe she can come back
5 and clarify. She said at one point that
6 folks were charged with a possession
7 with an instrument of crime. So there's
8 usually a two-part charge. You have an
9 instrument of a crime, which could be
10 anything. It could be a hammer that's
11 used in an instrument of a crime. It
12 would be a possession of an instrument
13 of a crime.

14 So a gun, often times you'll
15 charge the person with a gun crime and a
16 possession with an instrument of a
17 crime. They kind of dovetail together.
18 So I'm assuming when Darlene makes that
19 comment and just some of the things I
20 heard is that PIC is used as a
21 stand-alone charge, which will not have
22 the person actually -- and I don't want
23 get out of my lane. So Darlene, maybe
24 she can come back and clarify that. But
25 that to me seems like a parsing of

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2 process if they're charged with a PIC
3 and not the gun itself.

4 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: She's fine.
5 She doesn't have to. We hear the same
6 narratives ourselves in the street. I
7 just want to clarify for everybody in
8 the listening audience so people
9 understand what's being communicated not
10 just to us, but to the public today
11 because we're getting a lot of different
12 narratives as it relates, not
13 necessarily who's at fault, but some of
14 the holes in the system. But I think
15 what you're communicating is one hole
16 that we have in the system that I just
17 wanted you to simply elaborate on.

18 MR. BETHEL: Yes, sir.

19 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: You also
20 talked about the straw purchases. And
21 you said that in the midst of straw
22 purchases, that we can be put in a
23 position where people don't fear that as
24 much as they used to because we're
25 collecting so many guns. Can you just

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2 explain that, because if someone's in
3 the listening audience they might not
4 understand exactly why a gun that you
5 get today or might be picked up this
6 week impacts guns that might have been
7 picked up three years. I think that was
8 the number that you used.

9 MR. BETHEL: Yes, and I know
10 that I can talk fast so I apologize.
11 But one of the things that we have to
12 recognize when you emphasize on straw
13 purchasing, today if someone takes
14 someone in, whether they're willing or
15 unwilling, to go into a store and they
16 purchase a gun and they're going to take
17 that back with the purchase of giving
18 that gun to someone to use illegally,
19 it's part of what fuels much of this
20 activity.

21 Now, that gun, even the gun
22 that's purchased righteously may sit in
23 a drawer somewhere and then someone
24 breaks in the house and they retrieve
25 that gun, and that gun ultimately starts

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2 that clock of when will that gun be a
3 crime gun. And so, we have to be
4 mindful that if you don't work a
5 continuum from the beginning fearing of
6 just purchasing the gun, then you never
7 stop that flood of guns coming into the
8 community because everyone feels, oh,
9 okay, I can just go out there -- when
10 you're talking to your ATF colleagues,
11 when you have that conversation, find
12 out from them how many guns do you have
13 to purchase from someone before you can
14 actually physically charge them. That
15 should be a question that you ask your
16 colleagues as to what does that mean.
17 And so, there's got to be an emphasis on
18 the entire system from the beginning of
19 that gun all the way through.

20 And I know Council has made a
21 lot of efforts around reporting weapons
22 that are stolen and there were some
23 challenges with that. But there really
24 has to be that concentrated effort for
25 the gun being purchased, because it's

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2 shocking when you hear that a gun is
3 four years old or three years old and
4 you sit there and say to yourself, oh,
5 my goodness, I haven't even gotten to
6 the new ones, and that's because there's
7 some many in the system and they just
8 keep flooding into that process. And I
9 don't know if I properly answered your
10 question.

11 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: You did.

12 MR. BETHEL: I'm not a gun guy,
13 but I do my best.

14 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: You did.
15 Thank you for elaborating.

16 Last question, just putting
17 your school safety hat on, in a dream
18 world what would you like to see in the
19 fall? We know that our young people are
20 being put in a position where some of
21 the traditional things that they're used
22 to would not be essentially in place.
23 And I know you can't go in depth as it
24 relates to the announcement and the
25 collaboration that's taken place at the

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2 School District.

3 But hypothetically speaking,
4 what do you think based on your
5 experience we need to be doing as a City
6 to make sure our young people's time is
7 occupied in a positive capacity,
8 thinking about all the things that
9 they're facing as well as thinking about
10 our restrictions due to the pandemic and
11 the coronavirus crisis? And after that
12 question, I'm done.

13 Mr. Chairman, thank you for the
14 time. I appreciate it.

15 MR. BETHEL: Councilman Thomas,
16 you young guys hit me with those hard
17 questions, man, and know they're pretty
18 big, right. That's a good question
19 because I always put myself in a
20 position -- I have an 11th grader and
21 she's in sports, right. I think we need
22 to see as many outlets as possible
23 wherever that may be, whether it's our
24 recs centers and obviously, we're
25 looking at using our school settings to

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2 help with some of the sports. And any
3 of those private entities and those
4 community engagement groups and our
5 community supports out there, they got
6 to have some place to go to kind of get
7 some connectivity.

8 We're social beings, right, and
9 we're asking our social beings, our
10 young kids who love to feed off the
11 social energy to stay away from people.
12 And so, that time away often gives them
13 time to get into negative behavior. And
14 so, we really need to recognize how we
15 can just really fill that gap, even just
16 virtually. Even if they have someone
17 that they can even tune in that keeps
18 them occupied virtually that they love
19 and they can listen to and support them.
20 I think we have to move all of our
21 mentoring programs to a virtual space,
22 but many of the places don't have the
23 luxury of virtual.

24 So some of it is just giving
25 them the connectivity to be able to get

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2 into that virtual space. But I think
3 it's a hard place -- baseball, football,
4 all of that saved my life. I'm a
5 baseball player, I was a football
6 player. What does my kid do now who's
7 used to going to football practice and
8 baseball practice and the street is
9 always trying to pull them as you know.
10 It is a draw that sometimes even gets
11 our best. And so, we have to recognize
12 that they're pulling on them and if we
13 don't fill that gap, if we think we're
14 having a problem now, it's just going to
15 continue to manifest.

16 I think it's got to be all
17 hands on deck. When you talk about an
18 emergency, all of those community groups
19 have to open up their doors. Even if
20 they can only bring four kids into the
21 space, bring four, but don't just shut
22 the door, you know, or meet them where
23 they're at. But I think it's going to
24 be a challenge.

25 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you

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2 very much.

3 Great question too, Councilman
4 Thomas.

5 And so, I'm going to call on my
6 next two Councilmembers, but I just want
7 to slide in one very, very quick
8 question. I'm going to be aggressively
9 advocating for -- and I talked to
10 Dr. Hite yesterday for trauma services,
11 they should be mandatory services inside
12 the Philadelphia public school system.
13 You and I know that hurt children hurt
14 other children. And how are our youth
15 processing seeing their friends being
16 murdered in the streets of Philadelphia,
17 how are our youth and students
18 processing when they're losing loved
19 ones, how are they dealing with that
20 anger? So I just want to get an idea
21 from you in terms of what's actually
22 taken place now to provide their level
23 of wrap-around services and support when
24 these students are losing friends and
25 loved ones inside their neighborhoods.

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2 MR. BETHEL: Thank you,
3 Councilman. And I want to make sure --
4 Karen Lynch was unable to make the call
5 today, so I want to make sure -- I'm not
6 going to be able to fully represent the
7 work. But I know since I joined the
8 School District in November, Dr. Hite
9 and even before that has really charged
10 the School District to really be
11 trauma-informed, right. And so, they
12 have really built a robust working group
13 and with deputy-level personnel and
14 doctors and Ph.D.s working in that space
15 to really start to effectively deal with
16 the trauma of the students in our
17 schools. So that training has started
18 well before I got there and really,
19 really is taking off with the work that
20 Karen Lynch and her team have been doing
21 to really, really become trauma-informed
22 in all of our schools.

23 Now, is that going to take
24 time -- as you know, me and you talked
25 about this almost 10 years ago when you

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2 talk about putting trauma in our
3 neighborhoods and be able to respond.
4 So I always tell the audience your heart
5 has always been in that space. And so,
6 I think there's a lot of work in the
7 School District now.

8 We know internally in the
9 Office of School Safety and my school
10 safety officers, we have been
11 introducing a lot of work around trauma
12 so we understand that how those kids
13 engage with us is a manifestation of
14 often times the neighborhoods and the
15 trauma that they deal with on a daily
16 basis. Our diversion program is really
17 rooted in a trauma-informed approach, so
18 we don't arrest the kids and we don't
19 put them into the system and we make
20 sure we get services and we partner with
21 the Department of Human Services. But I
22 can assure you as an outsider who just
23 walked into the School District and my
24 colleagues on that side of the house and
25 the climate and safety staff under Karen

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2 Lynch are really, really working hard.

3 Every kid that we have that is
4 subjected to any type of violence, they
5 immediately engage their trauma team and
6 their support services to make sure that
7 not just the child, but the family have
8 the services that they need. And so, I
9 think there's a lot of work in that
10 space. Obviously, it's a big system,
11 but I know that they're working in that
12 space and I know that Dr. Hite has been
13 pushing all of us to be in that space.

14 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you.
15 I know in Chicago there's a program and
16 they implemented their focus on
17 cognitive behavioral therapy. It's
18 called the Becoming A Man program, and
19 that's the type of model that focuses on
20 helping young people deal with trauma,
21 but mostly importantly, expressing
22 themselves in a positive manner from a
23 mental health standpoint.

24 I think a lot of our young
25 people are under a significant amount of

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2 stress right now. I think COVID-19 just
3 builds on top of that stress. But I
4 have talked to, I have gotten different
5 stories about how young men are just
6 responding to the level of gun violence
7 that we're seeing and their lives are
8 being taken away from them, and also
9 them being put in a position that
10 there's good kids that are just hanging
11 out there, right, and he may be forced
12 to respond because the peer pressure and
13 feel like, I got to do something, right,
14 and that's not even what I'm about but
15 because I hang out there and this
16 happened when I was a part of being on
17 that corner when this particular
18 incident had taken place or being a part
19 of that group, right, that I'm forced to
20 put myself in a position to actually
21 retaliate, or some just feel a sense of
22 sadness and anger.

23 And so, that's something I'm
24 going to continue to advocate with
25 Dr. Hite, get the PFT involved because

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2 our young people need that type of
3 support as well as working with
4 Katherine Gilmore Richardson and
5 Councilman Curtis Jones around really
6 helping from the ground up. Our young
7 people deal with conflict resolution,
8 right, because today is not the same as
9 how we used to resolve conflicts. And a
10 lot of times it's easy for us to say,
11 oh, we used to handle it by putting our
12 hands up, but those days are gone. This
13 is a whole new era. So I just wanted to
14 put that information out there for the
15 record, but we commend the work that
16 you're doing.

17 And at this time, I want to
18 acknowledge Councilman Derek Green and
19 Councilman Mark Squilla who have
20 questions as well.

21 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you,
22 Councilmember Johnson and Councilmember
23 Jones, for today's continuation hearing.
24 I listened to a good portion of this
25 hearing today and the advocacy and

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2 passion that members of Council made in
3 reference to the lack of urgency I
4 share, especially in reference to some
5 of the initiatives that the City is
6 doing. I had to joke when Councilmember
7 Jones reflected on the fact that at one
8 point not that long ago we shared the
9 same barbershop. I won't say where that
10 barbershop was located. I'll just say
11 it was in the City of Philadelphia. I
12 don't want to get him in trouble in the
13 4th Council District. But just like the
14 people that we interact with in that
15 barbershop, I know Councilmember
16 Johnson, Thomas and others also had
17 connection with people from a lot of
18 different perspectives that give them
19 information about what they're hearing
20 when people interact with the criminal
21 justice system.

22 And, Mr. Bethel, when you
23 started testifying, and I know you're
24 now working in the School District but
25 you've had years of experience as a

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2 police officer, it also brought me
3 back -- and you started using certain
4 acronyms, and I'll try not to use
5 acronyms because people may not be
6 familiar with a PIC or VUFA, which is
7 Violation Uniform Firearms Act, but it
8 made me reflect on yesterday's
9 conversation in reference to guns.

10 And I just want to get a little
11 sense and I know you're not in the
12 Police Department now, but I want to get
13 a little perspective of that
14 coordination that was occurring in the
15 past. And I say that because when
16 Councilmember Jones or Thomas or Johnson
17 or myself interact with people, people
18 don't have that same fear of carrying a
19 gun. When I was a prosecutor, people
20 did not want to have a gun on them in
21 doing a crime because they did not want
22 to get hit with a VUFA or a Violation of
23 Uniform Firearms Act charge because they
24 know that was going to bring in the U.S.
25 Attorney's Office involved and they

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2 would get a different level of
3 punishment than they would at the state
4 level. And so, people would do things
5 just like people who are engaged in
6 criminal activity would hide drugs in
7 this location so they would not have
8 them on them at the same time. They
9 would make sure that the gun was away
10 from them. In case they wanted to grab
11 it, they could but they didn't carry it
12 on them.

13 So I'm curious when you talk
14 about your reflection of conversations
15 of various people, give me some more
16 perspective on that type of interaction
17 you saw in the past and what you're
18 hearing now that people don't have that
19 same fear, because it seems like what
20 you're hearing from your interactions
21 with those in public safety mirror some
22 of the conversations that I think
23 certain Councilmembers are hearing from
24 others as well.

25 MR. BETHEL: And I think it

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2 actually even dovetails back to your
3 comment yesterday when you were talking
4 about rising above. So part of the
5 process, for example, I think at one
6 point Councilman Johnson relayed to
7 Commissioner Outlaw around the crime
8 stat and it was actually gun stat. And
9 so, one of the programs that we were
10 working with the DA's Office was the gun
11 stat, where we literally got in the room
12 and we went through every gun case, who,
13 what, when, where and why about those
14 gun cases. And it was very, very
15 deliberate, so we were able to really
16 track what was happening with every gun
17 arrest. So, yeah, are there some that
18 didn't need to be arrested, there may be
19 a kid unwilling, had a gun in the car
20 but his brother left it, who knows, but
21 we can whittle those out as a
22 prosecutor. But a core of them was
23 really focusing on, this guy has got
24 locked up three times with a gun, what
25 are we waiting for, are we waiting for

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2 him to shoot somebody with it, what is
3 happening. So we were very deliberate
4 in that.

5 I think there has been some
6 changes just overall. As you know, the
7 federal government used to have a
8 mandatory minimum. So what you
9 described to your audience, never did
10 you want a gun and the drugs and a
11 person in a room because that was going
12 to be you're done, right. So I think
13 some of that that has happened is I
14 don't know if the federal are as strong
15 as they used to be in those days,
16 especially if you had crack, and you
17 know the mandatory minimum around that.
18 I know I'm speaking to the choir when I
19 talk to you about that. But there was
20 that sense of urgency in the federal
21 sector as well.

22 Now, we know out of all of the
23 cases, they may only have 100 of those.
24 Much of their cases are white collar
25 crime, but there's small cases where

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2 you're looking for that violent
3 offender. And so, it is a part of their
4 challenge regardless of how they feel or
5 the relationships that -- I never felt
6 that; that I couldn't go to the U.S.
7 Attorney's Office and say, hey, these
8 are the guys that really need to be
9 prosecuted.

10 And so, I think sometimes you
11 got to hit a reset button and kind of
12 say, hey, listen, for the good of the
13 order, we have a process now, we have an
14 emergency and everyone needs to be
15 involved. But I thought the gun stat
16 and there were other programs, the DA's
17 Office, I can't think of the name -- I
18 mean the federal group, I can't think of
19 the name right now, they'll kill me.
20 But where we used to meet in each of the
21 divisions with our federal counterparts
22 and with our local counterparts and with
23 the DA's Office and the AG's Office to
24 really, really come together and talk
25 about what is going on in that

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2 particular sector. I think it was
3 C-Spire was the name of the program.
4 You may be familiar with it.

5 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Um-hmm,
6 Operation C-Spire.

7 MR. BETHEL: Yeah, Operation
8 C-Spire. That was their funding. But I
9 think the Police Department under
10 Commissioner Outlaw, I think they
11 restarted in Southwest, I believe. They
12 may have mentioned it yesterday. But
13 that was a very effective program
14 because you had all of the core parts
15 who could make realtime decisions. So
16 even bringing somebody into that federal
17 space shapes -- that's a strong message.

18 COUNCILMAN GREEN: That's a
19 different -- as you know and I have
20 friends who are still prosecutors, it's
21 one thing when you're in front of an ADA
22 or a state prosecutor. But once you go
23 in front of an AUSA, it's a whole
24 different conversation because you know
25 they'll give you a here's what we're

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2 going to do and you have to decide what
3 you're going to do and that's it. It's
4 not a lot of negotiation. It's not a
5 lot of wiggle room. This is what's
6 going down --

7 MR. BETHEL: When it says
8 United States of America, you're like
9 where do I go after that, right. But
10 then that works very effectively with
11 these larger groups. When you start
12 that group activity, and that obviously
13 is a part of the conversation too is
14 really getting into those groups,
15 because all of it comes out of these
16 particular influencers in those groups,
17 because earlier it was talked about
18 focused deterrence. We have to be
19 realistic around that strategy.

20 It was really a very hard
21 strategy around policing, right. And
22 we -- it was. And so, is there an
23 appetite. I mean, the reality is the
24 appetite for that kind of -- where we
25 were doing the focused deterrence, I

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2 know Commissioner Dales is on the line
3 now, he ran it in South Philly as well,
4 it was really focused on you can't do
5 this in our community and if you do,
6 these are the consequences. But you
7 have these off-ramps. And so, I
8 appreciate the conversations around the
9 services and the things that could come
10 with that. But at the end of the day if
11 you want to go out there and shoot, all
12 of the group pays the price for that at
13 really settling things down.

14 COUNCILMAN GREEN: One last and
15 final question is regarding the schools
16 and I have been having these
17 conversations with students regarding
18 school police and their taking
19 perspective, and I can't speak for them,
20 but some of the conversations that I've
21 had and may have future conversations in
22 the fall regarding their concern about
23 having school police in their schools
24 and what type of perspective that
25 provides and how that impacts the

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2 environment.

3 And so, what would you say to
4 those young people who have a real
5 difficult time with school police being
6 in their schools and the environment,
7 from their perspective it sends of a
8 criminal perspective, criminal justice
9 perspective in their schools when
10 they're there for education, and from
11 their perspective they would like to see
12 that element removed from schools?

13 MR. BETHEL: So I appreciate
14 that question, Councilman. And so, we
15 have -- first, I want to clear up for
16 your audience, though we use the term
17 school police officers, we changed that
18 term now. We're going to school safety
19 officers because we're not police
20 officers. We're not sworn. We don't
21 have weapons. The Philadelphia Police
22 Department supports us in that space and
23 they come when we call them. And so
24 part of that, our responsibility really
25 for our young people is to change how

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2 we -- so we're going through this
3 reimagining, re-envisioning process of
4 we're moving away from our uniforms, so
5 we will be going into a khaki and a polo
6 shirt because we're not police officers.
7 We're training our men and women
8 around -- that they are going to receive
9 a lot of training, but we're doubling
10 down on our training around
11 de-escalation and trauma training and
12 really expanding our restorative
13 practices.

14 We've been working with the
15 Philadelphia Police Department and
16 they've done a phenomenal job with their
17 diversion program. We very rarely --
18 last year we used to be a system that
19 arrested 1600 kids a year. Last year we
20 only arrested 250. We've had an
21 84-percent reduction. So we don't
22 criminalize our kids at the school
23 anymore. And the kids who do get
24 arrested are those who are assaulting
25 other students or teachers or

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2 administrators or committing robberies
3 in that space. But we know we have a
4 lot of work to do to make sure our young
5 people, we're going through a
6 transformation around we do the scanning
7 process and really changing so that we
8 make it a more humane and just process
9 as if you're coming through the airport.

10 I've been meeting with
11 Inspector Altovise Craighead under the
12 direction of Commissioner Dales and
13 Commissioner Outlaw and Singleton to
14 really change how we're doing our space.
15 We agree to revamp and re-expand all of
16 our diversion work so many of the kids
17 who get involved in negative behavior
18 will go to our Youth Court or go to our
19 DHS diversion program or working with
20 the DA's Office. I'm meeting up with
21 those groups. One of the groups, ERB Ed
22 and Philadelphia's Youth Unit, I met
23 with both of them already and I've had
24 already virtual calls with the ERB Ed
25 letting them kind of be a part of our

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2 teams, looking at our policies, looking
3 at our job description.

4 Council, we just changed our
5 job description. If you read it, it
6 really embodies someone who comes in the
7 school who's ready to work with young
8 people and want to be a part of it.

9 Superintendent Hite is charged to really
10 change how we deal with our young people
11 in the school settings and we're really
12 focused on making that happen. And I
13 appreciate any support or any
14 conversations you have and if you want
15 to meet in that space will be extremely
16 helpful.

17 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you
18 for that response. I think there will
19 be an opportunity to have some
20 additional conversation with you,
21 representatives of the School District
22 and some of those student groups.

23 Thank you, Councilmember
24 Johnson, for your leadership on this
25 issue and keep doing what you're doing.

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2 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you
3 very much.

4 Councilman Squilla.

5 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you,
6 Mr. Chair.

7 And thank you, Mr. Bethel. Two
8 quick questions: One was about PICs.
9 And I know years ago you were able to
10 stop somebody who you saw with a gun.
11 But with the Hicks v. the Commonwealth
12 case, I believe that you cannot just
13 stop somebody on the basis of seeing
14 them with a weapon. By changing that
15 policing model, I know if you see a gun
16 and if you know there's a crime
17 committed with a gun and the person fits
18 the description, you can then stop him
19 and if you know the person, if you see
20 him and you know that he is a person
21 who's not allowed to carry a gun and you
22 see a gun, then you can stop him. But
23 other than that, you can't.

24 Do you think that affects the
25 way that police can at least address

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2 that concern?

3 MR. BETHEL: I know I saw the
4 legislation yesterday that was
5 discussed, Councilman, so I'm not sure.
6 But one of the things and clearly, the
7 Police Department obviously even with
8 those barriers have seemed to still be
9 able to affect --

10 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Right.

11 MR. BETHEL: -- more people
12 this year than they had last year. So a
13 lot it has to -- I'm sure the Police
14 Department is already doing that. It
15 comes around training and just
16 ultimately you need reasonable suspicion
17 leading to probable cause. And so,
18 often times it's been those cases where
19 you get out of the car and the guy runs
20 and has a gun on him. So, yeah, they
21 will challenge those cases. But I think
22 often times it really is the officer
23 being trained and building that
24 reasonable suspicion. So, yes, he can
25 get a call. Somebody says Kevin has a

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2 gun so he arrives on that location, he
3 observes, he may set up a surveillance.
4 He may see him grab the handle of the
5 weapon and then engage him. But it's
6 really being focused, because all of
7 this is layered in -- there's case law
8 for everything you can imagine as you
9 know to guide where the lanes police are
10 to stay in. But it appears based on
11 what I saw Commissioner Outlaw present
12 yesterday that her team has been able to
13 even with those barriers still move
14 forward and get guns off the street.

15 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: And you
16 mentioned focused deterrence earlier.
17 And I was around earlier in South Philly
18 when Dales was involved with focused
19 deterrence, and I don't think we can do
20 that aspect the same way. But I think
21 we can use that type of model where
22 maybe you don't bring people in, but you
23 also offer them opportunities to get out
24 of that lifestyle. So as you engage
25 them as part of the policing, we have

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2 then the social services aspect come in
3 and reach out to them in a focused
4 deterrence-type program and Pinpoint may
5 be something similar to that.

6 But I think to engage people
7 with other opportunities than the
8 lifestyle that they're in and showing
9 that there's other alternatives, it
10 seemed to work at that time. The
11 overenforcement, I guess it would be
12 because if you did have a gun --

13 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Point of
14 information.

15 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Go ahead.

16 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Councilman
17 Squilla, just point of information. The
18 new version of focused deterrence is the
19 Group Violence Intervention initiative
20 that has just been rolled out over the
21 last two weeks under the Office of
22 Violence Prevention. That was the
23 program that Curtis was questioning them
24 about as it relates to what has been the
25 results and benchmarks since they have

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2 started. I just wanted to provide you
3 some additional information.

4 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Yes,
5 correct. And I know it just started so
6 there wasn't much information about
7 numbers. But my question was going to
8 be, do you think a model like that can
9 still be successful in today's policing?

10 MR. BETHEL: I think the book
11 will be open on that. The reality is
12 the original iteration of focused
13 deterrence was law enforcement-led
14 strategy and where you were using kind
15 of a focused determination,
16 offender-focused strategy layered with
17 services for the individual. And so, I
18 think it appears based on just initially
19 with Theron and his team had discussed
20 earlier, there's obviously a lot more
21 funding available for the social
22 services.

23 When we did our program, at the
24 time I think it was maybe \$100,000, if
25 that, so there was a lot scrambling

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2 around to try to find services. It is
3 challenging. And when you have an
4 individual, especially a young man who's
5 got three or four arrests on him and
6 trying to move him into the work
7 setting, so it does require a lot of
8 diligence and a lot of work because it
9 has to have legitimacy.

10 When you bring men and women in
11 a room and you tell 100 of some of your
12 hardest individuals you've ever met that
13 we're going to go after you if you do
14 this, but if you want to do this
15 off-ramp, this off-ramp is here and then
16 that off-ramp needs to be there, because
17 what happens is then it doesn't have any
18 legitimacy anymore so it often winds up
19 becoming a policing strategy and then
20 the Police Department is faulted
21 because, oh, now, you're being
22 aggressive in your policing strategy.
23 But I've identified this guy as a
24 shooter. He's shot before. He just got
25 caught with a gun. And so, you're

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2 trying to do a balanced-approach.

3 And I understand the approach.

4 I respect the approach. We have to give

5 these guys an opportunity to get off on

6 all raps, but we also have a small

7 percentage of our folks out here who are

8 just hard-core killers. And we have to

9 make sure we understand that. There is

10 a percentage of our kids, of our guys,

11 who have gone down this path so far.

12 It's tough. It's a tough, tough

13 process. And so, I applaud those who

14 are trying to do that work from both

15 sides, but it has its challenges.

16 But the first iteration of this

17 program was really law

18 enforcement-centered with the DA's

19 Office included, and the DA's Office was

20 very -- and having a judge linked to it

21 to make sure that those men and women

22 were staying alive.

23 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: And I

24 agree, and I think those wrap-around

25 services are important. We saw what

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2 happened up in the 20 -- I guess the
3 East Division, they were trying to PAD,
4 Police-Assisted Diversion for narcotics.
5 And if the wrap-around services aren't
6 provided, then it's going to fail. So
7 that's something I think the City has to
8 really engage in. I think that's why
9 you heard some of the tough questions
10 today on what are the numbers, how are
11 we engaging these folks and how are we
12 helping them. If that part of it is not
13 working, it's going to be a failure and
14 it's going to be a failure on the
15 police. But it's really a failure on
16 the whole system, because we'll blame
17 the police for it because their part may
18 work but we don't have those wrap-around
19 services necessary to continue that
20 operation to really get them the help
21 they need. So that's really what I
22 wanted to get at and I appreciate your
23 answer. Thank you.

24 MR. BETHEL: Thank you,
25 Councilman.

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2 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you
3 very much.

4 Last question and then we're
5 wrapping up this panel. Councilman
6 Allan Domb.

7 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
8 Chairman Johnson and Vice-Chairman
9 Jones. Mr. Bethel, just a quick
10 question for you. I know yesterday I
11 asked the District Attorney the issue of
12 the morale of the Police Department
13 seems very low or appears to be very
14 low and how can we work better together.

15 I guess my question is how do
16 we get the District Attorney's Office,
17 the Police Department, maybe the U.S.
18 Attorney's Office, maybe the Attorney
19 General, how do we get all four parties
20 in the room and say to the following,
21 put the politics aside, do the right
22 thing for the City and we need to have
23 them all come together, because without
24 them coming together we're not going to
25 be effective. We need to have a leader

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2 step up and get these four parties
3 together and go forward. Who do you
4 think that would be and do you think
5 that's the right way to go?

6 MR. BETHEL: Councilman,
7 respectfully and you know I have a lot
8 of respect for you, but that would be
9 inappropriate for me to even begin to
10 answer that question. Commissioner
11 Outlaw was here yesterday and I saw her
12 team and she has a phenomenal team.
13 What I can say to you is based on my
14 conversation of what I observed the
15 Commissioner doing and her team doing, I
16 think that is already happening. And
17 so, it would be inappropriate for me to
18 kind of say my opinion on that. But I
19 just feel confident looking at the team
20 that she has put and assembled, that
21 those steps are very much under way and
22 I'm sure under Commissioner Outlaw's
23 leadership, they will make sure that
24 happens.

25 COUNCILMAN DOMB: I'm not

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2 questioning Commissioner Outlaw. What
3 I'm questioning --

4 MR. BETHEL: I know you
5 weren't, sir. I know you weren't, sir.
6 Not at all. I just don't want -- but
7 you know where I'm at.

8 COUNCILMAN DOMB: No, I'm
9 trying to figure out how do we get the
10 Police Department and the District
11 Attorney's Office and other law
12 enforcement all on the same page for our
13 City.

14 MR. BETHEL: Again, I think
15 that -- I mean, part of the
16 relationships is building relationships,
17 right. It's all around -- as my
18 relationship on the call today, I've
19 known many of you for decades. And so,
20 part of it is, you know, you have to
21 build that trust amongst each other.
22 You have to start to rely more on each
23 other, but that comes in time, you know
24 what I mean. And often times,
25 particularly because of the COVID

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2 because you really can't get in the
3 room, and working in this virtual space
4 it can be a challenge when it comes to
5 doing this type of work. But it is
6 about time and building relationships.

7 And things don't turn around --
8 it takes time. I've always
9 challenged -- even under Commissioner
10 Ramsey's leadership, it took us four
11 years before we could really turn it
12 around and really get ourselves in that
13 space. And so, obviously this is an
14 emergency and you don't have that time,
15 but it is around building relationships.
16 Every time you look up, there's a
17 different maybe U.S. Attorney or
18 different people come in and out of
19 those partnerships, so it does take time
20 to get in a room and build the level of
21 trust so you can move forward. And then
22 when that happens is when you really get
23 the true synergy.

24 And so, often times we just
25 have to be patient and I know we don't

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2 want to be but it does take time. When
3 I look at Castro or Darlene, I built
4 those relationships with them through
5 time and sitting in the meetings and
6 constantly responding to their needs and
7 they responded to mine. And then from
8 there, that level of trust really,
9 really started to build where you can
10 really move forward in a synchronized
11 way.

12 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. Well,
13 thank you for your testimony.

14 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

15 MR. BETHEL: Thank you,
16 Councilman.

17 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you
18 very much for your testimony.

19 Mr. Castro-Jimenez.

20 MR. CASTRO-JIMENEZ: So good
21 afternoon, Councilman Johnson and
22 Councilman Jones and Councilmembers of
23 the Special Committee of Gun Violence.
24 So my name is Faustino Castro-Jimenez.
25 I am the Chief of Probation for the

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2 Juvenile branch of Family Court. Thank
3 you for allowing me the opportunity to
4 provide remarks on this important issue.

5 So beyond the emotional damage
6 on the lives claimed by shootings, the
7 aftermath and the struggles with respect
8 to trauma for all family members
9 remaining, it is disproportionately
10 affecting our Black and Brown
11 communities. It is an everyday fight
12 that is exacerbated by the COVID-19 that
13 residents are experiencing. The
14 violence however it seems now to be
15 immune to the (inaudible) and I cannot
16 wait until the disease subsides to
17 continue to address this important
18 issue.

19 At the start and throughout the
20 City's closure due to the COVID-19, our
21 probation officers have been contacting
22 our youth and families, albeit virtually
23 through electronic platforms. However,
24 given the growing concerns with the
25 spike in gun violence with our young

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2 people, two weeks ago we immediately
3 implemented the resumption of regular
4 supervision services to monitor youth in
5 our communities.

6 Additionally, measures to
7 intensely monitor and engage our
8 high-risk youth by our YVRP team comes
9 along with designated police officers,
10 are critical and we have also
11 implemented measures to safely conduct
12 face-to-face contacts for the at-risk
13 youth involved in shootings or likely to
14 become victims of shootings.

15 Complementary measures by some of our
16 pre-adjudicatory providers, such as
17 inhome detention programs incrementally
18 have started face-to-face contacts with
19 youth and families.

20 Further, our YVRP teams have
21 been mobilized to resume warrant
22 services with certain districts that we
23 have seen an uptick in juvenile crime.
24 Monitoring activities continue to be by
25 our teams and social media platforms,

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2 identifying youth who have been adjudged
3 on a gun-related charge and being gang
4 involved with activities and warrant
5 violations and probation stipulations.

6 With regard to acquiring and
7 offering intelligence, our JPO officers
8 are involved in calls that are
9 coordinated by the Police Department.

10 Our law enforcement partners share
11 information on shootings and hotspots by
12 the Police Districts around the City.

13 It is also important to note that akin
14 to prevention with regard to the focused
15 deterrence initiative, we have committed
16 and stand ready to work with the
17 Managing Director's Office on the new
18 initiative with regards to the Group
19 Violence Intervention initiative.

20 Job placements for youth have
21 been limited during the pandemic.

22 However, we have been able to connect
23 with Philadelphia Youth Network Group,
24 WorkReady program to provide virtual
25 employment opportunities, offering

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2 during the summer that they earn \$595
3 for about a six-week period. In
4 partnership with DHS, one of our
5 priorities this year was to develop two
6 additional community evening reporting
7 centers with GPS components. These
8 community centers engage youth during
9 critical times of the day when shootings
10 may be occurring. This places the
11 number of community evening reporting
12 centers to four with a capacity of 26
13 students each.

14 I would add that through court
15 events we have been and continue to
16 place youth on ankle GPS bracelets which
17 utilizes a platform that allows us to
18 view and track a juvenile's location in
19 the City every two minutes. It's an
20 opportunity to use this platform as an
21 intervention such as placing
22 restrictions where a young person cannot
23 congregate in safety issues associated
24 with being in certain sections of the
25 City.

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2 We also partner with the Police
3 Department's Intelligence Bureau with
4 matching GPS data where a possible
5 correlation exists between juvenile
6 trace and shootings that may have
7 matched the same time, date and location
8 of a particular shooting. We will
9 continue to do our part to address that
10 small population within our
11 jurisdiction, of course, that is
12 purportedly committing many of these
13 unwanted acts.

14 It is not the youth who may
15 have been caught up in a bad situation
16 to be clear, but more so the young men
17 who may be influenced by peers or may
18 act impulsively due to beefs with other
19 neighborhoods. We also need to assure
20 that we do not widen the net and use our
21 available leverage and sanctions to
22 necessarily have youth end up in our
23 deep end of the system. We also want to
24 continue to reduce disparity and
25 disproportionality. We've endeavored to

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2 reduce the footprint of youth entering
3 our system, including reductions of our
4 populations and residential places.

5 In fact, prior to the courts
6 (inaudible) spending operations, of
7 course with the exception of critical
8 and social services, on or about March
9 16th the Administrative and Supervising
10 Judges for Family Court instead held a
11 meeting to address the reduction of
12 residential placements via an expedited
13 list. The conversation centered around
14 the reduction of residential populations
15 to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in
16 our institutional settings.

17 For nearly two months or
18 specifically from March 16th through May
19 18th, key stakeholders made a considered
20 effort to work closely with the Courts
21 and Probation to identify and refer
22 cases that may be prepared if placed on
23 the expedited list for immediate review.
24 During the same time period, the court
25 heard approximately 566 petitions which

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2 discharged or made releasable close to
3 170 youths from state facilities,
4 private residential facilities and
5 youth-awarded secure custody at the
6 Philadelphia Secure Intensive Center.

7 The residential population is
8 at a historic low and now stands at a
9 combined 134 youth at the various
10 institutional sites. I would like to
11 conclude by saying that we recognize our
12 most vulnerable populations being
13 continuously exposed to undue stress,
14 trauma and sometimes injury to
15 themselves or a loved one.

16 We stand committed to
17 continuing to convene. Our children
18 have a right to age and live productive
19 lives and we must do everything possible
20 to ensure that they do so. This
21 concludes my testimony. I'm happy to
22 answer any questions that you may have.

23 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you
24 very much, Castro. I just have two
25 questions. The first question is the

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2 YVRP program. I know it's been a victim
3 of budget cuts. Do you have any aspects
4 of why YVRP has been retained? And then
5 also my other question is, can you
6 provide data on juveniles who have been
7 arrested and charged with a gun?

8 And then last, I think you
9 talked about the limited face-to-face
10 monitoring. Give me an idea of the
11 checking for drug abuse amongst our
12 youth, like someone basically taking
13 their urine when they come into that
14 process, because again talking to
15 individuals on the street a lot of young
16 people take percocet, they take
17 something called K2. They engage in a
18 variety of different other drugs as
19 well, which plays a role in them
20 committing gun crimes as well. So I
21 wanted to get an idea from you answering
22 those three questions.

23 MR. CASTRO-JIMENEZ:

24 Absolutely, Councilman. So with respect
25 to YVRP and any hits that we had based

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2 upon any budget cuts, the fact of the
3 matter is that the Managing Director's
4 Office is still funding six of our
5 probation officers while working
6 directly with the YVRP population.
7 However, I know that they've cut funding
8 for PAAN, which are the credible
9 messengers, which are those people on
10 the streets every day addressing issues
11 with our youth. However, with that
12 said, our probation officers have also
13 been equipped with other services,
14 supports and resources that we can use
15 in our communities.

16 Our POs, YVRP POs specifically,
17 based upon the model visit youths in the
18 community, those high-risk youth, and we
19 have about 51 youth that are currently
20 in YVRP. Our goal is to visit them at
21 least eight times a month. We visit
22 them through patrol with the police. We
23 visit them when in need. And we also of
24 course visit them when they go on
25 warrant status and are absconders, so

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2 the only thing that we've lost based
3 upon the YVRP project or initiative is
4 the fact that we no longer have the PAAN
5 workers assisting us and supervising our
6 kids.

7 In terms of data, the
8 gun-related data, while I just said that
9 we have about 51 youth that we have on
10 YVRP, most of those youth that are on
11 YVRP are those particular youth that
12 either have gun charges or have been
13 shooting victims that we believe present
14 a safety to themselves or a public
15 safety, so those are the particular kids
16 that were targeted.

17 We can get you data,
18 Councilman, in terms of gun-related
19 charges. But the data that we can
20 probably provide you is the ones that
21 have been adjudged delinquent on VUFA
22 charges, Violation of the Uniform
23 Firearms Act, or related charges. We
24 can provide you with that data.

25 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you.

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2 Can you give us a comprehensive overview
3 also geographically where these young
4 people come from as well as their age,
5 please?

6 MR. CASTRO-JIMENEZ: So our
7 mandate is to supervise youth from the
8 ages of 10 to 21 who have been adjudged
9 delinquent or who up to the age of 18
10 are awaiting a pretrial or an
11 adjudication hearing. So YVRP districts
12 cover the 12th, the 14th, 16th, 19th,
13 22nd, 24th, 25th and 39th Districts.
14 Those are the districts currently that
15 we're in. I know that soon and
16 hopefully in the near future, we look to
17 expand to the 1st, 15th, 17th and 35th
18 Districts, but it's based upon the
19 number of youth that we have on
20 probation supervision. So the kids that
21 we do supervise are within that age
22 limit, if that's what you're asking for.

23 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you.

24 MR. CASTRO-JIMENEZ: With
25 respect to the drug test that you

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2 inquired about, because of COVID-19 the
3 Court administration is trying to limit
4 the number of individuals, the number of
5 public entrances into the building. The
6 Court is having, Family Court that is,
7 having hearings, review hearings,
8 disposition hearings, adjudicatory
9 hearings on a limited basis because
10 they're trying to limit individuals
11 coming into the building.

12 With that said, we're also
13 limiting the number of youth for
14 probation contacts coming into drug
15 tests. We are, however, visiting youth
16 in our communities. We're doing
17 "curbside probation," so we're not
18 entering the homes, but we're making
19 sure that we're having that specific
20 contact, that assures us and assures our
21 youth to know that we are still
22 monitoring and supervising them. And
23 any needs of the family and any needs of
24 the youth and any issues in terms of
25 safety and anything that can compromise

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2 the youth and the family, we are
3 addressing specifically when we're doing
4 those home supervisions.

5 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you
6 very much. I see no questions from
7 members of Council. Thank you,
8 Mr. Castro. Just please provide my
9 office with that information as soon as
10 possible and we're going to have --

11 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Councilman
12 Johnson?

13 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yes, Mark
14 Squilla. Go ahead, Councilman Squilla.

15 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Yes,
16 sorry, quick question. I know we were
17 talking about probation and patrol. And
18 we had some concerns, I guess, from
19 yesterday saying that the District
20 Attorney seeks sometimes higher bail,
21 but then also they said that during
22 COVID, Probation and Parole wasn't able
23 to access or reach out to the people who
24 were on probation. Is that something
25 that's been resolved?

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2 MR. CASTRO-JIMENEZ: So,
3 Councilman, I believe that the District
4 was referring to Probation and Parole
5 with respect to contacting individuals
6 on supervision with regard to juveniles
7 throughout the pandemic and throughout
8 the court closure. We have been
9 contacting youth through various
10 platforms, and then we began the
11 resumption of probation supervision in
12 the communities as of two weeks ago. So
13 we've maintained contact with our youth
14 population to address specific issues
15 and needs that the youth and families
16 have.

17 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: You
18 maintained contact all through the
19 pandemic, so they were being engaged?

20 MR. CASTRO-JIMENEZ: With
21 regard to juvenile probation population,
22 we have been in contact with our
23 population throughout the closure and
24 throughout the pandemic.

25 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Okay.

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2 Thank you.

3 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you
4 very much and thank you for your
5 testimony.

6 Will the Clerk please call the
7 last panel and then there will be public
8 comment.

9 THE CLERK: David Jones and
10 Ruth Abaya.

11 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Mr. Jones,
12 can you please begin your testimony.
13 Just state your name for the record and
14 your position.

15 COMMISSIONER JONES: Yes,
16 certainly will. Good afternoon,
17 Co-Chairpersons Kenyatta Johnson, Curtis
18 Jones, Jr. and members of the Special
19 Committee on Gun Violence Prevention. I
20 am David T. Jones, Commissioner of the
21 Department of Behavioral and
22 Intellectual Disability Services. I
23 will refer to it going forward as
24 DBHIDS. Thank you for this opportunity
25 to testify in response to Resolution No.

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2 170609. Accompanying me is Deputy
3 Commissioner Roland Lamb.

4 Today I will speak to the
5 trauma caused by gun violence. We know
6 that trauma is certainly exacerbated by
7 poverty, the pandemic, toxic stress and
8 institutional racism. I actually have
9 submitted my written testimony so I will
10 make more of kind of overarching
11 comments about DBHIDS. This is an
12 initiative designed to address the
13 impact of trauma at both the individual
14 and community level.

15 First, on behalf of DBHIDS
16 staff and myself, we certainly want to
17 express our condolences to families,
18 specifically in Philadelphia but also
19 across the country who lost children to
20 gun violence. As I have read the
21 article about kids getting caught in the
22 crossfire as U.S. gun violence surges,
23 it absolutely broke my heart. In
24 Chicago, Columbus, Cleveland, New York
25 and Atlanta and unfortunately here in

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2 Philadelphia, similar stories about
3 children playing in front of their homes
4 killed by a stray bullet. DBHIDS is
5 committed to implement Roadmap for Safer
6 Communities and akin to the Group
7 Violence Intervention that we heard both
8 Theron and Shondell describe in which
9 community supports and social services
10 play a role in reducing gun violence.
11 DBHIDS is absolutely committed to the
12 strategy.

13 I also want to outline kind of
14 eight initiatives very quickly to
15 underscore our eff -- this also is in
16 part speaking to some of the questions
17 that both, Council Chairs Johnson, you
18 asked, and Jones as well as Councilman
19 Thomas about, so what actually are you
20 doing. Our department partners with the
21 Philadelphia Police Department to
22 provide a crisis intervention training
23 to the officers. We've expanded police
24 officers' skillset to engage safely and
25 de-escalate situations, particularly

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2 situations that may involve a person
3 suffering from the diseases of mental
4 illness and addiction.

5 There's probably been about
6 3,000 police officers trained in crisis
7 intervention. We have more proactively
8 trained community members in mental
9 health first aid. That's an eight-hour
10 training course that teaches the skills
11 needed to identify and understand the
12 response and signs of behavioral health
13 challenges of crisis.

14 We certainly have worked with
15 Council staff. I know that Council
16 Jones' staff have participated, I think
17 more recently Councilwoman Parker's
18 staff, and there have been approximately
19 40,000 Philadelphians trained in mental
20 health first aid. Through our network
21 of neighbors responding to violence,
22 it's an evidence-informed model that
23 teaches community members stabilization
24 techniques and response to violence and
25 trauma.

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There were nearly 380 individuals trained in Fiscal Year '19. We work and continue to make sure that Philadelphians are aware of the member services number. That's the number that Community Behavioral Health staffs. It's that 888-545-2600 number that's available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year where if an individual is in need of behavioral health treatment and they are covered under Medicaid, that's the number they can contact. They will be connected with an array of behavioral health. That's both mental health and addiction treatment providers.

That network of providers also includes a specialty group that we will refer to as the Philadelphia Alliance for Child Trauma Services. Those are providers who have clinicians who are trained in the provision of trauma-informed care. And, Councilman Johnson, as you had mentioned, these are

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2 also individuals who will be trained for
3 example in trauma-focused cognitive
4 behavior therapy.

5 We also conducted
6 trauma-awareness training for
7 individuals generally, and that gives
8 individuals the opportunity to learn
9 about trauma-informed care to build
10 their resiliency and wellness. I think
11 there was over nearly 900 folks trained
12 in Calendar Year '19. And then just as
13 we've had the different conversations --
14 well, let me also mention that we
15 continue to support -- Theron mentioned
16 healing hurt people, where individuals
17 who present at emergency departments who
18 have experienced violence, to connect
19 them through HHP, again Healing Her
20 People, to supports and services. We
21 also support Cure Violence that then
22 does some of that same work in terms of
23 connecting people to services in the
24 community.

25 And then we have partnered with

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2 the School District. There have been a
3 number of questions asked about programs
4 and the School District and we are about
5 to institute intensive behavioral health
6 services, IBHS. It's a model in which
7 clinicians again are trained in
8 trauma-informed therapeutic techniques.
9 The idea is that young people will be
10 able to receive those again
11 therapeutic-informed techniques in home,
12 school and in the community. So as we
13 go through this pandemic, I just want to
14 be explicit about that provider network
15 that I had mentioned.

16 I know the question at times
17 had come up around kind of what's been
18 going on in terms of young people having
19 access to services. Certainly, young
20 people have been able to receive
21 therapeutic services via telehealth,
22 through that network of providers that
23 I've mentioned. And then obviously, as
24 we are here to talk about gun violence
25 prevention, I just want to be specific

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2 in my kind of closing comment about if
3 we can get further upstream, and I think
4 most of us, if not all of us, would
5 agree with this statement which is if
6 there were just more commonsense gun
7 laws in Pennsylvania, I think it would
8 certainly result in fewer deaths in
9 Philadelphia.

10 So I know that the Mayor has
11 certainly been committed very much to
12 his goal around a safer and more just
13 Philadelphia, and I think it was
14 yesterday that the Police Commissioner
15 mentioned that Philadelphia I think may
16 be second to Chicago in the number of
17 shooting deaths and obviously trending
18 clearly in a way that we all don't want
19 to see.

20 I had also in doing my homework
21 looked at the mayor out of Chicago,
22 Mayor Lightfoot, and certainly she has
23 been obviously committed very much to
24 decreasing the number of shooting
25 deaths. And so, when we also looked at

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2 for example, and this was mentioned
3 yesterday, New York City who has far
4 fewer shooting deaths, part of what they
5 have that's different than both
6 Philadelphia and Chicago is they have
7 far more restrictive gun policies.

8 So when New York that has five
9 times our population and Chicago has two
10 times our population, one of the major
11 changes or differences is that they
12 prevent guns from getting into the hands
13 of young people to begin with. And so,
14 I think that obviously there's a place
15 where if we could see some traction
16 there, it would put us further ahead of
17 the game. That's my last comment and
18 I'm happy to take any questions.

19 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you
20 very much.

21 Any questions from Council?

22 (No response.)

23 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Okay. I
24 have a question. Just to elaborate on
25 your partnership with the Philadelphia

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2 School District, I'm an advocate for
3 additional mandatory services that
4 should be provided and offered at the
5 public schools that relates to young
6 people who are dealing with the issue of
7 trauma as a result of gun violence. Can
8 you elaborate on what you are actually
9 doing in partnership with the District,
10 please?

11 COMMISSIONER JONES: Sure.

12 Thank you, Councilman Johnson, for the
13 question. So we should say and,
14 particularly through Community
15 Behavioral Health, we actually have a
16 longstanding relationship with the
17 School District. Previously, there were
18 therapeutic services. And when I say
19 that, I mean so individual counseling,
20 group counseling, there was also some
21 family therapy work that had been
22 available through what was referred to
23 as school therapeutic services, STS, and
24 then what was previously Behavioral
25 Health and Rehabilitation Services.

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2 Those services are now being replaced by
3 what I refer to as Intensive Behavioral
4 Health Service, IBHS. The difference
5 really is that IBHS to the point you
6 made earlier, Councilman Johnson,
7 demands that evidence-based practices
8 are incorporated in the provision of
9 treatment.

10 And so, not only will young
11 people have the opportunity to have
12 clinicians who are trained, for example,
13 in trauma-focused cognitive behavior
14 therapy, but there will also be
15 therapists who are trained in child and
16 family traumatic services intervention,
17 which essentially is a form of grief
18 therapy where again it can happen
19 typically in group, it can happen
20 individually. That work can be done
21 with families. It's five to eight
22 sessions where there's work done,
23 considerable work, to help develop
24 coping skills while addressing some of
25 the emotional dysregulation that would

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2 have been developed as a result of them
3 experiencing trauma.

4 I think that there were over
5 previously -- there's certainly over
6 30,000 students who received various
7 types of supports and treatment. The
8 goal is that for Intensive Behavioral
9 Health Services to be available in some
10 form for all of the School District
11 schools as well as the Charters.

12 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Excellent
13 response. Thank you very much.

14 Councilwoman Katherine Gilmore
15 Richardson.

16 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE
17 RICHARDSON: Thank you so much,
18 Mr. Chair.

19 And thank you for your
20 testimony, Commissioner Jones. And I
21 wanted to come on the record to thank
22 your department for your partnership
23 with our virtual Zoom call around mental
24 health services earlier this year during
25 COVID, so thank you for your partnership

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2 there.

3 I wanted to circle back to what
4 you were just talking about relative to
5 this new program where you're partnering
6 with the School District to provide
7 Intensive Behavioral Health Services,
8 and you talked about Child and Family
9 Traumatic Services Intervention, which
10 is essentially grief therapy and you
11 stated there are five to eight sessions
12 centered around coping skills. So I
13 wanted to ask you if there is a training
14 and/or opportunity within that structure
15 to address conflict resolution as a part
16 of those services since you already have
17 established a partnership with the
18 School District?

19 COMMISSIONER JONES: So thank
20 you, Councilwoman Gilmore Richardson.
21 And I want to say I just have to give a
22 quick shout-out to my Chief of Staff
23 Nicole Connell who works very closely
24 with you and your office and just talks
25 about how wonderful it is to work with

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2 you and your staff, so I just want to
3 show that appreciation.

4 And then we have worked very
5 closely -- there's been a lot of
6 planning that has gone into this with
7 the inclusion of the Managing Director's
8 Office. There had been questions around
9 the Office of Children and Family, who
10 has been involved certainly, obviously
11 Dr. Hite, Karen Lynch and their team
12 around just figuring out how we did --
13 to make sure that the Intensive
14 Behavioral Health Services, that model,
15 was a model that would be able to meet
16 the needs.

17 So as you asked about just in
18 addition to kind of coping skills and
19 then conflict resolution, there are
20 actually probably two or three, if you
21 will, evidence-informed practices that
22 both the clinicians will be trained in
23 and then they also will be able to
24 support the teachers as well obviously.
25 And then there's also training that will

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2 happen with some of the school
3 therapeutic staff as well. So the goal
4 really is absolutely to be able to
5 expand those coping skills, address some
6 of that conflict resolution.

7 Councilman Johnson, the Chair,
8 had asked earlier about things that had
9 shifted a bit around how young people in
10 fact handle conflict now. There used to
11 be a time where it was really more of a
12 hand-to-hand, we step outside, we're
13 going to handle this. Now, obviously
14 hence this hearing, folks tend to pick
15 up guns more frequently. Obviously, we
16 would like to see a decrease in access,
17 but I think part of the work will be
18 just on making different decisions, like
19 understanding that there are -- you have
20 different decisions.

21 So, one, you have choices. And
22 among those choices, these are the
23 decisions you can make that will have an
24 impact on not just you, the person that
25 you may get into this conflict with but

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2 their family and your family and then
3 that neighborhood. So I think that's
4 the work that IBHS will do kind of in
5 totality. And again, I think the real
6 benefit is that it will be instituted in
7 home, school and the community so that
8 the idea is that the clinicians will
9 follow young people kind of where they
10 go so that the strategies they give are
11 strategies that are practical, useful
12 and relevant to the environment that
13 they kind of transport through.

14 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

15 RICHARDSON: Sure, and I appreciate your
16 response. And I wanted to follow up if
17 there was an opportunity for us to
18 partner with your office and the
19 District to work on mandating conflict
20 resolution within the School District of
21 Philadelphia, because it may be synergy
22 there particularly around the sharing of
23 resources as well to help the School
24 District to do this, so thank you very
25 much for your response. And I also

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2 wanted to give a shout-out to Nicole who
3 has really done a tremendous job with
4 working with our office. So thank you
5 very much.

6 And thank you so much,
7 Mr. Chair.

8 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you,
9 Councilman Gilmore Richardson.

10 And, Dave, where did you grow
11 up talking about when you grew up, y'all
12 used to throw hands?

13 COMMISSIONER JONES: Hey,
14 listen, Councilman Johnson --

15 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I know
16 that's right.

17 COMMISSIONER JONES: -- at one
18 point in time I had a 17-inch afro, let
19 me just be clear about it.

20 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I
21 understand, Bro. We live in some
22 different times. Before, you could put
23 hands up and then at the end of the day,
24 shake hands with every one that lost and
25 life goes on. It's just unfortunate at

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2 this day and time we have to have an
3 emergency hearing because at the end of
4 the day, these conflicts will result in
5 someone losing their life and that's
6 totally unacceptable. But with my
7 colleagues and working with agencies
8 such as yourself, we believe that we can
9 reduce this level of gun violence that
10 we're seeing. And so, I want to
11 personally thank you for your testimony
12 and we will be in contact with you as we
13 move forward around the issue of
14 trauma-informed support for our young
15 people. Thank you very much.

16 We want to call the last panel
17 and then public comment. Thank you very
18 much.

19 COMMISSIONER JONES: Thank you,
20 Council Chair.

21 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: You're
22 welcome.

23 DR. ABAYA: Good afternoon.
24 Thank you so much Committee members for
25 allowing me to speak on behalf of the

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2 Health Department today. My name is
3 Ruth Abaya. I'm the Injury Prevention
4 Program Manager for the Health
5 Department. I'm also a pediatrician at
6 the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.
7 And I speak, I think, as many of my
8 colleagues do with a heavy heart today.

9 We've witnessed in the last few
10 months a troubling increase in the gun
11 violence that's consistent with the
12 trend that we've seen beyond just those
13 few months. And as our society has
14 grappled with the challenges of
15 COVID-19, communities throughout our
16 City have seen shootings climb
17 inflicting trauma on families, on
18 neighbors and on entire communities.

19 As of Sunday, August 9, 2020,
20 there are over 1,000 people that have
21 been shot; 176 who have lost their
22 lives. Overwhelmingly, this burden of
23 disease is carried by young Black men
24 whose entire futures are still before
25 them. And as a pediatrician, I've

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2 watched this grief, the toll of gun
3 violence on children. And while no
4 children in Philadelphia thus far have
5 died of COVID-19, 9 children have lost
6 their lives to gun violence.

7 Countless others have been
8 direct witness to the violence in their
9 communities and now must cope with the
10 loss of family and friends. This is a
11 public health crisis that predated
12 COVID-19 and has been worsening as the
13 pandemic continues to disrupt our
14 society. While many of the solutions
15 that we have will require creativity and
16 readjustment in the midst of a public
17 crisis, there is much that we can do.
18 Understanding the drivers of violence is
19 foundational to finding solutions, we
20 have to anticipate that some of these
21 drivers have changed and commit to
22 partnering with communities to
23 understanding those changes.

24 However, many of the
25 determinants of violence are not new.

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2 The communities that suffer high levels
3 of violence also grapple with lower
4 levels of opportunity, and systemic
5 racism must be made clearly as a factor
6 in community violence that drives the
7 disparities we've seen so consistently.
8 A thorough understanding of the trend is
9 an important part of defining and
10 working to solve the problem of gun
11 violence, and our team is working
12 towards developing an outward facing
13 dash forward that helps to describe not
14 only incidents of violence, but the
15 social determinants that drive them.

16 In addition, an in-depth
17 analysis of the stories of those
18 affected meant to inform efforts to
19 reduce gun violence is the foundation of
20 the Fire and Homicide Death Review team,
21 which has now convened twice, the
22 partnership from within and without City
23 government. We've been grateful to have
24 the opportunity to partner with the
25 Office of Violence Prevention in their

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2 efforts to address the occurrence of
3 violence in our City. And in addition,
4 our relationship with the Delaware
5 Valley Intelligence Center at the Police
6 Department through our Injury Prevention
7 epidemiologist has been very fruitful
8 and has served as an essential
9 foundation for many of our efforts.

10 We also need to begin to
11 recognize that what happens in one part
12 of our Commonwealth affects what we see
13 in our streets. I was very grateful to
14 hear a colleague referenced the need for
15 a commonsense legislation and the way
16 that that affects Philadelphia streets,
17 and I think that that's a very true
18 thing. For too long, inaction in
19 Harrisburg has cost Philadelphia dearly.
20 And when it comes to many of our
21 policies, our hands have been tied on a
22 local level.

23 A safer Pennsylvania is a safer
24 Philadelphia. And to this end, the PA
25 Safety Alliance, a group dedicated to

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2 effective and evidence-based policies
3 for the whole Commonwealth was recently
4 launched. The PA Safety Alliance is
5 committed to bringing together a broad
6 coalition of voices from across the
7 state to advocate for the most effective
8 policies one at a time. And these
9 policies, and our primary example at the
10 moment is a permit to purchase law for
11 gun purchases, have been credited with
12 significant reductions in violence in
13 many other states, and specifically
14 reductions in violence in urban counties
15 like Philadelphia.

16 It's critical that we renew our
17 commitment to eliminating violence from
18 our streets. We are all here today to
19 find a way to combine and coordinate our
20 collective efforts and to find real
21 solutions. Thank you so much for your
22 time, and I'll take any questions.

23 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you
24 very much for your testimony.

25 Any questions from members of

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2 Council?

3 (No response.)

4 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I have a
5 question regarding health and how we
6 approach the issue of youth gun violence
7 and gun violence in general. What would
8 be two of your key recommendations that
9 you think that if we had the resources
10 or the manpower or the support,
11 obviously gun laws is one issue, but
12 just locally, what would be one or two
13 recommendations of approaching this that
14 you believe that we could take in terms
15 of addressing this issue from a Health
16 Department standpoint?

17 I do know, I think, that
18 Dr. Richards has a program where you
19 have workers who are on the street
20 working in partnership with --
21 Dr. Richards from Drexel University
22 working in partnership with the Health
23 Department with victims who have been
24 survivors of gun violence trying to
25 address this issue of gun violence, but

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2 also using it as a way of therapy for
3 them. But give me one or two
4 recommendations that we can also use on
5 a local level to kind of enhance what we
6 are doing to address gun violence.

7 DR. ABAYA: Sure. So my
8 primary recommendation would be to
9 develop a more comprehensive database of
10 the evidence-based policies that are
11 already on the ground so they can be
12 scaled to be effective. I think one of
13 the prior individuals who testified
14 referenced the notion of violence
15 prevention efforts in the City being
16 siloed. So one of the things that we
17 are committed to doing is trying to get
18 a sense of how much people who have been
19 victims of gun violence have made
20 contact at any point with the existing
21 evidence-based programs, whether it's a
22 Cure Violence model program or a
23 hospital-based violence prevention
24 program, two of which are known
25 evidence-based interventions or victim

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2 services program. How often have those
3 individuals seen a program like that and
4 can we say that their outcomes have been
5 different. But all of those programs
6 are housed in different places and it's
7 hard to kind of get that data to talk to
8 each other.

9 So I think the very first thing
10 we can do is unsilo those efforts so we
11 can figure out what our capture rate is
12 for violently injured individuals and
13 how well we're doing at recruiting them
14 at programs that are known to reduce
15 subsequent exposure to violence, and
16 also known to reduce subsequent exposure
17 to crime. So I think that's the primary
18 thing.

19 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Okay.
20 Well, listen, thank you very much.

21 Are there any other questions
22 or comments from members of the
23 Committee?

24 (No response.)

25 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Ruth, as

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2 always keep up the good work and we
3 appreciate your hard work and dedication
4 around this issue. Okay?

5 DR. ABAYA: Thank you so much.

6 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you
7 very much.

8 At this time, we are going to
9 engage in public comment. And I'm going
10 to have my staff member Joshu Harris,
11 the Clerk, to begin calling --

12 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

13 RICHARDSON: Mr. Chair?

14 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yes.

15 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

16 RICHARDSON: Mr. Chair, this is
17 Councilmember Katherine Gilmore
18 Richardson. I just wanted to thank the
19 pediatrician Dr. Abaya for her
20 testimony.

21 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON:

22 Absolutely.

23 DR. ABAYA: Thank you.

24 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

25 RICHARDSON: Thank you so much.

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2 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you.

3 Joshu Harris.

4 THE CLERK: Councilmember

5 Johnson, the IT Department has requested
6 a brief intermission just to make sure
7 that all of the persons registered for
8 public comment are online and able to
9 connect, so they requested just a brief
10 intermission.

11 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: All right.

12 Thank you very much.

13 (Brief recess.)

14 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you
15 everyone for participating in the
16 Special Committee on Gun Violence. I
17 want to thank you for your patience but
18 most importantly, your dedication in
19 expressing yourselves as we all come
20 together to address the senseless acts
21 of gun violence that we're seeing taking
22 place in the City of Philadelphia.

23 We are truly in a state of
24 emergency and enough is enough. And so,
25 we appreciate the ideas, your concerns

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2 and most importantly your
3 recommendations in assisting us as we
4 address the issue of gun violence here
5 in the City of Philadelphia.

6 At this time, I'm going to call
7 on the Clerk to please call the first
8 witness. I'm going to ask you to please
9 give your remarks within the
10 three-minute time frame because we have
11 a significant amount of individuals who
12 would like to anticipate in this
13 hearing. We want to give them ample
14 opportunity and time to participate.
15 Thank you very much.

16 THE CLERK: Coleman Holmes.

17 MR. HOLMES: Yes. Good
18 afternoon, Councilman Johnson and
19 Councilmembers. I am Coleman Holmes,
20 Chairperson of Community Outreach
21 Committee of the Delaware Valley
22 Association of Black Psychologists.
23 I'll try to speak rapidly here. I did
24 not realize we only have three minutes.

25 On behalf of our President

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2 Dr. Ayo Maria Gooden and our Regional
3 Representative Dr. Faruq Damon, we wish
4 to express our gratitude to you,
5 Councilman Johnson, and to your
6 colleagues for convening this special
7 emergency hearing on the gun violence
8 that is terrorizing and traumatizing
9 Black people in this city and
10 retargeting our communities' growth and
11 development.

12 The fratricidal gun violence we
13 now witness is the predictable
14 culminating of hundreds of years of
15 physical violence, economic violence,
16 educational neglect, emotional and other
17 psychosocial violence heaped upon Black
18 people in this City and nationwide by
19 many, many members of the majority
20 community population and the
21 institutions they control.

22 Most Black Philadelphians are
23 forced to tolerate miseducation,
24 culturally inappropriate failed schools,
25 un- and underemployment, exclusion for

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business opportunities, an unjust
criminal justice system marred by police
brutality, self-esteem and race esteem
destroying news and entertainment media,
and very importantly, an externally
manipulated youth culture, highly
seductive youth culture that glorifies
and promotes toxic masculinity,
violence, misogyny, drug use, instant
gratification, hedonistic materialism,
emotional dysregulation and disregard
for spirituality and emotionally helping
nuclear family formation.

These devastating factors do
not excuse the gun violence permitted by
less than 1 percent and we emphasize --
the statistics I think will bear out the
fact, less than 1 percent of the over
600,000 Black people in this City are
engaged in gun violence against other
people, but they do shine a bright light
on the psychosocial violence that must
be eliminated once and for all if we are
serious about ending this very visible

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2 heart-wrenching reaction to the
3 brutality of White institutional racism
4 and White supremacy.

5 We cannot ignore the elephant
6 in the room any longer. This does not
7 present as an argument against parental
8 and personal responsibility. However,
9 some in our community have been so
10 devastated by oppressive conditions,
11 especially the 1 percent or less
12 perpetrating this gun violence and
13 others exhibiting anti-social and self-
14 destructive behaviors often
15 internalizing it, that we must take
16 action to save our children and
17 ourselves.

18 Therefore, we recommend a
19 well-funded violence prevention
20 department with hundreds, not
21 50-something people, but hundreds of
22 well-trained credible messengers and
23 affected messengers. Everyone who's
24 credible cannot necessarily influence
25 others to do the right thing. These

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2 people must be trained in conflict
3 resolution skills and have the ability
4 to monitor social media to head off
5 violent acts, and we did hear that
6 there's something heading in that
7 direction from some of the other folks
8 who testified from various departments.

9 There must be free culturally
10 appropriate trauma-informed group and
11 individual therapy services provided
12 through Zoom conferencing in these
13 terrible times we're in now with the
14 virus, social media and in the schools
15 when we can and in the recreation
16 centers and in mobile van through mobile
17 van unit use, provision of thousands of
18 living-wage jobs and paid job
19 training -- I'm sorry, provision of
20 thousands of living-wage jobs and paid
21 job training through government,
22 corporate, university contributions from
23 endowment funds. These universities
24 have tremendous endowment funds and
25 through property taxation of these

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2 various universities and other
3 nonprofits that are making money hand
4 over fist, provision of business
5 development grants and business training
6 to bring the percentage of
7 Black-prospered businesses in this City
8 to 50 percent within five years from its
9 horrible rate of maybe 2 or 3 percent at
10 this moment.

11 We also advocate the hiring of
12 Black people as teachers and teacher's
13 aides. If every public and charter
14 school in the City immediately implement
15 the teaching of African and
16 African-American history at all grade
17 levels of public and charter schools and
18 the use of as a principal text of a book
19 that we, the taxpayers, have paid the
20 commission to have written that we
21 understand 50,000 copies are sitting in
22 a storage room of the School District
23 right now. The book is entitled, The
24 World of African and African-Americans,
25 and it was written by Dr. Edward

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2 Robinson and Professor Molefi Asante of
3 Temple university. As we said, we
4 understand the book was commissioned and
5 paid for sitting and gathering dust in a
6 storage room.

7 School, business, recreation
8 centers and mobile vans must be used as
9 sites of one-stop hubs for social
10 services with simplified application
11 process and service delivery. Police
12 contracts must be amended and redrawn to
13 eliminate any clauses that permit return
14 to services any officers found guilty
15 internally of brutality by a committee
16 of his or her peers, along with
17 community members of equal voting
18 rights.

19 We also recognize that there
20 are many fine police officers in this
21 City, majority, and we urge them to
22 speak up and point out to their
23 supervisors those who are brutalizing
24 and actually tarnishing the oaths that
25 they have taken to protect and serve.

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The removal of Black people from our communities by direct and indirect tax-funded gentrification must stop immediately. City, corporate and foundation-funded low-interest mortgages and grants must be made with fairer qualification guidelines to thousands of Black people who have been unjustly excluded from homeownership for generations in this City. Thousands of new affordable housing units must be built or rehabbed during the next three years.

We repeat, poorly funded Band-Aid measures will never repair the toxic stress and trauma from which our people suffer in varying degrees of psychological adjustment to an insanely evil institutionally racist system of genocide. And we use the word genocide not lightly --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Other people have to talk.

MR. HOLMES: Okay. We use the

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2 word genocide as that is the sign by the
3 United Nations. We stand ready to
4 assist you, Councilman Johnson and your
5 colleagues, and urge others to visit us
6 on the Internet on the Delaware Valley
7 Association of Black Psychologists and
8 join us for our therapeutic web
9 conference on the 24th of this month. I
10 am Coleman Holmes, Chair of the
11 Community Development Outreach Committee
12 of the Delaware Valley Association of
13 Black Psychologists, and we thank you
14 for hearing us out.

15 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you,
16 Mr. Holmes, and please forward your
17 information to my office, 215-686-3412,
18 kenyatta.johnson@phila.gov. Thank you
19 very much.

20 MR. HOLMES: We will indeed do
21 that. Just sorry I didn't mention the
22 bond issue that we wished that you
23 offer. Thank you.

24 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you.
25 Can the Clerk please call the next

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2 witness.

3 THE CLERK: Melissa Robbins.

4 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Melissa,
5 are you there?

6 MS. ROBBINS: Good afternoon.
7 Are you guys able to hear me okay?

8 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yes, we
9 can hear you, Melissa. Please proceed.

10 MS. ROBBINS: Okay. So thank
11 you all. Good afternoon. I'd like to
12 say thank you to Councilman Johnson and
13 all of City Council for having this
14 hearing. Clearly, I don't need to
15 reiterate to you where we are here in
16 the City of Philadelphia with gun
17 violence and just deaths unfortunately.

18 Today I'm more turning my
19 concern towards funding. If I'm not
20 mistaken, last year House Bill 1416,
21 that was a piece of legislation that
22 enacted, I think it was, Act 58 if I'm
23 not mistaken that allowed our Attorney
24 General concurrent jurisdiction over gun
25 cases in the event that our District

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2 Attorney Mr. Larry Krasner drops cases.

3 And in that bill, there was X amount of
4 funding that was allotted to the City of
5 Philadelphia, which is why I was told
6 some of -- most of the State

7 Representatives with the exception of
8 Representative Chris Rabb,

9 Representative Mary Joe Daley and one
10 other, they were the only three

11 dissenting votes on this piece of
12 legislation. The legislation went

13 through and of course Governor Wolf
14 signed. But with that legislation came
15 a good amount of funding to the City of
16 Philadelphia, specifically earmarked for
17 gun cases.

18 My question to the
19 Councilmembers today is how much money
20 was allocated specifically to curve gun
21 violence? How many organizations
22 received that funding? What kind of
23 metrics were put in place to just check
24 and see how effective the programs were
25 towards gun violence? How much money

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2 did they receive and how effective were
3 they? Was there any follow-up or any
4 metrics put in place to determine if, in
5 fact, their approaches were effective or
6 not?

7 What I know is this, I know
8 that you can't simply throw money at an
9 issue without people who are there, who
10 are on the ground, who are connected
11 with families and actually have a
12 background of gun deterrence and
13 programs that are actually effective.
14 So I think it's important that if, in
15 fact, those dollars weren't used in a
16 way we see that there has been no
17 decrease in gun violence -- someone has
18 to mute their phone. I'm sorry. It's
19 interrupting.

20 But we see there's been no
21 decrease in gun violence, so I think
22 it's important that electeds really look
23 at how we are allocating funding, who we
24 are allocating funding to and what
25 actual metrics are in place to ensure

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2 the effectiveness of the program. If
3 not, and we all know it's not working,
4 we got to look around the country and
5 find of what is working. We have to
6 look at things that are effective. What
7 kind of extracurriculars are being
8 offered to our young men and young women
9 so that their minds are elsewhere and
10 not in the streets and trying to harm
11 the next person.

12 I know that we don't have a lot
13 of time. That's my comment for the day.
14 I just want to know what happened with
15 that money from last year and I want to
16 know some -- I want to see some metrics
17 or some tracking to see how that money
18 was used and out of all of those
19 nonprofits that receive money, what kind
20 of programs did they actually implement,
21 so that is my comment. And again, thank
22 you to Councilman Kenyatta Johnson and
23 his staff and all of you all at City
24 Council today.

25 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you

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2 very much.

3 MS. ROBINSON: Excellent point.

4 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Can the

5 Clerk please call the next witness.

6 THE CLERK: Cheryl Pedro.

7 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Cheryl

8 Pedro, are you available? Cheryl Pedro,

9 are you available?

10 Can the Clerk please call the

11 next witness.

12 THE CLERK: Judith Robinson.

13 MS. ROBINSON: Good afternoon.

14 Can you hear me?

15 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Good

16 afternoon, Ms. Robinson.

17 MS. ROBINSON: Queen Judith

18 Robinson here to testify on Bill 190609.

19 I agree with the testimony before me,

20 very much on point. I'm here in the

21 22nd District as a Committee person, a

22 grandmother and I really, really am

23 concerned as a native of Philadelphia

24 that the programs are not more

25 preventive, that we're not focused on

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2 those who should not be carrying
3 firearms.

4 I was corrected in calling guns
5 illegal. There are people who should
6 not be carrying guns. That's what makes
7 this process illegal. So in my
8 community in my observation, I would
9 like to suggest that you focus on people
10 on probation and parole to give them
11 support and employment and finding
12 educational resources. We have plenty
13 of resources here in the 22nd District,
14 Temple University, Hahnemann Center, all
15 kinds of libraries and support systems
16 for workforce development. So we want
17 to make sure that these young folks who
18 are on probation and parole get the
19 attention that they need.

20 I understand that the Mayor's
21 anti-violence program does include a
22 program, I believe, it's a Ms. Garrison,
23 please check into that, to bring these
24 social services, mental health and other
25 resources to where they're most needed,

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2 to these young folks that should not be
3 in possession of firearms. The law
4 enforcement know who they are. As we
5 observe in our community, unfortunate
6 things happen when they have idle time
7 on their hands and are not directed to
8 the resources in our communities. Some
9 of these tragedies could be avoided.

10 Back a while ago when Dr. Debra
11 Stitt came to town with her message,
12 murder is no accident. There is
13 preventable prevention, focus that we
14 can focus on, areas that we can focus
15 on. We definitely want to send the
16 message to all law enforcement, DAs, all
17 involved that we're looking for
18 prevention. We're looking for education
19 directing these young people to
20 employment. We must demand inclusion in
21 all of the economies that we know exist
22 in Philadelphia, and it's a shame that
23 we cannot direct these folks to that
24 employment when it is available.

25 We know what the problems are.

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2 We know what we need to do. Funding is
3 always an issue. I agree with the last
4 testimony that we should monitor and
5 measure. Where are the resources going?
6 If they're not going towards this new
7 program to put these resources in the
8 hands of folks most in need and then
9 prevention so we could allay some of
10 these devastating tragedies in our
11 community, which by the way is really
12 affecting everyone. Even if we are not
13 directly affected, it just reverberates
14 in the community.

15 People are asking, how in the
16 hell can we have gentrification moving
17 in the same direction while we're having
18 our community being devastated with
19 violence. It's some real cognizant
20 distancing going on here where this is
21 going on. And our focus, our focus as
22 leaders -- I'm a committee person at the
23 very lowest level where I hear it. My
24 ear is to the ground to present back to
25 you all. Something's not right when our

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2 attention is not focused on those most
3 in need.

4 This COVID-19 has really
5 discovered, uncovered so much, and our
6 community is being affected most and we
7 are the ones asking folks to come
8 outside their door or send in a vote of
9 registration or a vote of a ballot.
10 We're requesting that and we have little
11 or nothing to offer them with these
12 crises going on in our communities. So
13 I'm not going to beat a dead horse, but
14 I do want to ask our representative to
15 focus on that program that will help the
16 most in need.

17 We see the law enforcement
18 system is encountering these same folks
19 over and over again in the system. What
20 can our judges do to help them focus
21 without being discriminatory, but given
22 some direction. We always had that in
23 the past where a judge could direct
24 someone to get some education resources
25 or take advantage of programs in our

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2 community or else. Yeah, or else
3 because we would rather have them
4 somewhere than where we know where they
5 are than dead or serving time for a
6 murder of someone else in our community.
7 I know there are others who want to
8 speak so I'm going to get off with that.
9 Thank you very much for the opportunity.

10 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you,
11 Queen Judith Robinson. As always, thank
12 you for your passion, your advocacy
13 around these issues.

14 Will the Clerk please call the
15 next witness.

16 THE CLERK: Joel Wilson.

17 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Joel
18 Wilson from 100 Black Men, are you
19 available? Joel Wilson from 100 Black
20 Men, are you available?

21 Will the Clerk please call the
22 next witness.

23 THE CLERK: Nadera Branch.

24 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Nadera
25 Branch, are you available? Nadera

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2 Branch, are you available?

3 MS. BRANCH: Hello. Can you
4 hear me? Hello?

5 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yes, we
6 can hear, Nadera.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We hear
8 you.

9 MS. BRANCH: I think you have
10 to -- please, just a point to remind
11 everyone how to unmute their phone
12 because I had to remember to do that.
13 Okay. Thank you all. My name is Nadera
14 Branch. I am a two-time Fulbright
15 Scholar from West Philadelphia. I just
16 returned from West Africa where I was in
17 Côte d'Ivoire. It's a country next to
18 Liberia, and I learned of a possible
19 great solution that I would like to see
20 implemented here. I just want to tell
21 you a little about myself very quickly.

22 I am also a graduate of the
23 University of Pennsylvania and I want to
24 accomplish much in my life. The root of
25 why I even went to college or anything

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2 was because my father was murdered at
3 52nd and Vine in 1989. He was murdered
4 with hollow point bullets across the
5 street from my grandmother's house on
6 her birthday. And I was a 10-year-old
7 child when I was told I would never see
8 my father again.

9 I know how it feels as a child
10 to hear this, right. I also understand
11 that I've never received justice from my
12 father's murder. I don't know who
13 killed him. I don't know anything,
14 quite frankly. So this brings me to my
15 recommendation. There are two
16 recommendations that I would like to see
17 happen.

18 The first thing is to research
19 the Liberian Women of Peace Movement.
20 As a scholar, as a scholared
21 practitioner, I would love to be
22 involved in that. But it's more
23 important that I would want to see this
24 happen. What happened in Liberia is the
25 women came together and they banded

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together on both sides from both sides
of the war in Liberia and said that they
would no longer enable men who fight,
who contribute to the war. They won't
enable them sexually. They won't enable
them financially. They won't enable
them in any way. And that war ended.
Women were instrumental in ending a
14-year civil war in Liberia. I would
like to see the extent to which that
model can be implemented here in
Philadelphia. That model actually
inspired the movie Chi-Raq. It's a
sensationalized version, but it's still
very true. The movie Chi-Raq was
directed by Spike Lee.

The second thing that I want to
see happen in terms of research, again I
would like to be involved in it, and the
extent to which is something that I
personally am very passionate about, but
at the end of the day I want to see
happen, is to look at drug dealing in
the lifestyle from a different

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2 perspective. I would like to see -- I
3 always have seen the term addiction from
4 a drug user's perspective. But I've
5 never seen this. I don't know if it
6 exists. I would like to see if it
7 exists and I would like to see the
8 research surrounding this. But can we
9 study addiction from a drug dealer's
10 perspective.

11 People can be addicted to the
12 lifestyle, addicted to the money,
13 addicted to it all. And I think the
14 narrative of how we see individuals
15 involved in that lifestyle should be
16 looked at from a different perspective.
17 And I'll stop there.

18 Thank you for your time,
19 Councilman Kenyatta Johnson, for
20 allowing me to speak and thank you to
21 all members of City Council for hearing
22 my, I don't know, innovative but yet
23 somehow crazy ideas. Thank you. Have a
24 a great day.

25 COUNCILMAN THOMAS:

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2 Mr. Chairman, may I be recognized? This
3 is Councilman Thomas.

4 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Councilman
5 Isaiah Thomas.

6 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Very
7 briefly, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to
8 thank her for her innovative ideas. I
9 know that she mentioned that she wanted
10 to be involved in the process. I'm
11 pretty sure I'm going to echo the
12 sentiments of some of my colleagues that
13 I too would like her to follow up with
14 our office if she's interested.

15 So, Mr. Harris, if you can help
16 us out with that, I definitely
17 appreciate it. I just want her to know
18 I appreciate her testimony.

19 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

20 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you,
21 Councilman Thomas.

22 I also had a chance to watch
23 the movie Chi-Raq after listening to
24 Nadera's presentation before. It's a
25 very interesting concept, so thank you

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2 very much for your innovative ideas and
3 recommendations.

4 Could the Clerk please call the
5 next witness, please.

6 THE CLERK: Councilmember, I
7 understand that Mr. Joel Wilson is with
8 us. He just needed to unmute his line.

9 Mr. Wilson, star 6 to unmute
10 your line and you can go ahead with your
11 testimony.

12 MR. WILSON: So good afternoon,
13 everyone. This is Joel Wilson,
14 President of the 100 Black Men of
15 Philadelphia. So what I would like
16 to -- and like everyone in Philly, we
17 are just in shock, in awe and just
18 hurting with the recent slayings in our
19 City of young folk.

20 So what I want to talk to very
21 briefly about is the issue dealing with
22 identity foreclosure. And so, I've been
23 doing research on this particular topic
24 because it impacts our number one
25 mentee, which is the young Black male.

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We deal with boys from the age of -- we start at the 2nd grade level and we go up through 12th grade. So in my research what I found is with identity foreclosure in urban environments, our young men have identity foreclosure surrounding really basketball. So many of them want to be professional athletes. But in our experience what we found is that identity foreclosure expands three areas.

One is being a professional athlete. Number two is an entertainer such as a hip hop artist and then the third one is actually being a criminal. So these are the three things that are glamorized, that are pushed. Young people, this is where they see that they can make a lot of money. They can buy the fancy cars in all of these things. And so, the culture that has evolved from that it's almost a self-fulfilling prophecy.

So what we try to do through

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2 the 100 with our model, what they see is
3 what they'll be. We try to put forth an
4 alternative model so that the young
5 folks can see business owners, they can
6 see the teachers, they can see the
7 engineers. They can see someone who's a
8 police officer, folks who are walking in
9 careers in which they are able to buy a
10 home.

11 Just a simple thing as buying a
12 house, there's a lot of folks who are in
13 our neighborhood, they don't believe
14 Black people can buy homes. So what we
15 want to really advocate for is that we
16 have to understand that the gun violence
17 culture, it goes after our kids as young
18 as 6 years of age. And so, we have to
19 put some type of firewall, some
20 infrastructure, and we have to make sure
21 these young folks are getting
22 mentorship, guidance. They need to have
23 job abilities.

24 One of the things I witnessed
25 first-hand this summer is WorkReady.

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2 WorkReady is set up to employ 10,000
3 high school youth every summer. Because
4 of the COVID situation, right now it's
5 less than 1,000 students being employed.
6 And a part of that is that a lot of the
7 money that was originally allocated for
8 WorkReady was pulled back. So what
9 sense does it make during a pandemic in
10 which we have all of these youth that
11 are home and idle, that the powers that
12 be pulled the money back. So now we
13 have less than 1,000 kids with summer
14 employment and we're wondering why the
15 violence is ratcheting up. We are not
16 providing adequate opportunities for
17 these young folks.

18 And I just got one last comment
19 and I will go my way. The proposals
20 that was put forth by the Psychology
21 Association, I think that has so much
22 merit to it. And so, I would love to
23 work side by side with Brother Cole and
24 just hoping that we as a City can take a
25 new direction, because we cannot keep

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2 going at the rate and the way we're
3 going. So thank you.

4 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Brother
5 Joel Wilson, I just want to say thank
6 you for your testimony. Thank you for
7 your work with 100 Black Men of
8 Philadelphia, and we're going to follow
9 up and do a deep dive into the issue
10 regarding youth employment here in the
11 City of Philadelphia. So thank you very
12 much.

13 Will the Clerk please call the
14 next witness.

15 THE CLERK: Aleida Garcia.

16 MS. GARCIA: Good afternoon.
17 Thank you very much for all your work
18 around this issue. I just wanted to
19 testify. I'm the mother of Alejandro
20 Rojas-Garcia. He was murdered on
21 January 24, 2015. I wanted to talk
22 about the fact that we've been having
23 this problem for a long time. Just
24 before my son was murdered in 2014,
25 there were 149 murders. I looked up for

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2 that date for 2014, the goal with the
3 Police Department had laid out was to
4 reduce homicides by 50 percent.

5 Yet in 2015, there were 161
6 homicides and my son was No. 17. I want
7 to just confirm that there is an
8 incredible feeling of urgency and I have
9 been feeling this urgency for a very
10 long time. In fact, when my son was
11 very young, less than 1 year old, I
12 bought a property at the 3800 block of
13 Darien Street, which later -- at the
14 time that I bought the house, there were
15 no corners. There were no drug corners.
16 About less than a year later, they
17 started a drug corner on 8th and Butler,
18 the notorious 8th and Butler. And I
19 witnessed with my own eyes the
20 neighborhoods deteriorating, all the
21 problems that happened because of that
22 drug corner.

23 And I really have to ask the
24 question, what has happened in the last
25 40 years. Why did we lose the grip on

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2 Philadelphia? Why have D and Allegheny
3 and Frankford and Allegheny and all
4 these other incredibly deteriorated
5 generated areas of our City come to what
6 they have come to? We know that the
7 major source of gun violence is drug
8 trafficking, not necessarily the drug
9 use but the drug trafficking. And there
10 are other areas as well, domestic
11 violence and arguments, but we have this
12 information.

13 And I feel an incredible sense
14 of urgency, fear and frustration which I
15 think is shared by many of the people
16 that I speak to. I think that for too
17 long we've accepted this condition and I
18 think that we need to stop accepting
19 this condition. It's not okay because
20 it's a very small minority of people who
21 are doing this to the majority and
22 terrorizing people in their own
23 neighborhoods. And people have to stay
24 in their house. They can't sit on their
25 porch because they're afraid of a

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2 bullet.

3 I've spoken to many, many
4 mothers. In fact, last night I spoke to
5 Nicolette Rivera's mom about the fact
6 that she was in her home and the bullet
7 came through her window. So why is that
8 the people who are doing the right thing
9 in the City have to fear the small
10 minority of people and have to do things
11 like listen to people feel sorry for
12 this woman or these people when, in
13 fact, our children are six feet under
14 the ground.

15 The major attention has to be
16 to preserve all the people that are
17 working and doing the right thing and
18 helping the youth. Because what I saw
19 on 8th and Butler was that organized
20 crimes, organized criminals were using
21 the youth of the area and seducing them
22 in the drug trade and, therefore,
23 creating for them now a criminal record
24 and situations that would lead them --
25 so I'm definitely very interested in all

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2 the programs, all the recreations, all
3 the programs in the School District
4 that's going to make a difference for
5 the youth. But as far as the organized
6 crime in the City, that needs to be
7 addressed.

8 And if there's corruption in
9 the City or whatever is going on that
10 hasn't been addressed in the last 40
11 years, we have to really look at that.
12 This didn't start yesterday. And I'm
13 always surprised as to why we can't
14 figure this out or is it that we know
15 what to do, but we're not taking the
16 correct action. So that's what I wanted
17 to say. And I also wanted to make sure
18 that everybody knows that Latinos are
19 very affected by this. We're the No. 2
20 group after African-Americans.

21 And one of the things in my
22 mission is to make sure that the Latino
23 community understand that we have to
24 work with the African-American community
25 side by side in unison on this issue,

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2 that we have to do that. And I thank
3 you for your time and I thank you for
4 all the work that has been done today.

5 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you,
6 Ms. Aleida Garcia, and thank you for all
7 the work you do for National Homicide
8 Justice Alliance and making sure there's
9 a voice of victims and co-victims of gun
10 violence. Thank you very much.

11 Will the Clerk please call the
12 next witness.

13 THE CLERK: Yes, Mr. Chair.
14 Before I do, I've been asked to remind
15 residents who are testifying to speak
16 clearly into the phone, keep their face
17 close to the receiver and to try to
18 limit background noise.

19 The next witness is Julia
20 Robinson.

21 MS. ROBINSON: Hi. Can you
22 hear me?

23 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: How are
24 you doing, Ms. Robinson.

25 MS. ROBINSON: Can you hear me?

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2 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yes, we
3 can hear.

4 MS. ROBINSON: You can hear me
5 now?

6 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yes, I can
7 hear you, we can hear you.

8 MS. ROBINSON: Good afternoon.
9 I'm so happy to share my thoughts and
10 views today about gun violence. I'm
11 representing Moms Bonded by Grief today.
12 I'm the (inaudible). Terrez McCleary,
13 she's the founder of Moms Bonded by
14 Grief. She founded it in September
15 2017.

16 What we do, we embrace, inspire
17 and support families when they feel
18 there is no hope of recovery after
19 losing a loved one. We feel very, very
20 strong about gun violence as we all have
21 lost our own children to this senseless
22 violence. We are here to make a change
23 so no family can ever have to feel
24 alone. We strongly believe in unity and
25 healing and how we can work together

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2 trying to end this crisis in our City.

3 We're losing our children at a
4 rapid rate every day, but we are here
5 fighting on the front lines for all
6 families. Every night we pray that no
7 mother has to cry and bury her child.

8 We also support parents and siblings.

9 They share their grief, hopes and
10 stories of triumph since their loved
11 ones' death. Before COVID shut down so
12 many programs, we held weekly Tuesday
13 meetings at the Dixon House. It's in
14 South Philadelphia, located at 1920 20th
15 Street. We call this our place of
16 comfort where we gather together,
17 releasing our fears, anxiety and we give
18 them the strength they need, just
19 letting them know no one is ever alone.

20 So now since the Dixon House is
21 shut down, we Zoom every Tuesday evening
22 at 6:00 p.m., and we keep everyone
23 feeling very confident about themselves.
24 I am also a survivor. My son was
25 murdered in 2016. Murder case still

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2 unsolved, but I continue daily to fight
3 for other families. Alongside the
4 families, we fight together because our
5 hearts have been ripped apart. So
6 today, City Council, we need you to help
7 make the change. So we can't do it
8 alone. These shooters have no remorse
9 for human life. Murder has become a
10 sport to them.

11 I was at a rally on Monday.
12 Someone said, guns are confiscated daily
13 on the street. So I said, thank God,
14 but really because when they're
15 confiscated, 100 more are put right back
16 on the street. And the majority of
17 these guns are straw purchases. I
18 listened to Commissioner Coulter
19 yesterday when she said, we had 259
20 homicides this year. Most were
21 committed with a gun and we are next in
22 line with Chicago.

23 Now, the arrests of nonfatal
24 shootings is exceptionally low because
25 her staff recognizes this and realize

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2 these gunmen are still walking our
3 streets, so we need all the help we can
4 get from you, City Council, for this gun
5 violence because we can't do it alone
6 and everyone has the right to live. Gun
7 violence, like I said, is a crisis
8 that's taken over our City. So whatever
9 you can do, you can help us, you can
10 reach us at Moms Bonded By Grief, our
11 foundation.

12 You can come visit and you can
13 share your thoughts and ideas with us.
14 We always have open ears. And another
15 thing, I will never approve guns being
16 in school for children. Children are
17 very curious and we all know that. They
18 want to know how those weapons work. So
19 that's why I'm speaking today on behalf
20 of Moms Bonded By Grief, our foundation,
21 and what we do to comfort families that
22 are in need who have lost their loved
23 ones. Thank you.

24 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you
25 very much, Ms. Robinson, for your

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2 testimony.

3 Can the Clerk please call the
4 next witness, please.

5 THE CLERK: Holly Jennings.

6 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Holly, are
7 you available? If you are, maybe you
8 have to unmute your phone, star 6.

9 Will the Clerk please call the
10 next witness.

11 THE CLERK: Willfredo Rojas.

12 MR. ROJAS: Good afternoon. My
13 name is Willfredo Rojas and I was a
14 prison social worker -- prison social
15 work supervisor and retired in 2012 as
16 Director of the Office of Community
17 Justice and Outreach. During my time at
18 the prison as a social worker, I sat
19 right next to inmates that were accused
20 of minor crimes and those that were
21 accused of higher crimes, such as
22 murder, aggravated assault, rape.

23 And I would get from them that
24 some of them that were arrested for
25 large quantities of drugs or being the

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hitman in a drug deal were usually able to secure high-paying attorneys that would argue for them in court, and many times they would delay, delay, delay the process and at times they were actually released and found not guilty of the crime. In speaking with a lot of these individuals, I learned that many did not have any remorse. It was part of the business. It was part of everyday living in impoverished neighborhoods of Philadelphia.

And the reason that they said they were doing it is because they needed the money. They needed to take over somebody's corner so they could make money for themselves and for their families. So the high unemployment rate among Black and Brown youth is something that we have to really look at. When I was listening to testimony from City officials yesterday, and there were a lot of very good questions, it reminded me of a Spanish language Novela, that

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2 you get very anxious about what is the
3 end going to be. The Spanish Novela
4 takes you through 59 episodes before you
5 finally find out what's going to happen.

6 With respect to the police,
7 when I worked at the prison system we
8 had the Criminal Justice Coordinating
9 Committee that had the Police, the
10 District Attorney's Office, the Public
11 Defender, Probation and Parole, the
12 School District and other entities. We
13 formed the gestalt of organizations that
14 were working together around one common
15 theme which was the theme of criminal
16 justice.

17 When listening to the Police
18 Commissioner speak yesterday, I think
19 that one of the suggestions that I had
20 is, number one, that gun violence and
21 homicide is not a partisan issue. It
22 affects republicans, democrats and
23 dependents. It's not a racial issue.
24 It affects everybody, though it affects
25 Black and Brown people more. There

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2 should be intelligence that are able to
3 coordinate with federal authorities in
4 which they could come up with a
5 comprehensive attack plan, because the
6 criminals are more organized than the
7 police. We have to come up like we did
8 in droves.

9 I remember back in the 1970s
10 when there were a lot of drug busts and
11 I said, poppy seeds were not grown in
12 the bayou. They came in from somewhere
13 else, and today that still rings true.
14 Guns are not manufactured in West
15 Philadelphia or Southwest Philadelphia
16 or North Philadelphia. Guns come in
17 from somewhere. That's why we need the
18 federal intervention to help the local
19 police department to go after the source
20 of those guns. If we can break up
21 cartels that are bringing drugs into the
22 country, we have to use the same zealous
23 effort to break up these guns that are
24 coming into the City of Philadelphia and
25 I think we can do that.

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2 With respect to the District
3 Attorney's Office, I love Larry much.
4 But Larry's got to stop trying to impose
5 his criminal philosophy on the rest of
6 Philadelphia. He's got to start
7 listening to people in Council that
8 asked some very pointed questions
9 yesterday. He has to drop the fight
10 with the Police Union and see how they
11 can actually work together to resolve
12 the homicide and shooting incidents. He
13 has to work with the Federal Attorney
14 General and stop the politics and see
15 how we can work together to eliminate
16 the problem.

17 In terms of the schools, I
18 remember at the prison I had an
19 internship program with Lincoln High
20 School. Kids were paid minimum wage to
21 come and work at the prison, and I
22 assigned them with different personnel.
23 Some worked with the accountant. Some
24 worked with personnel. Some worked in
25 the warden's office. 98 percent of

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2 those kids are now in college and most
3 of them got Master's degrees, and some
4 of those kids actually went back and
5 they are police officers today and/or
6 correctional officers, because we had
7 not only mentorship, but we had
8 sponsorship of those kids in the prison
9 system.

10 So that program was run through
11 the Nutter Administration through the
12 Managing Director's Office, and it was
13 private corporations and City
14 departments hiring these kids. And we
15 also had college kids that did not get
16 paid, but got college credits for their
17 internships at the prison. So I think
18 we should visit that again because if
19 kids are working, they're not busy
20 committing crimes because they're
21 actually getting some money into their
22 pockets. But probation and parole --

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Other
24 people have to talk.

25 MR. ROJAS: -- I know, have

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2 long said that they should not just be a
3 punitive department, but they should
4 work to actually help the incarcerated
5 find employment, and to actually guide
6 and supervise the lives of the people
7 that are released from the prison. So
8 with that, I just want to say I'm tired
9 of the meetings, I'm tired of the
10 hearings. I'm tired of everything else,
11 of the rallies.

12 We have to start acting because
13 right now this is not a crisis, this is
14 a war. This is a war of the citizens of
15 Philadelphia against a small minority of
16 people that are the ones that are
17 perpetrating the murders and the
18 shootings. Thank you so much for your
19 time. And thank you, Councilman Jones
20 and Councilman Kenyatta Johnson, for
21 leading this fight and now finally,
22 we're getting other Councilmembers that
23 are supporting you. Thank you so much.

24 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you,
25 Mr. Willfredo. And I also just want to

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2 acknowledge that my colleagues and I
3 sent a letter to the Office of Alcohol,
4 Tobacco and Firearms actually today
5 requesting an investigative report on
6 gun crimes, which includes illegal
7 trafficking of guns as well as straw
8 purchasing so we can find out where are
9 these guns coming from. It's no way in
10 the world that a 15-year-old should have
11 9 mm with a 30-shot clip.

12 And so, we all know that no
13 guns are made in Point Breeze. No guns
14 are made in Strawberry Mansion. And so,
15 we want to get to the bottom of where
16 these guns are coming from. For me,
17 it's also part of addressing the issue
18 of institutional racism, because when
19 you talk about priorities and resources,
20 it can be reflected in what you believe
21 is important in terms of addressing it,
22 so we must find out where the guns are
23 coming from. Thank you very much.

24 Will the Clerk please call the
25 next witness.

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2 MR. ROJAS: Thank you,
3 Councilman.

4 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: You're
5 welcome.

6 THE CLERK: Lee Scott Lorde.

7 MS. LORDE: Hello. Thank you
8 for allowing me to speak today. Please
9 bear with me because I am now in transit
10 to a medical appointment. I am
11 testifying today to bring to the
12 attention of Council that to address gun
13 violence and any other issue related to
14 the African-American or the communities
15 of color, you must address systemic
16 racism and not just throwing it around
17 like a buzz word term.

18 There needs to be a public
19 formal declaration of systemic racism as
20 a public health crisis, and then to take
21 all action to ensure that all City
22 policies are filtered through an anti-
23 racist whole person framework, which
24 includes making sure that all solutions
25 are sourced from authentic community

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engagement using the dignity-infused community engagement strategy that honors the lived experience of people and their needs by continuously seeking resident input for revisions and effectiveness and accountability. So that means not just having these hearings and taking this information and going back to your silo and evading solution, but continuously coming into the community and centering our needs and our solutions.

Gun violence in the Black community is not a root detriment of public health. There are Councilpeople who have mentioned public health crisis multiple times. And when you talk about a public health crisis, you're talking about using the public health's approach. And it's important to use that strategy properly so that you get down to the root determinants of health.

According to the Dean of Public Health at Boston University, a public

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2 health crisis is a problem that affects
3 large amounts of people and must
4 threaten health over long-term and must
5 acquire the adoption of large-scaled
6 solutions, large-scaled solutions. So a
7 lot of the solutions that have been
8 presented over the last two days are
9 addressing the symptoms. Yes, they will
10 have an immediate effect on the person,
11 the people, because we're beginning to
12 use the language that dehumanizes.
13 We're calling them offenders and we're
14 calling them criminals. These are
15 people who have been disenfranchised by
16 a racism institutional system that has
17 created an environment where people have
18 to commit crimes in order to survive.
19 So we need to now do an overhaul of our
20 systems.

21 And racism is the oldest system
22 in our country spanning over 400 years
23 and affects the health outcomes of every
24 African-American regardless of income,
25 class or education. So a lot of times

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we think about it in terms of poverty.
Poverty is a problem in Philadelphia.
However, gun violence affects all people
regardless of income, class and
education. And especially from
African-Americans, our health outcomes
are negative from in utero until death.
Therefore, there is no doubt that
systemic racism qualifies as a public
health crisis. 40 percent of
Philadelphia is African-American. So we
have a population of 1,584,084. And out
of that number, 633,000 people are
African-American living under the
oppression of systemic racism so that
means all of us, all of us, regardless
of our income are under the effects of
systemic racism.

All of the ailments in the
Black community are as a result of
historic disinvestments in education,
discriminatory hiring practices,
gentrification and affects affordable
housing and redlining. Someone

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mentioned that Black people now believe that they can't own houses. Now, that's not just a figment of our imagination. When we try to purchase houses, we are not allowed to get mortgages. We are not allowed to purchase houses in neighborhoods that we want or we do not have the income due to disenfranchisement. That is not something of our own fault.

And then we also have food insecurity, lack of markets in our neighborhoods. We don't have walkable communities and we definitely do not have accessible culturally competent mental health services in our schools, true restorative justice practices and effective conflict resolution taught at the grade school level. These inequities were created by policies designed to oppress and destroy Black communities by policymakers with explicit and implicit racial biases.

And we must put special

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2 attention on implicit racial biases.

3 There are those of you in Council and

4 there are those working in the City

5 government right now who believe that

6 they are liberal and ended up pushing

7 for a progression, but they have

8 stereotypes and biases that are

9 forbidding them from looking at people

10 from a whole-person perspective.

11 There is a Councilperson that

12 mentioned marijuana sales, and the DA

13 said that -- and the DA's department was

14 laughing, thought it was a laughable

15 matter. And though it was rude for them

16 to make it a laughable matter, but it is

17 a matter that is not being looked at

18 critically. Our young people,

19 especially those -- you're specifically

20 talking about marijuana, they are

21 selling it legally because they are

22 disenfranchised from participating in

23 the legal aspects of medical marijuana

24 sales. It starts at \$100,000 to

25 participate in dispensaries and other

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2 forms of legal marijuana practices.

3 So we can't look at our young
4 people and say that they are making poor
5 choices when we aren't even taking the
6 time to critically evaluate why they are
7 making those choices. So it is urgent
8 that we do not put not another dollar
9 into policing because policing is not
10 the answer. The Police budget was \$725
11 million and they have had a 30 percent
12 increase since 2016 and matters have
13 gotten worse. We have over 1,000
14 shootings --

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Other
16 people need to talk.

17 MS. LORDE: Yes, I honor that.
18 We have over 1,000 shootings and yet
19 yesterday Council was allowing the
20 Police Chief to spin the narrative and
21 say that COVID and the budget cut is
22 preventing them from doing their job,
23 when clearly they have a track record of
24 failure. So funding needs to be
25 diverted from police and given to social

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2 services and there needs to be a
3 complete overhaul of our systems, and
4 starting with education, making sure
5 that all our young people are graduating
6 from high school with a vocational
7 certification --

8 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: All right.
9 Thank you, Sis.

10 MS. LORDE: -- and what they
11 need to be professional.

12 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you
13 very much, Sis.

14 MS. LORDE: You're welcome.
15 And if you would like to work together,
16 I'm a member of the Get Healthy Philly
17 Health Justice Leadership Team, and we
18 can continue to assist you in using the
19 public health approach appropriately to
20 solve this matter.

21 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: All right.
22 Can you please provide your information
23 to the Clerk when you get a chance.
24 Thank you very much.

25 Can the Clerk please call the

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2 next witness.

3 MS. LORDE: Thank you.

4 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: You're
5 welcome. Can the Clerk please call the
6 next witness.

7 THE CLERK: Vickie West.

8 MS. WEST: Hi. I just want to
9 say thank you to Councilman Johnson for
10 holding this hearing. I have lived in
11 Los Angeles for the past seven years,
12 but am a Philadelphia native and I have
13 lost two cousins to gun violence in
14 Philadelphia in that time. Both were
15 victims not involved in any crime in the
16 street, but random occurrences of
17 violence.

18 All the way in Los Angeles, the
19 ravage gun violence still breaks my
20 heart and it hurts to see it
21 progressively get worse. This hearing
22 should have happened a long time ago.
23 It should be happening more often as you
24 are dealing with a gun violence
25 epidemic, so act like it. The City was

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2 shut down for coronavirus. Bring that
3 energy to the public health crisis. To
4 be specific, more preventative measures.

5 If you'll have rallies, have
6 them in neighborhoods and show the
7 people that you care, have them in the
8 neighborhood. Show the people engaging
9 in violence that we see them, hold them
10 morally accountable. Don't just do a
11 rally once in a blue moon. Repeat the
12 care. Show up once a month, make it
13 easily acceptable to those in the
14 neighborhood. City Hall is not easily
15 accessible, nor is it where the violence
16 is happening consistently. Make the
17 people affected/subjected to violence
18 feel safer, feel that they have
19 community and protection. Make those
20 engaging in violence feel outnumbered.

21 The DA mentioned reallocating
22 funds, excellent idea. Reallocate them
23 to preventative measures like this one,
24 try fixing up homes and streets in the
25 City, make them better places to live.

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2 To the DA, please push against the guns
3 laws. Straw gun purchases must be
4 stopped. Make the laws as strict as New
5 Jersey's, push back. The DA, you have
6 power. You know some republicans, I'm
7 guessing. Push this issue if you really
8 care.

9 Danielle Outlaw, I'm not sure
10 what it is you're doing. You got there
11 and crime got worse. I know you came
12 from Oakland. What did you do there?
13 If you're not able to do your job
14 reducing crime properly, put the funds
15 elsewhere. All and all, thank you guys
16 for finally treating this as an urgent
17 matter. I hope you have these hearings
18 and you rally once a month and make sure
19 that they are accessible to the public.
20 Thank you.

21 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you
22 very much.

23 Will the Clerk please call the
24 next witness.

25 THE CLERK: Rania Major.

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2 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Rania

3 Major, are you available?

4 Will the Clerk please call the
5 next witness.

6 THE CLERK: Bridgette Powell.

7 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Bridgette

8 Powell, are you available? Can you
9 please check to see if your phone is on
10 mute. To unmute is star 6. Bridgette
11 Powell, are you available?

12 Will the Clerk please call the
13 next witness.

14 THE CLERK: Gregory Holston.

15 REVEREND HOLSTON: Hello?

16 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: We can
17 hear you, Reverend Holston. Please
18 proceed with your testimony.

19 MR. HOLSTON: Good afternoon. I
20 want to thank Councilman Johnson for
21 having this special hearing and all the
22 Councilpeople who have shared their
23 concerns. First, I would like to just
24 say that last year we had a very similar
25 conversation. Last year we indicated

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2 that this was an emergency situation.

3 Last year around this same time I was

4 testifying at a special hearing that

5 Councilman Johnson called, again

6 expressing the outrage over gun

7 violence. And last year we shared that

8 we would do something different and

9 better. And here we are again kind of

10 expressing the same things.

11 Last year in testimony I said,
12 we don't spend nearly enough money.

13 From the studies that I read, that is

14 about .5 percent of the people, about

15 maybe 3500 people in the City that

16 really engage particularly in the

17 shooting activity, that if we spent --

18 that we should be spending about \$25,000

19 on each one of those individuals to

20 divert them into better lives.

21 They would be costing us
22 \$61,000 a year to be in prison, so it's
23 much less of a cost if we divert them
24 now by providing services and resources
25 now that can change their lives. I've

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2 heard testimony over and over again that
3 people on the street no matter what
4 activity they may be in, even many of
5 the people that have testified said that
6 resources, workforce development, jobs
7 are the real issue here, and that the
8 poverty rate of 25 percent of our City
9 is driving the violence and that even
10 more so during COVID-19 where our
11 poverty rate has spiked, our
12 unemployment rate has spiked some saying
13 in some of our neighborhoods as much as
14 70 percent of the community living in
15 poverty now. So I think the issues are
16 powerful.

17 Last year when I argued that we
18 should spend about \$10 million extra
19 because we had \$360 million in a rainy
20 day fund, some people agreed with that
21 and tried to push for that. This year
22 we don't have the rainy day fund to look
23 to because of COVID-19. And so, we had
24 to look to allocate our resources
25 differently.

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2 If we're going to spend \$25,000
3 on each one of these individuals to move
4 them into a better life, that is roughly
5 \$90 million. However, we're spending
6 \$720 million on police. We're spending
7 \$250 million on prisons. We're spending
8 \$120 million on courts. All of the
9 things on the back that cost us more
10 than spending money on the front-end
11 where we really can change lives and
12 save lives.

13 So my argument, what I said
14 last year is still the same way thing
15 this year. It's still the same. A
16 program like Cure Violence in the City
17 that has been proven to be successful in
18 the places it's been used in this City,
19 in the two districts that it's been used
20 in North Philadelphia, which it has in a
21 couple of years driven the shooting rate
22 down by 30 percent. When asked how much
23 money do they need to put across all of
24 Philadelphia and they responded about
25 \$15 million to \$17 million for just that

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2 program, to be all across the City of
3 Philadelphia and bring down the crime
4 rate, people did not want to spend the
5 money. People did not want to spend the
6 money. Yet we're here right now talking
7 about this is an emergency.

8 A budget is a moral document.
9 How we spend our dollars tells what we
10 believe, shares with us what we really
11 think. Don't tell me what we say we're
12 going to do when we do not spend our
13 dollars in a way effectively to make the
14 change that we're asking and desperately
15 asking for.

16 So I'm saying the same thing to
17 Council I said last year. We need to
18 make those changes. And that means for
19 Council to really look critically of how
20 we are spending our money and make a
21 determination of what is the most
22 effective way to help our people so that
23 children are not shot down in the street
24 any longer. For me, this goes back 30
25 years because I remember Marcus Yates,

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2 who would have been 37 this year, when
3 he was shot and killed in Southwest
4 Philadelphia so many years ago. This is
5 the same story. This is the same stuff.
6 And we still got the same choices of
7 what we're going to do about it. Thank
8 you.

9 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you
10 very much, Reverend Holston.

11 Will the Clerk please call the
12 next witness.

13 THE CLERK: Lakesha Joseph.

14 MS. JOSEPH: Hello.

15 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Hello.
16 Please start your testimony. We hear
17 you.

18 MS. JOSEPH: Hi. My name is
19 Lakesha Joseph and I'm just a regular
20 citizen and my concern and my view has
21 been on these corner stores and liquor
22 stores and Asian food stores in the
23 neighborhoods. They offer illegal
24 service, and illegal services attract
25 illegal traffic. And from my personal

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2 experience living in North Philadelphia,
3 the Logan area, Cecil B. Moore area,
4 it's a lot of gunshots around those
5 types of businesses.

6 I lived in the County for seven
7 years. It was none of those types of
8 stores. No walkable liquor stores. No
9 corner stores. It was a CVS that you
10 had to go to for a snack. And the CVS
11 was like three long blocks down the
12 road. No gunshots the whole time I
13 lived out there. You didn't experience
14 that. My children now are 20 and 25.
15 And I asked them the other day when I
16 signed up for this call, had you ever
17 had to run from gunshots? And they both
18 said, no. That's because I don't
19 support businesses like that. And I'm
20 saying that to go out to regular
21 citizens, you have to stop supporting
22 these businesses that don't care about
23 our neighborhoods, don't care about our
24 people, not pouring back into our
25 people. And I just want to know what

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2 can be done about those establishments?

3 How can they be fined, ticketed, shut
4 down? What are the neighborhoods in the
5 County doing that we're not doing to
6 keep our areas clean? That's my
7 question for the leaders and that's my
8 plea to the citizens to stop supporting
9 these organizations.

10 And, yes, my father was shot in
11 the '70s. He was in a crossfire. The
12 bullet is still in his leg and he still
13 suffers to this day. He's a mailman of
14 over 42 years. He's still working
15 through the pandemic and he has often
16 been put in the hospital because of
17 problems with the leg. What can be
18 done? That's what I would like to know.
19 What can I do personally? What can the
20 citizens do?

21 I know we have to, like I said,
22 stop supporting them. But what can be
23 done where they're ticketed, fined and
24 shut down? Thank you. And I just want
25 to say to everybody out there that is

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2 fighting for the cause, thank you.

3 Every little bit helps. Never give up

4 hope. Thank you for letting me speak.

5 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you

6 very much for your testimony, young

7 lady. And also, you can follow up with

8 Joshu Harris in my office. If you have

9 a nuisance establishment or store in

10 your neighborhood, you can get in

11 contact with the Office of Licenses --

12 MS. JOSEPH: I have a few.

13 It's a few around here.

14 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: You can

15 also get in contact with the Department

16 of Health. You can also get in contact

17 with the District Attorney's Office,

18 Public Nuisance Taskforce. Those are

19 the three resources that can look into

20 any nuisance stores or establishments in

21 your neighborhood, and thank you for

22 your testimony.

23 Will the Clerk please call the

24 next --

25 MS. JOSEPH: Thank you.

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2 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: You're
3 welcome. Will the Clerk please call the
4 next witness.

5 THE CLERK: Yvonne Sawyer.

6 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yvonne
7 Sawyer, are you available?

8 Will the Clerk please call the
9 next witness.

10 THE CLERK: Davon Gaskins.

11 MR. GASKINS: Hello. Can you
12 hear --

13 MS. MAJOR: Hello. This is
14 Rania --

15 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: We're
16 going to let Davon Gaskins go first.
17 Davon Gaskins, can you please start with
18 your testimony.

19 MR. GASKINS: Okay. I'm a
20 little nervous. All right. So --

21 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Don't be
22 nervous. Take your time.

23 MR. GASKINS: I'm a Penn State
24 grad. I'm a paralegal at the District
25 Attorney's Office. I'm not here

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2 speaking on behalf of the Office at all.

3 I'm just speaking on behalf as a

4 citizen. So for the past eight years,

5 me and a friend of mine, Dawud Morris,

6 we've been running a -- we run the

7 biggest outdoor basketball league in the

8 City.

9 Last summer it got to the point

10 where it almost was basically like a

11 public nuisance because it was causing

12 traffic violations. The fact that me

13 and this guy, we risked our lives for

14 this. Like packing 300 people at 27th

15 and Clearfield three nights in the

16 summer, you can die doing that, and we

17 do this. And we reach out to people in

18 the City and it's like nobody wants to

19 help us. It's like nobody wants to

20 believe in us. Nobody seems to -- it

21 baffles me at this point. As a

22 professional, it baffles me because I go

23 to my job because I don't want to have

24 to do what I do. I work to not have to

25 work anymore.

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2 I would love to get up and be
3 able to walk to my park and not have to
4 worry about getting shot every day.
5 It's at the point -- but anyway, we
6 established a nonprofit, the Mid-Range
7 Morris Athletic Association. We expand
8 in multiple other sports, but we have an
9 infrastructure here that has been having
10 young Black men succeed and avoid
11 violence and I'm a product of it.

12 And it broke my heart when I
13 heard the guy from I think 100 Black Men
14 come on here and say something about the
15 basketball community, because we are one
16 of the only communities that's competing
17 against the rap and the entertainment
18 that's putting people to college, that's
19 sending these young boys away from this
20 stuff that's going on out here.

21 But at the same time, every
22 coach I talk to, every rec leader I talk
23 to, we're all having the same trouble.
24 We've all been 30, 40, whatever years,
25 whether you're from Gratz network, the

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2 Imhotep network, whether you're from
3 South Philly basketball network,
4 regardless of what network, we probably
5 have some of the most successful Black
6 men coming out of Philadelphia, outside
7 of basketball just as professionals.
8 I'm not even just talking about as
9 superstars in the NBA or anything like
10 that.

11 Most of the guys that I play
12 with, they are professional guys. So I
13 don't understand why when these people
14 come in these offices and they say, yo,
15 I need this money for this rec center
16 because I got 400 people that want to
17 come up here and watch basketball for
18 four hours or whatever, and people are
19 looking at them like they got their head
20 turned sideways.

21 And I really appreciate those
22 on the Council that have been
23 supportive. I really appreciate those
24 that are on the front line and doing the
25 best they can, because also what I'm

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2 saying is it's a real big time gap going
3 on in this country right now. I mean,
4 in this country and in this City. So
5 it's getting to the point where either
6 we're all going to get on the same page
7 about the primary problem of what
8 everybody is suffering about here or
9 we're going to keep lollygagging or
10 playing politics about these people's
11 lives, because I'm using young bulls
12 behind this.

13 So I'm seeing 300 people will
14 be able to get together for these Philly
15 social groups and Black Lives Matter and
16 stuff like that, but we can't get nobody
17 to come out for these babies. It's
18 baffling me, yo. It's baffling me.
19 I've been active on Philadelphia's
20 social media since Philadelphia's social
21 media has been a thing, so there's no
22 way we're not seeing everything each
23 other's sharing.

24 It's just getting to a point
25 now where I can sit back and I can look

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2 at City Council and we're kind of all in
3 the same network some way. And I can
4 tell we are all people that care. But
5 at some point, let's untie our hands,
6 yo. We really have to untie our hands,
7 yo. I just had a son. I held my son
8 today and I looked at him and almost
9 cried because I got to raise him because
10 one of these young bulls might kill him,
11 yo.

12 And I hear this motherfucker on
13 here earlier -- excuse my language. I'm
14 sorry. I heard this person on here
15 earlier talking about some we're making
16 sure we get the resources and we get the
17 data, and I hate to be mean and I hate
18 to come off like I'm cruel, we're
19 getting the data and we're getting the
20 research. And all I hear from that is
21 where I work at, is it's more people
22 that don't look like me, that don't come
23 from my neighborhood, that ain't even
24 from this City and getting jobs in data
25 entry, and getting jobs in GIS.

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2 We don't need to study our
3 problem no more. We know what's going
4 on. We know where it's coming from. We
5 know why these young bulls think these
6 crimes are acceptable. I can literally
7 go through this -- I can literally go
8 through rap songs for you, Council, show
9 crimes in our City and it will match up
10 word for word. And I'm not even talking
11 about from our rappers in this City.
12 These kids literally think this is how
13 the street life is being played out
14 because they're hearing it in the music.
15 And then people are looked at like we're
16 crazy when we go ahead and say that.
17 I'm 29 years old. I grew up on the
18 music.

19 I'm at the park with these
20 kids. I'm around these people. People
21 act like -- yo, they really feel like
22 don't nobody in the City care about
23 them. That's why they run around like
24 it's a Wild West. And now, I'm at the
25 point where I grew up and I had to worry

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2 about my life starting at 13. I'm
3 worrying about my babies, yo. So at
4 some point, somebody got to untie their
5 hands and get to the point where -- as a
6 matter of fact, I'm just bringing back
7 the solutions. Sorry about that.

8 It's a fundamental problem
9 that's going on. I don't see why
10 there's a difference between the
11 Anti-Violence Coalition, the Urban
12 Affairs and Parks & Recreation when
13 Parks & Recreation kind of serves as the
14 hub for all the communities. I don't
15 understand why these people in these
16 communities can't go to their rec
17 centers like how all of us who went to
18 college could go to the community center
19 and get information and stuff like that.

20 I don't understand why there's
21 not big bright billboards. I don't
22 understand why do we cut the lights off
23 and we live in high-crime areas at
24 parks. We need to brighten these
25 neighborhoods up, and we need to fund

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2 these parks. I'm not a big fan to
3 defund the police movement. I don't
4 even think these people live where I'm
5 at, so I don't know if they understand
6 how much the cops and the anti-violence
7 movement is -- it's a
8 hand-wash-the-other-hand type of thing.
9 I'm not going to get into that. But my
10 thing right now is the whole Parks & Rec
11 thing, it shouldn't be so detached in
12 communities. And Parks & Rec is really,
13 really failing these communities, yo.

14 There's no reason why I can
15 drive around Northern Liberties and I
16 see all of these new builds and these
17 new people here and I'm not hating on
18 them. But I want to be able to take my
19 son to the park that's in my
20 neighborhood. I don't want to have to
21 drive to theirs. That's theirs. I live
22 in North Philly and I got to drive to
23 South Philly to find an accessible park
24 just to take my kids to. That's
25 ridiculous.

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2 These kids ride their bikes
3 around the hood all day and y'all sit
4 back and wondering why they're busting
5 windows and shooting people and stuff
6 like that. We don't need no more data.
7 We don't need to spend no more money on
8 research. That's diverting money away
9 from these people. We need to give the
10 money to these people that's on the
11 ground. Give the money to the guy in
12 West Philly that's got a non-profit with
13 a small building that's looking out for
14 the young bulls. Give that money to him
15 because that's going to be more
16 effective than giving it to these data
17 research boys behind the glasses on this
18 thing, sitting back studying making us
19 more victims so the media can keep
20 talking about us.

21 We got a whole movement going
22 on in our City right now. I'm literally
23 one of the people active in trying to
24 fix my community and I ain't seen a dime
25 from this Black Lives Matter movement.

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2 And I don't look for a dime. I'm just
3 sitting back like, wow, Black Lives --
4 I'm seeing it in these people's windows.
5 I'm seeing it in neighborhoods that's
6 built to avoid my neighborhood. It's
7 amazing to me what's going on --

8 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Can you
9 summarize, Bro?

10 MR. GASKINS: I'll let people
11 go. I'll wrap up. I appreciate y'all.

12 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I'll say
13 this though, and I want to also -- one,
14 I want you to do one thing, young
15 brother. I feel your passion. I'm born
16 and raised in South Philly. I stand on
17 every rec center in South Philly and
18 Southwest I represent all have brand new
19 sports courts as well as a brand new
20 football field. But I understand your
21 passion as it relates to the issues to
22 be done across the City of Philadelphia,
23 but please reach out to my office or
24 inbox me on Instagram at CouncilmanKJ.

25 But also, I'm going to give you

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2 somebody that's in your lane especially
3 around athletics and I want you to
4 follow up, which is Councilman Isaiah
5 Thomas. And I think you two are on the
6 same page as it relates to the lane
7 around athletics, Parks & Rec, the
8 youth. And so, he's generation now.
9 He's definitely in the midst of what
10 you're doing. So please contact
11 Councilman Isaiah Thomas and then also
12 I'll follow up with you as well to make
13 sure you reach out. Okay?

14 MR. GASKINS: All right. I
15 love what you're doing.

16 COUNCILMAN THOMAS:
17 Mr. Chairman, just point of clarity.

18 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Councilman
19 Thomas, go ahead.

20 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Yes, sir.
21 First of all, thank you, Mr. Gaskins. I
22 appreciate your testimony. I appreciate
23 your passion. I recognize your concern
24 and of course, I'm a sports advocate.
25 As Councilmember Johnson said, we are

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2 here for support. Again, just for a
3 point of clarity, I do want to let you
4 know that I have sponsored your league
5 in the past. I'm open to supporting
6 your league again. I'm very familiar
7 with your league at 27th and Clearfield.
8 And if you do need more support, if
9 there is more of an effort that's
10 needed, again just communicate that to
11 us and we're here to support you.

12 I don't want you to feel that
13 you're out there by yourself. I
14 understand it's very difficult in the
15 world of athletics. I'm entrenched in
16 the basketball field so outside of City
17 Council, I'm actually the President of
18 the Coaches Association for the Public
19 League and I too do a number of free
20 leagues and events for the young people
21 across the City and I help other people
22 as it relates to sponsorships and
23 dollars for their event. So I
24 appreciate your passion, but I do want
25 you to know that you do have support and

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2 we on City Council are actually very
3 familiar with your league.

4 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

5 MR. GASKINS: When I come, I
6 want y'all to know my passion -- I'm not
7 upset at City Council at all. I kind of
8 understand that everybody's hands are a
9 little tied.

10 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON:

11 Mr. Gaskins, that's cool. We appreciate
12 you. We know you're not angry. And if
13 you are, you have a right to be because
14 at the end of the day, our babies need
15 to be safe and our young people need to
16 be supported, so I appreciate that
17 passion. I appreciate that energy to
18 hold us accountable because at the end
19 of the day, we work for you and not the
20 other way around. Thank you very much.
21 Looking forward to talking to you.

22 MR. GASKINS: I appreciate it.

23 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Will the
24 Clerk please call the next witness.

25 THE CLERK: The next witness is

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2 Rania Major.

3 MS. MAJOR: Good --

4 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Good

5 afternoon, Rania. State your name

6 and --

7 MS. MAJOR: Good afternoon,

8 Councilman.

9 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: -- proceed
10 with your testimony. Good afternoon.

11 How are you.

12 MS. MAJOR: I'm good. Thank
13 you. And good afternoon to everybody on
14 the call. I believe most of you know
15 me. I know most of you personally, and
16 you know that I wear two hats. I wear
17 the Defense Attorney hat with an office
18 in North Philadelphia at 5th and
19 Indiana, and I wear just the regular
20 citizen hat living in this 17th District
21 in Kenyatta's District.

22 And this started, Larry,
23 wherever you are on this call when you
24 came into office, and what's going on
25 and really is causing a lot of problems

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2 to the point that my staff members that
3 are Latino that live in the neighborhood
4 where we have an office are even afraid
5 to go to the corner store where my
6 office is. I'm afraid to go to the
7 corner store where my office is.

8 The problem is when you balance
9 criminal justice reform, you forgot to
10 put a weight on one side and that was
11 the guns. And while it's great for me
12 as a defense attorney and while it's
13 great for me to help my clients that
14 need some reform and need classes and
15 different things that I just heard the
16 gentleman sort of reference with the
17 basketball league, it does nothing to
18 stop the gun violence.

19 Commissioner Outlaw, I have not
20 met you yet. I know you're new to the
21 City. I don't know if you've heard what
22 the Krasner Special is. In the original
23 days when Larry took over the office, it
24 was a 6- to 23- or 9- to 23-month
25 sentence for having a gun on the street,

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2 not necessarily using it, not an
3 assault, not a homicide obviously, but
4 for just having the gun. And that sent
5 a message out to the community.

6 And I've had police officer
7 friends come up and tell me that they
8 had known criminals that they've
9 arrested before, come up in their face
10 and say to them, I'll take a six-month
11 hit, I'll take a nine-month hit. I've
12 had people walk in my office and say,
13 can you get me the Krasner Special.
14 That started the systemic and the big
15 increase, not to mention all the
16 socialization issues that we all know
17 about.

18 I do not believe in defunding
19 the police. I think right now you can't
20 defund them. If anything, you need to
21 keep the funding so that you can better
22 educate the police officers. The bad
23 cops -- the bad cops, get rid of. We
24 know who they are. I sue them. The
25 ones that make false arrests and false

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2 allegations, they hurt the good
3 officers.

4 And, Commissioner Outlaw, with
5 all due respect not having met you, you
6 need to back your officers too. For
7 example, what happened on the highway, I
8 asked an officer friend after the tear
9 gas went out, why don't you use water,
10 because my mother who's in Florida and
11 saw it on national news said, why don't
12 they use water. That's what they did in
13 the '60s and '70s for those of you who
14 are around my age group.

15 And the officer explained to me
16 that tear gas is actually less harmful
17 and causes less injuries than water
18 would, and I'm not talking about the
19 SWAT officer that went up and
20 individually shot people in the face.
21 Clearly, that was wrong. But that
22 street, that highway, needed to be
23 cleared. There is a balance in
24 everything. And with regard to the guns
25 and the sentencing and the deterrent

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2 effect of criminal law and prosecution,
3 we have lost it. And that's what's
4 wrong with our City. There needs to be
5 more of a deterrent effect when it comes
6 to these guns.

7 Mayor Kenney, I don't know if
8 you're on here, Larry, you both should
9 come out strong on television and
10 address people and tell them this is not
11 going to happen anymore instead of us
12 just seeing you marching with Black
13 Lives Matter, which I also support and
14 you all know that. There is a balance,
15 a balance between the two and you need
16 to find the way. And until our City
17 gets to that point, we are going to keep
18 having these shootings.

19 I represent family members
20 who's had a mother of a baby shot
21 because mother was sitting on a
22 doorstep, fighting over grandchild
23 custody issues now and seeing all these
24 little children through buildings,
25 through cars, getting killed. It took

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2 us three and a half years to get to this
3 point, that you're having a Committee
4 meeting about it. Well, we should have
5 had this at least years ago.

6 And I implore you -- not that I
7 want to hurt my clients in sentencing.
8 But you need to look on a case-by-case
9 basis at these gun cases. There's a
10 difference between someone, and this is
11 a current matter -- well, maybe I
12 shouldn't bring it up because the DA's
13 on the phone. But if somebody has a gun
14 in their house and they're a former
15 convicted felon but they don't know a
16 gun is in the house because their
17 girlfriend or boyfriend has it and then
18 they hear somebody break in their house,
19 so the girlfriend or boyfriend gives it
20 the former convicted convict, there's a
21 difference between that case and a case
22 where someone is wielding a gun out on
23 the street. We need the police
24 presence, particularly in the
25 hard-hitting communities and we all know

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2 where they are.

3 We literally now closed 5th
4 street, North 5th Street closes down
5 now. And, Councilperson Quinones, if
6 you're on here, she can confirm it. We
7 close down 4 or 5 o'clock every store
8 except for the pizza place because even
9 the residents are afraid. This is no
10 way for our community to live. This is
11 no way for anybody in Southwest, West,
12 South, Center City, whatever you want to
13 call it, and you need to strike a
14 balance. It was overkill.

15 The PWIDs, the possession with
16 intent to distribute, the retail theft,
17 maybe an RSP, a theft of a motor
18 vehicle, sure, you can do better as far
19 as those crimes in getting them into
20 programs or giving them more probation
21 or giving them a shorter sentence. But
22 certain gun cases short of something
23 where it was a self-defense issue or
24 something like that, somebody with a
25 first-time gun offense -- I once had

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2 somebody from the military that came
3 here from Virginia and got arrested when
4 his ex-wife and he were having a fight
5 about their child's custody and they
6 found out he had an unregistered gun in
7 his car here in Philly. That's the kind
8 of case that can just go away.

9 That's the kind of case where
10 you give a light sentence. That's the
11 kind of case you put out in the
12 community that we understand some things
13 go both ways. But you need to come out
14 strong on these guns and let them know
15 they're going to get arrested and let
16 the police arrest them. And let the
17 preliminary hearing -- let me as a
18 defense attorney do my job. Let me help
19 you sort through the melee of any
20 particular case. Let the judge decide,
21 but prosecute them.

22 Also, the no-bail situation on
23 some of these gun cases, it used to be
24 \$250,000 which is crazy. Now, it's more
25 reasonable. I just had one guy get

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2 popped for 100K on two separate cases
3 where he got arrested on the same day
4 for gun charges, and that's more than a
5 little high but it's definitely sending
6 a message. He has a detainer and I
7 wanted him to go -- he wanted to go to
8 his detainer county which is not
9 Philadelphia, but my bail decreased
10 motion was denied.

11 Just like anything else you
12 look at in your life, you need to look
13 at it individually and not just lump it
14 together. And we lumped all the gun
15 cases together and that was the mistake.
16 And as far as everything else, you know
17 it. They need better schooling. They
18 need afterschool programs. I, myself,
19 am childless. But I bleed for anybody
20 that has a child in this City that
21 cannot get the resources that they need
22 or closing out art programs or
23 afterschool programs and there are
24 plenty of boards that can help out. I
25 sit on TRC's Board. I'm on the Board

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2 with John Dye in Center for Returning
3 Citizens.

4 People need more support
5 socially and I know balancing a budget
6 for this City particularly with
7 everything we're going through in
8 expenses now must be absolutely crazy.
9 But the gun case, the gun situation and
10 the violence situation is a quick nip in
11 the bud that will be a domino effect.
12 Just like the dominos built up, now you
13 have to build them back down by coming
14 out strong now on this gun violence and
15 protect all of our citizens. Thank you.
16 Are you there?

17 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you
18 very much for your testimony. And I
19 want to thank everyone for taking time
20 out of their busy schedule for the last
21 two days to listen to the hearing,
22 listen to the recommendations, most
23 importantly giving us your honest
24 feedback regarding what we need to do as
25 a City to address the senseless gun

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2 violence that we are seeing here
3 currently.

4 This will not be our last
5 hearing. We will continue to stay on
6 this case until we get to the bottom of
7 reducing or even eliminating gun
8 violence in the City of Philadelphia,
9 but most importantly, protecting and
10 supporting our young people.

11 This concludes the hearing of
12 the Special Committee on Gun Violence.
13 We will adjourn to the call of the
14 Chair. I want to personally thank all
15 of my colleagues as always stepping up
16 to the plate and dedicating your time
17 and energy and your efforts as we
18 collectively address this issue of gun
19 violence keeping our City safe.

20 Thank you very much. I'll talk
21 to you soon.

22 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you,
23 Chair, for all your work.

24 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: You're
25 welcome. Thank you very much.

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2 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you,
3 Chairman. Great job.

4 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you.

5 (Special Committee on Gun
6 Violence Prevention concluded at
7 3:35 p.m.)

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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

(The foregoing certification of
this transcript does not apply to any
reproduction of the same by any means,
unless under the direct control and/or
supervision of the certifying reporter.)

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