

Special Committee on Poverty Reduction and Prevention  
November 18, 2019

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA  
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON POVERTY REDUCTION AND PREVENTION

The Philadelphia Corporation  
For the Aging  
642 North Broad Street  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
Monday, November 18, 2019  
4:26 p.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCIL PRESIDENT DARRELL L. CLARKE  
COUNCILMAN ALLAN DOMB

RESOLUTIONS: 190239

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2                   MS. GLADSTEIN: Good evening, everyone.  
3 Thank you so much for being here.

4                   This is the first of three subcommittee  
5 meetings of City Council Special Committee on  
6 Poverty Reduction and Prevention. So, I am  
7 really pleased to see this turnout this  
8 evening -- afternoon/evening. Starting in the  
9 afternoon, going into the evening. So, we  
10 really appreciate it.

11                  I'm just going to do a few opening  
12 words, talk to you a little bit about the  
13 agenda. And then, have the subcommittee members  
14 introduce themselves. And really, we are trying  
15 to reserve a significant amount of time for  
16 conversation. So, we took this meeting outside  
17 of the formal halls of City Hall and City  
18 Council Chambers so we can set up the room in a  
19 way that we can discuss the proposals that are  
20 on the table right now, and also get ideas about  
21 some additional or new proposals and have a  
22 quality conversation to take back and absorb and  
23 continue to do more work on.

24                  So, we are expecting all of you to  
25 have -- to be able to add your experiences and

1 thoughts as we go through this process.

2 My name is Eva Gladstein. I'm Deputy  
3 Managing Director for Health and Human Services.  
4 And I'm honored to be one of the four co-chairs  
5 of this City Council Special Committee.

6 Councilman Domb has joined us, so we appreciate  
7 his interest and, you know, coming to hear what  
8 you have to say and learn from that.

9 Councilwoman Maria Quinones-Sanchez  
10 unfortunately is not able to be here, but she's  
11 represented by staff, as well. I want to  
12 express appreciation. She has provided real  
13 leadership in this project. And certainly,  
14 Council President Darrell Clarke is the person  
15 who empowered all this and all of us to get this  
16 work going. And it's really significant. So,  
17 we appreciate that.

18 In case you haven't noticed, this is  
19 a -- we are holding this meeting in the  
20 auditorium of The Philadelphia Corporation For  
21 Aging. This will be recorded, streamed. There  
22 is a stenographer, Angela -- did I get that  
23 right -- who will be recording, so we will have  
24 all of the information captured today and  
25 available on City Council's website.

1           So, one of the things I do want to do is  
2 say our word of appreciation To the Corporation  
3 for Aging. Ben Ellis is here representing.

4           (Applause.)

5           MS. GLADSTEIN: That's right. Applause  
6 is good. Gives us such a beautiful space in  
7 which to work this evening as well as some  
8 refreshments to keep us going until you get home  
9 tonight. So, refreshments are in the rear.

10           Also in the rear is a resource table  
11 that you can go by, if you haven't already, and  
12 pick up materials at any point that you want to  
13 do that. So, I'm going to start first with a  
14 little piece of homework.

15           One of the things, there are three  
16 subcommittees. There is one on housing. There  
17 is one on jobs and education. And then this  
18 committee, which is on the social safety net.  
19 And one of the first things that we had to do as  
20 a subcommittee was define what we meant by  
21 social safety net, which is not the easiest  
22 thing in the world to do. So, I want to share  
23 what our definition is so that that can help  
24 guide our discussion going forward this evening.

25           So, here you go. The Special Committee

1 on Poverty Reduction and Prevention looks to  
2 improve the social safety net to safeguard every  
3 Philadelphian's access to healthcare, nutritious  
4 food, housing and basic income supports. The  
5 social safety net is a collection of services  
6 and supports to ensure that all Philadelphians  
7 are healthy, have the basic building blocks for  
8 economic mobility and are well positioned to  
9 thrive.

10 And so, I think unlike the other  
11 subcommittees, we are looking at recommendations  
12 and proposals that can improve the quality of  
13 life for Philadelphians, particularly those with  
14 very low or no income. That may or may not help  
15 us meet the overarching goal of the special  
16 committee, which is quite ambitious, which is to  
17 help a hundred thousand individuals in  
18 Philadelphia move out of poverty by 2024. It's  
19 a very ambitious goal.

20 For those of you who are students of  
21 this, the way the Federal Government counts  
22 poverty is based upon income. So, doesn't  
23 necessarily take into account other kinds of  
24 supports that we think are basic such as access  
25 to food, healthcare, housing, et cetera. But

1 this subcommittee is definitely looking at those  
2 additional supports as being necessary for  
3 people to have the building blocks and to be  
4 able to move out of poverty at some point;  
5 hopefully, near time in the future and according  
6 to their own goals.

7 So, I am going to stop talking for a  
8 minute before we get to the rest of our agenda  
9 and ask members of the subcommittee to introduce  
10 themselves. I am going to start on this side of  
11 the room. And I hope most of you are sitting up  
12 front, but not all of you.

13 I am looking at Ben.

14 MR. ELLIS: My name is Ben Ellis. I'm  
15 Vice President of Finance for Philadelphia  
16 Corporation For Aging.

17 MS. WOLFF: Hi, everyone. My name is  
18 Jennifer Wolff. I'm Policy Analyst at  
19 Pennsylvania Health Access Network.

20 MR. GONZALEZ: Buenos Tardes. My name  
21 is Will Gonzalez, the Executive Director of  
22 Ceiba.

23 MS. DIETRICH: Hi. Sharon Dietrich.  
24 I'm a Litigation Director at Community Legal  
25 Services.

1 MR. BERGMAN: Glenn Bergman, Deputy  
2 Director at Philabundance.

3 MS. FISHER: Hi. I'm Kathy Fisher,  
4 Policy Director at the Greater Philadelphia  
5 Coalition Against Hunger.

6 MS. ABERNATHY: Pauline Abernathy,  
7 Benefits Data Trust.

8 MS. ROMENS: Hi. Kristin Romens from  
9 the PEW Charitable Trust.

10 MS. ROBINSON: Hi. I'm Debbie  
11 Robinson. I'm a self-advocate. Also, I'm the  
12 Executive Director of a non-profit called  
13 Speaking for Ourselves. I just joined the  
14 committee a couple weeks ago.

15 MS. SCOTT: Hi. Stephanie Scott,  
16 Department of Human Services of Philadelphia  
17 County Assistant's Office.

18 MS. WILLIAMS: I'm Ms. Williams. I'm a  
19 consultant with CEO.

20 MS. BROWN: I'm Carolyn Brown, Director  
21 of Planning Evaluation with the Office of  
22 Community Empowerment and Opportunity.

23 MS. GLADSTEIN: All right. We got  
24 everybody? Did I miss anybody?

25 So, thank you again. And folks have --

1 on the subcommittees have worked really hard and  
2 our committed and committed to continuing to  
3 work hard to kind of get this right. So, what  
4 we are presenting you tonight are a series of  
5 recommendations that were kind of work-shopped  
6 amongst ourselves. But we want to get your  
7 input and feedback as well as hearing if you  
8 have additional ideas for other proposals around  
9 strengthening the social safety net.

10 So, the way we are going to work the  
11 agenda is we are going to have fairly brief  
12 presentations on three different groups of  
13 proposals. The first is called Removing  
14 Barriers. And you will learn what that is in a  
15 minute. The second is about Growing Income.  
16 And the third is on Benefits Access.

17 When those presentations are done, I  
18 want to try to ask you to hold questions unless  
19 it's for clarification. What we are going to do  
20 is, you're signature at a table. And there is a  
21 card on the table telling you which of those  
22 sets of proposals we are going to discuss at  
23 that table. We will give you the opportunity  
24 for discussion with a facilitator and a record  
25 keeper of that discussion. And you will have



1 the opportunity to go to two tables and to  
2 address two of the topics this evening so you  
3 can have a full discussion.

4           There is a table in the rear where if  
5 you want to present some new ideas, we will also  
6 have staff there so that you can present those  
7 ideas for to us bring back to our subcommittee.  
8 And also, I think at every table there are  
9 sticky notes. And folks can feel free to write  
10 their ideas on the sticky notes. And we will be  
11 putting them up on the news print sheets and  
12 also on the rear wall so we can take that back  
13 and process that again.

14           Is that clear to everybody? We will be  
15 keeping time, so you kind of know when the  
16 discussion is starting and when to move from one  
17 discussion table to a second discussion table.

18           So with that, I'm going to ask Rachel  
19 Eisenberg and Sharon Dietrich to reveal to you  
20 what we mean by Removing Barriers.

21           MR. SELLERS: Can I ask a question?

22           I want to know if the committee has come  
23 up with an idea of what they consider poverty to  
24 be or what started family of one or family of  
25 four? What do you consider poverty number to

1 be?

2 MS. GLADSTEIN: We are using the Federal  
3 Poverty Level Definition, which one could debate  
4 whether or not that is fair because it's been  
5 the same definition for decades and doesn't  
6 cover a lot of situations including what the  
7 costs are getting particular area or the  
8 benefits that might be available.

9 But in the City of Philadelphia, our  
10 poverty level was most recently determined by  
11 the Federal Government to be 24.5 percent,  
12 something under 400,000 individuals living under  
13 that federal poverty level. And for a family of  
14 four, it's about \$25,000 plus or minus. I think  
15 many of us would argue that, actually, you need  
16 a much higher income to be able to move out of  
17 poverty in the City of Philadelphia.

18 But for the purpose of tonight's  
19 discussion, that's the definition that we are  
20 using.

21 MS. EISENBERG: Good evening, everyone.  
22 Thank you to subcommittee members for having me  
23 to speak with you here today. My name is Rachel  
24 Eisenberg. And I'm the Director of Policy and  
25 Planning for the Managing Director's Office of

1 Criminal Justice. And I'm here to set a little  
2 bit around the relationship between the criminal  
3 justice system and poverty in the City of  
4 Philadelphia.

5 So, there is a joint recognition between  
6 the City and its criminal justice partner  
7 agencies that for just far too long, the  
8 Criminal Justice System has been overly punitive  
9 and has created barriers to reentry and economic  
10 prosperity that are damaging to both individuals  
11 and communities as a whole.

12 Support is growing nationwide around  
13 criminal justice reform and reducing mass  
14 incarceration. In fact, the City has been  
15 engaged in a large scale collaborative criminal  
16 justice reform effort since 2015 to reduce the  
17 size of the local jail population by 50 percent  
18 in five years. And to date, we have  
19 accomplished or we have reduced the jail  
20 population by 40 percent and have been able to  
21 close one of the oldest and largest jail  
22 facilities in the City.

23 (Applause.)

24 So, that was an incredible undertaking  
25 by both local criminal justice agencies and

1 community members to jointly reform the system  
2 and create pathways out of the criminal justice  
3 system from the earlier interest. And so, we  
4 are very proud of that. But there is still a  
5 lot more work to do

6 And so despite the progress that we  
7 made, the Criminal Justice System continues to  
8 impact far too many people in ways that are life  
9 altering and long lasting.

10 Nationally, one in three individuals in  
11 this country have criminal records. And here in  
12 Philadelphia, there are 35,000 people on local  
13 probation and parole; and 25,000 people that are  
14 admitted to our jails approximately in a given  
15 year. The collateral consequences of criminal  
16 records and incarceration are deeply felt by  
17 individuals in communities who are directly  
18 impacted; particularly, communities of color and  
19 those who experience poverty.

20 Criminal records put up barriers to  
21 employment, education, housing, and other -- and  
22 establishing other family and community  
23 supports. Incarceration and the disconnection  
24 that results from that only exacerbates those  
25 barriers. And a vast majority of people in the

1 criminal justice system also experience poverty.

2 We know that between 80and 90 percent of  
3 the people charged with a crime in Philadelphia,  
4 have either a court-appointed counsel or public  
5 defender. Meaning, they don't have the ability  
6 to afford an attorney. And the economic impacts  
7 of the system itself are astounding. From the  
8 earliest stages of the criminal justice process,  
9 an individual's ability to pay money bail  
10 impacts whether they are incarcerated pre-trial.

11 Court fines and fees are assessed in all  
12 cases. And supervision fees and diversionary  
13 program fees only add to the economic impacts of  
14 criminal justice involvement. And the ability  
15 to pay those fees impacts whether or not you're  
16 able to have your records sealed under clean  
17 state, which is something that Sharon will  
18 discuss later.

19 So, we are working hard in Philadelphia  
20 to ensure that justice does not depend on  
21 people's financial situation, but there is a lot  
22 more to do. We look forward to working  
23 collaboratively with this committee and other  
24 stakeholders to ensure that the justice system  
25 is fair and equitable for everyone regardless of

1 your race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation  
2 or your ability to pay.

3 Thank you.

4 (Applause.)

5 MS. DIETRICH: Hi, everyone. Again, I'm  
6 Sharon Dietrich. I brought some slides today to  
7 help me with my presentation, which hopefully  
8 will work. Yes. We are off to a promising  
9 start.

10 So, I'm with the employment unit at  
11 Community Legal Services, where we serve about  
12 1500 new clients a year. And of that 1500 new  
13 clients, 1000 of them come in about health with  
14 their criminal records, which is two out of  
15 three. I think a really remarkable number.

16 And primarily, what they are looking for  
17 when they come in is they say, I want to get my  
18 record expunged. And it's pretty clear why they  
19 want that. They recognize that employers of  
20 background screening, housing providers even  
21 educational institutions. And getting away from  
22 your record can be one of the key things you can  
23 do to quickly make a big difference in your  
24 life.

25 So, we worked on a law called Clean

1 Slate that has gone into effect over the last  
2 year. And it, basically, does two things. The  
3 primary thing that I will be talking about is  
4 that it makes it possible for a person to get  
5 their record, certain records cleared even  
6 without having to find a lawyer or going to  
7 court. But instead, technology in possible  
8 situations, seals up their record if they are  
9 eligible. And it applies to non-convictions.

10 So you know, you had a case, and it's  
11 dropped or you are found not guilty. It applies  
12 to what are called summary convictions, below a  
13 misdemeanor. If ten years have gone by and you  
14 have paid off your fines and costs. And  
15 finally, it applies to misdemeanor convictions,  
16 if ten years have gone by without you being  
17 convicted of another felony or a misdemeanor and  
18 your fines and costs are paid.

19 So far, this has been an extraordinary  
20 successful law as far as it's gone because  
21 31 million cases are on their way to being  
22 sealed automatically without a person needing a  
23 lawyer.

24 In addition, Clean Slate made it  
25 possible for other things that were not

1 previously able to be sealed, but you need a  
2 lawyer for them. Just so you know, though, like  
3 second degree simple assault, you cannot be  
4 sealable, and now it is.

5           So -- so now can I change the slide?  
6 Yes, I can. Okay. But as good as it is with  
7 31 million cases, our goal at CLS is to make  
8 this as broad as it can possibly be because that  
9 is the beauty of this. The more people we can  
10 do throughout a nation, the more people can be  
11 helped by this. And there is certain things  
12 that are a problem with it being as broadly  
13 applicable as it could be.

14           The first is, the process only works  
15 when there is data in the system. And  
16 unfortunately, many cases in Philadelphia,  
17 especially the old cases from before 2006, do  
18 not have that grade in it in the data. It  
19 doesn't say, was it a misdemeanor? Was it a  
20 felony? Was it a second degree misdemeanor or a  
21 third degree misdemeanor? That's a problem  
22 because if it doesn't say that, you can't get  
23 your case automatically sealed.

24           The second thing, is that if you owe  
25 court fines and costs on a case, that case is



1 not going to be sealed. And that is a huge  
2 barrier for people as you will hear more about  
3 today.

4 And finally, Pennsylvania's running  
5 behind a lot of states in that we do not allow  
6 any felony conviction to be sealed no matter how  
7 old it is or anything that you have done to turn  
8 your life around, excuse me. So particularly, a  
9 lot of drug felonies are holding people back but  
10 other types, as well. And we are kind of behind  
11 the rest of the country, at least about  
12 three-fifths of the country now is allowing for  
13 felonies to be sealed.

14 Indeed, Michigan is about to pass one of  
15 these Clean Slate laws for automatic sealing,  
16 allowing felonies to be automatically sealed.  
17 But we don't even have the right to file a  
18 petition to get such a case sealed.

19 So, our recommendations on Clean Slate  
20 to make it more effective are the following.

21 First of all, we would like to see the  
22 courts help out the technology by putting some  
23 data in where it doesn't already exist. So,  
24 those misdemeanor cases can automatically be  
25 sealed. So, that is a labor intensive thing,

1 unfortunately. And some support, financial  
2 support from the state would help. But we would  
3 like to see the Philadelphia courts, which are  
4 interested, commit that they will try to get as  
5 many grades as possible in so minor convictions  
6 like DUI or low level theft or prostitution,  
7 whatnot that go back ten years are automatically  
8 sealed and those people can move forward.

9           The second thing is, we want to see the  
10 barrier of fines and costs eliminated. And  
11 obviously, one way it could eliminated is if we  
12 could eliminate fines and costs. And you will  
13 hear more about that. And of course, we would  
14 be supportive of that. But short of that, we  
15 would like to support a bill that Jordan Harris,  
16 who was the prime sponsor from Philadelphia  
17 along with Senator Anthony Williams for Clean  
18 Slate.

19           Jordan Harris has a house bill 1540 that  
20 would say it's only if you owe restitution that  
21 you would be prohibited from getting your  
22 misdemeanor or summary offense sealed. And most  
23 cases, honestly, do not involve restitution.  
24 That would greatly increase the number of cases  
25 sealed.

1           And finally, we want to see the General  
2 Assembly start to get with it and get those  
3 felony convictions eligible to be sealed, as  
4 well. So, those are our recommendations on  
5 Clean Slate.

6           Just to let you know, if you are  
7 interested in this whole Clean Slate thing, a  
8 place for more information is a website that CLS  
9 runs called mycleanslatePA.com. Everything you  
10 want to know, I think, about Clean Slate will be  
11 available on that website. Or also, if you want  
12 to see whether the law is going to help you, you  
13 can go to an expungement clinic. If you are a  
14 low income Philadelphian, you can come into CLS  
15 for intake. We take new cases at our Center  
16 City office, 15th and Chestnut, every Monday  
17 through Friday from 9 to 12.

18           And that's it for me. Thank you.

19           (Applause.)

20           MS. GLADSTEIN: That's what we mean by  
21 Removing Barriers. And again, that was kind of  
22 a hint of some of the other recommendations that  
23 are coming. So, thank you Rachel and Sharon.  
24 And again, when we get ready for small group  
25 discussions, if you are interested in learning

1 more and providing input on this recommendation,  
2 just make sure you go to one of the tables where  
3 a placard says Removing Barriers.

4 And next -- who is going first? We have  
5 two Wills representing together. Will Gonzalez  
6 is going first, and then Will Hall.

7 MR. GONZALEZ: Thank you, Eva. You  
8 proved where there is "Wills" there is ways.

9 Thank you for coming to this important  
10 hearing and for inviting me to testify. My name  
11 is Will Gonzalez. I'm the Executive Director of  
12 CEIBA.

13 Local earned income tax credits make  
14 sense. The Earned Income Tax Credit, which is a  
15 federal program, is one of the most successful  
16 and deep poverty programs in the country.

17 And to give you an example, if a family  
18 of four earning around \$16,000 can get up to  
19 \$6,431 in terms of a one-time tax line. There  
20 is some issues in terms of making sure that  
21 everybody who is eligible to get that credit  
22 applies for it. And let me say that I'm so  
23 proud to be in Philadelphia where amazing  
24 efforts are being made by CEIBA, the Campaign  
25 for Working Family, AARP, others to make sure

1 that Department of Revenue and others are doing  
2 their maximum to make sure that people apply for  
3 this federal tax credit.

4           However, as you know, with the rate of  
5 poverty that we have in the City, that's not  
6 enough. And so, having a Pennsylvania State  
7 Earned Income Tax Credit and a Philadelphia  
8 Local City Earned Income Tax Credit is very  
9 helpful for poor families. There is numerous  
10 studies showing the value of both the federal  
11 EITC and, also, adding onto that state and local  
12 EITCs. These EITCs help working families make  
13 ends meet. It keeps families working and reduce  
14 poverty, especially among children.

15           The EITC has kept more children living  
16 above the poverty line than any other tax credit  
17 program.

18           For example, in Montgomery County,  
19 Maryland, a local EITC increased the probability  
20 of low birth rate babies between 1.9 percent to  
21 2.4 percent points among likely eligible  
22 mothers.

23           Having a state -- talking about  
24 Pennsylvania state, EITC is not crazy.  
25 Twenty-nine states plus the District of Columbia

1 and Puerto Rico have their own version of their  
2 Federal Earned Income Tax Credit. Let me first  
3 start -- because I know that they are recording  
4 this. And the acronym EITC is already being  
5 used in Pennsylvania for something else.

6 Another tax credit program, believe it or not.

7           But this particular EITC is used to give  
8 tax breaks to businesses who may qualify  
9 donations to scholarship, educational  
10 improvement and kindergarten scholarships. So  
11 when I am talking about the EITC in  
12 Pennsylvania, I'm really meaning the Earned  
13 Income Tax Credit.

14           Another reason why it's important to  
15 have a state earned income tax credit is that in  
16 Pennsylvania, we have a significantly regressive  
17 tax system. What that means is that below  
18 income families pay proportionately more in  
19 their taxes than higher income brackets. In  
20 Pennsylvania, has a Tax Forgiveness Program, but  
21 that doesn't incentivize work. And its benefits  
22 are limited to the amount of tax owed. And that  
23 is not helpful to those who pay little tax,  
24 including the lowest income working families.  
25 And many of those who are just entering the

1 workforce.

2           A state EITC is not that costly. To  
3 provide its own credit, Pennsylvania would only  
4 need to add one line item to its tax form. The  
5 calculations are straightforward. Most state  
6 Earned Income Tax Credit programs are set as the  
7 percentage of the Federal Income Tax Rate  
8 program. So basically, the state filers would  
9 simply multiple that percentage by the tax  
10 amount of the federal income tax credit to  
11 determine the amount of the state Earned Income  
12 Tax Credit.

13           In most states, the straight income tax  
14 credit is refundable. This means that tax  
15 filers can claim the maximum value of the state  
16 tax credit, even if that exceeds what they owe  
17 in tax liability.

18           Pennsylvania is ready to have a state  
19 EITC. In 2009, the General Assembly Joint State  
20 Government Commission researched the subject,  
21 put out a study and said that it could provide  
22 an additional 10 percent of the Federal Earned  
23 Income Tax Credit at a cost to the Commonwealth  
24 of \$144 million. States with State Earned  
25 Income Tax Credits have very low administrative

1 costs, typically less than 1 percent.

2 Philadelphia is also ready, thanks to  
3 Councilman Domb and Councilwoman Maria  
4 Quinones-Sanchez, to have a Philly local EITC.  
5 There is a bill currently in City Council, and I  
6 hope you can support that. I don't know if I  
7 can do advocacy here. But anyway, there is a  
8 bill currently in City Council that is asking to  
9 put into effect a local Earned Income Tax  
10 Credit.

11 Philadelphians need both a state and a  
12 local EITC. People who live in Philadelphia  
13 bear the highest tax burden of any metro area in  
14 the US, 18 percent. If the City leadership can  
15 be sensitive to the tax burdens borne by big  
16 business and take into consideration that to  
17 martial out all other efforts to implement tax  
18 cuts for businesses like Amazon and bring them  
19 to Philadelphia, then why can't we expect the  
20 City to have the capacity to find ways to  
21 implement a local EITC to help low-wage earning  
22 families stay in Philadelphia?

23 If we are committed to equitable  
24 development, then we have to encourage workers  
25 to live in the City at the same time that we



1 seek to encourage corporations to come to  
2 Philadelphia. The local EITC and the state EITC  
3 are good investments. They incentivize low  
4 income individuals to work, and they have a  
5 multiplier effect. For every dollar in EITC or  
6 tax refunds that someone gets, we can say it's  
7 like a 15 percent investment in businesses and  
8 the neighborhoods in the local economy. So, we  
9 need both a local Philadelphia EITC and a state  
10 EITC in the arsenal of our Special Committee on  
11 Poverty Prevention and Reduction.

12 Thank you for your attention to this  
13 matter.

14 (Applause.)

15 MR. HALL: Good evening. My name is  
16 Will Hall. I'm the Office of Community  
17 Empowerment and Opportunity. I'm the Director  
18 of Financial Inclusion. And I want to talk a  
19 little bit about what the effects of some of the  
20 proposals around earned income would be for the  
21 clients that our services work with.

22 So, one of the things I do in my role is  
23 financial empowerment centers, which offer free  
24 one-on-one counseling to primarily low and  
25 moderate income Philadelphians. A lot of the

1 folks who come in, come in at a place of crisis,  
2 facing utility shutoff or an eviction notice or  
3 something like that. And one of the first  
4 things once we dealt with the immediate threat,  
5 is work with a client to put together a crisis  
6 budget, just a budget that meets the most basic  
7 needs and is balanced month to month.

8           Unfortunately, a lot of the clients come  
9 in don't have sufficient income to put together  
10 a crisis budget. The model is supposed to grow  
11 folks from there to financial security to asset  
12 accumulation. But without sufficient income, we  
13 can't do that initial crisis budget.

14           So, one of the recommendations from the  
15 committee is an increase in TANF for a family of  
16 three. The proposed increase would phase in  
17 from \$403 a month up to over \$880 a month. With  
18 that extra \$480 a month, our counselors can work  
19 with low income individuals to put together a  
20 crisis budget which has, you know, immediate  
21 stress relieving effects and, also, greater  
22 security for the family, but also long term  
23 effects. I believe recommendation points to  
24 research around the effect it has on children as  
25 they are going to school to not be dealing with

1 the most, you know, awful parts of living in  
2 poverty.

3 And Will talked a lot about the EITC  
4 proposals. Gave another snapshot for that.  
5 Family of four making \$32,000 that comes into  
6 our financial empowerment centers, through EITC  
7 proposals, would see tax refund of a little over  
8 a thousand dollars a year. I just want to give  
9 you an idea of what our counselors can help  
10 folks do with that extra money.

11 Earlier this year, the State Treasurer  
12 announced that Keystone for Scholars Program. A  
13 hundred dollars goes into an account for every  
14 child born after January 1, 2019. And the  
15 Treasurer estimates that if the family puts \$25  
16 into the account every month, but the time the  
17 child is ready to go to college, there will be  
18 \$10,000 in the account, which is great.  
19 Unfortunately, most of the clients we see don't  
20 have that extra \$25 a month.

21 This family of four through the EITC  
22 proposals would have the \$600 needed every year  
23 to match that or make more than match that money  
24 the state is providing to help that family grow  
25 well so that college isn't just an idea but is a

1 actual goal for the two children living in this  
2 family.

3 I used to be a bankruptcy attorney. We  
4 go through bankruptcy. The IRS calculates how  
5 much you need for basic living expenses. And  
6 they give a family of four a credit of about  
7 \$516 a year for personal care and services. And  
8 as any of us know who have worked with folks who  
9 are low income, personal care service is one of  
10 the first things to go when you can't meet your  
11 basic needs. Which has adverse impacts on not  
12 only personal well being but also job prospects  
13 and how much kids attain in school when they are  
14 not dressed appropriately. This thousand  
15 dollars would meet that 516-dollar need.

16 That same IRS testing gives a family of  
17 the four \$260 allowance for out-of-pocket  
18 medical costs every month. Medical costs that  
19 are often forgone and lead to much higher costs,  
20 future medical problems. This thousand dollar  
21 credit would cover at least four of those months  
22 for this family of four.

23 These are just some of the things that  
24 our counselors run into helping folks put  
25 together budgets as they come in. And why any

1 of them would be very supportive of the EITC and  
2 the TANF recommendations.

3 Thank you to the committee for allowing  
4 me to talk about this. And I will turn it back  
5 to Eva.

6 (Applause.)

7 MS. GLADSTEIN: Our third set of  
8 presentations are around improving access to  
9 benefits. And to discuss that, I'm not sure if  
10 Mitch or Pauline -- Mitch Little, the Office of  
11 Community Empowerment and Opportunity will come  
12 up; and then Pauline Abernathy from Benefits  
13 Data Trust.

14 MR. LITTLE: Good evening again. My  
15 name is Mitch Little. I'm the Executive  
16 Director of the Office of Community Empowerment  
17 and Opportunity, known as CEO. My office serves  
18 as the community action agency for Philadelphia  
19 who is responsible for administering the  
20 Community Services Block Grant funding to help  
21 meet the needs of improved life conditions for  
22 thousands of Philadelphian residents living near  
23 and below the poverty line.

24 Earlier on as we develop our approach  
25 for addressing poverty in Philadelphia related

1 to termination, that new programs and policies  
2 were needed to ensure that every eligible  
3 Philadelphian was able to easily apply for and  
4 receive all the public benefits to which they  
5 were entitled. By public benefit, we mean  
6 familiar programs such as Supplemental Nutrition  
7 Assistance Program, known as SNAP or food  
8 stamps; cash assistance programs such as TANF,  
9 Temporary Assistance for Needy Families; LIHEAP,  
10 Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program;  
11 Medicaid and many others.

12           Why do some eligible households neglect  
13 access available for public benefit programs and  
14 resources? Well, we understand first and  
15 foremost that there is a lack of awareness.  
16 There are thousands of people in the City who  
17 are eligible for certain public benefits who  
18 don't even know that they are eligible. Seniors  
19 or people with limited English proficiencies or  
20 students, for example, are population who are  
21 often unaware of the existing benefits that they  
22 qualify for.

23           Secondly, the complexity of the  
24 application process. There are also thousands  
25 of people in Philadelphia who know about public

1 benefits but face difficulty navigating complex  
2 applications and recertification processes.  
3 They wind up getting discouraged because of  
4 their application which are rejected or have  
5 their case closed simply because a form they  
6 attempt to submit didn't go through and they  
7 have to start the whole process over again from  
8 the beginning, a phenomenon known as the  
9 benefits turn.

10 Oftentimes, the question is asked, why  
11 is improving access to public benefits so  
12 important to addressing poverty? Well, when  
13 families living in poverty don't have access to  
14 public benefits that they are eligible for, they  
15 miss out on much needed assistance that can make  
16 the difference between having heat, food on  
17 their tables, access to some needed medical  
18 treatment or even keeping a roof over their  
19 head.

20 Why did the office begin to investigate  
21 the BenePhilly Program five years ago? Well,  
22 BenePhilly, which is run by our partners Benefit  
23 Data Trust, provides streamline application  
24 assistance for 19 different publicly funded  
25 benefits. They do that through a network of

1 coordinated BenePhilly centers that's enable  
2 residents to meet in person, with enrollment  
3 specialist housed with entrusted neighborhood  
4 organizations that provide direct one-on-one  
5 assistance with the application.

6 Residents who prefer to start the  
7 process by phone can access the hotline. We go  
8 through a step-by-step intake process that will  
9 identify all the programs that they qualify for  
10 and get each application started.

11 Since the launch of BenePhilly, our  
12 agency has provided assistance to more than  
13 50,000 applicants, resulting in over 25,000 firm  
14 enrollments and generating benefits valued at  
15 approximately \$52 million.

16 With all that success, though, there is  
17 still much more that is needed to improve  
18 benefits access for Philadelphians living below  
19 or near the poverty line. We need more  
20 coordinated access across agencies that serve  
21 vulnerable populations to ensure that nobody  
22 falls through the cracks. We also need to  
23 identify systemic improvements that will make it  
24 easier for applicants to confirm and document  
25 their eligibility for existing programs and to



1 help reduce paperwork required to further  
2 streamline the process.

3           The recommendation of the safety -- let  
4 me try it again. The Social Safety Net  
5 Subcommittee that focuses on benefit access are  
6 designed to deal with on the progress made  
7 through BenePhilly and similar programs by  
8 taking the next necessary steps to eliminate  
9 barriers and better integrate enrollment  
10 activities throughout our services network.

11           Thank you for taking the time to let me  
12 share with you this evening about this very  
13 important work and the great strides we are  
14 making across the City, and the necessary need  
15 to make even more.

16           With that, I will invite Pauline up to  
17 talk a little bit more about the recommendations  
18 to go with that.

19           (Applause.)

20           MS. ABERNATHY: Thank you, Mitch.  
21 Pauline Abernathy with Benefit Data Trust. As  
22 you just heard, thanks to the support of CEO,  
23 the state, private funders such as PEW, the  
24 United Way and many others, it's now possible  
25 for people to go to organizations around the

1 City, 25 different places, and get assistance,  
2 being screened and applying for benefits all in  
3 one place rather than having to fill out  
4 multiple applications, or they can simply call  
5 the hotline that Benefits Data Trust runs. It's  
6 a free hotline that you can do the entire  
7 screening and application over the phone,  
8 whichever people prefer.

9 Our partners in this effort are Catholic  
10 Social Services, Campaign for Working Families,  
11 Esperanza, Impact Social Services Corporation,  
12 HACE, Philadelphia FIGHT, Project HOME, UESF,  
13 the United Community Southeast, Philadelphia and  
14 others are places where you can go in person and  
15 get seen and assistance applying.

16 Since BenePhilly first started in 2008,  
17 over 110,000 Philadelphians have been enrolled  
18 in benefits for over \$330 million. But despite  
19 those huge numbers, there is so much more. We  
20 estimate, and there's a flyer in the back, that  
21 Philadelphians are leaving on the table each  
22 year \$450 million in benefits for which they are  
23 eligible that they are not receiving. Those are  
24 all federal and state benefits that people are  
25 eligible for including Medicaid; EITC, Earned

1 Income Tax Credit; Quick; SNAP, food assistance.

2 And so, this committee's recommendations  
3 is an opportunity to develop strategies to  
4 ensure that more people are getting those  
5 \$450 million in benefits that families who  
6 desperately need them. And so, we developed  
7 three sets of tentative recommendations that we  
8 would welcome your input on tonight as a way to  
9 do that.

10 The first is to expand the number of  
11 locations where people can get seen and  
12 assistance for applying benefits in a  
13 streamlined where, again, currently you can get  
14 screened for up to 19 benefits at a time, and  
15 your answers get -- go into the application so  
16 you don't have to keep providing the same  
17 information 19 times. It's just one set of  
18 questions. And it fills them out automatically  
19 and is submitted the applications for people in  
20 the BenePhilly centers or on the hotline can  
21 help you, provide documents if documents are  
22 needed to support your application, which  
23 sometimes is the case.

24 So, we have a tool called Community  
25 Prism that we provide to organizations. And

1 it's currently in the 25 locations including  
2 health centers, community schools and  
3 non-profits. Where people, volunteers or social  
4 workers can actually help screen people. We  
5 have a separate tool called Benefits Launch  
6 where people can do a quick screen themselves in  
7 less than ten minutes. One can just tell  
8 whether you are likely eligible for up to 19  
9 benefits.

10 And then it directs you to where you can  
11 get assistance applying if you want assistance.  
12 Either to the online application sites or to a  
13 new person, location or to the hotline. And  
14 then we can follow up with text messages to help  
15 you along the way if people get tripped up in  
16 the process. And also, just a reminder to  
17 follow through on the next step.

18 So, our first recommendation is to  
19 provide those tools to more locations. In  
20 addition, it's to help support the financial  
21 empowerment centers that you just heard Will  
22 talk about, so that they are available free  
23 one-on-one financial counseling is available in  
24 more locations around the City.

25 Our second recommendation has to do with

1 providing proactive targeted outreach. Many  
2 people don't apply for benefits because they  
3 either don't know they exist or they don't know  
4 they are eligible. We at Benefits Data Trust  
5 has been doing for years is been getting  
6 different lists to identify who is eligible and  
7 not participating. And we literally then mail  
8 or text or call all of the different ways to  
9 tell people using a trusted partner, either the  
10 state or local non-profit to say we think you  
11 are likely eligible for benefits. Call us or go  
12 to this location and get assistance.

13 And so, our second recommendation is to  
14 do much more of that whether it's done by BDT or  
15 City agency or other non-profits, is to use the  
16 data that people already have to identify who is  
17 likely eligible and not receiving benefits and  
18 then do an outreach. We know that just flyers  
19 alone don't tend to have much impact. But a  
20 personalized letter from a trusted entity that  
21 has clear action of where to go, research has  
22 been very clear as a huge measurable impact.

23 And then the other part of that  
24 recommendation is to really focus on particular  
25 populations like immigrant populations,

1 students, returning citizens, others who we know  
2 are missing out on benefits. And to also not  
3 just help people enroll, but also help them to  
4 recertification. So each year, often or  
5 sometimes even more frequently than that, one  
6 has to provide additional information to keep a  
7 benefit.

8 In New York City, we contact every  
9 participant in the SNAP Program to remind them  
10 when it's time to renew the SNAP application.  
11 Then we provide text assistance with each step  
12 along the way. And so, something similar could  
13 be done here either by us or by others to help  
14 people in a low cost way, make sure that they  
15 keep the benefits once they are on them.

16 And the third and final recommendation  
17 is for the City funded benefits, of which there  
18 are many to help people with home repairs,  
19 property taxes, utility bills and other things.  
20 Right now, those are all separate applications,  
21 often a paper application. And to instead, move  
22 to a single application for City benefits and  
23 really move as much as we can towards automatic  
24 enrollment. If you're one benefit, so that you  
25 can get enrolled in other benefits by simply

1 providing consent.

2 And so, that's a place where more work  
3 needs to be done. But we are very interested  
4 and the City is interested in having a  
5 streamlined single application and portal. And  
6 so, we need to identify what can be done  
7 currently, what might require some legislative  
8 change but a tremendous amount can be done  
9 currently by having just a single application  
10 for multiple benefits.

11 We look forward to getting your input.

12 (Applause.)

13 MS. GLADSTEIN: Okay. It's almost time  
14 to break into small groups. But first, we had  
15 the pleasure of having the Council President  
16 Darrell Clarke in his district we are sitting in  
17 now.

18 (Applause and boos.)

19 And Councilman Allan Domb who has  
20 provided leadership on a number of these issues.  
21 I wanted to see if either of them wanted to say  
22 a few words.

23 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Give us some of your  
24 unused campaign contributions to help us out.

25 (Approaches podium.)

1 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you.

2 First of all, I want to thank all of you  
3 for your ongoing either long term/short-term  
4 commitment. I know one of the things that we  
5 found out when we embarked on this initiative is  
6 that there were a lot of people in the City of  
7 Philadelphia doing a lot of great work. I want  
8 to fully acknowledge that.

9 We do not have the answer for  
10 everything, but we thought it was appropriate  
11 that members of Council, Councilman Domb and  
12 other individuals, that are working on this kind  
13 of being -- move the needle forward in terms of  
14 pulling everybody together. We do have the  
15 ability to have a Public Hearing. We do have  
16 access to media, some of the other things that  
17 brings this to the forefront.

18 I want to thank all of you so much for  
19 what you have done or what I will anticipate you  
20 will be doing.

21 Second of all, I want the thank the  
22 individuals and our co-chair Eva, Councilwoman  
23 Quinones-Sanchez, Melville, Matlock-Turner for  
24 their great work in subcommittee chairs. And  
25 Councilman Domb is on one of the subcommittee



1 for all the great work. Bottom line is, this is  
2 about our moon shot. And we called it that  
3 because of a documentary on a long time ago.  
4 People said, well, we going to figure out how to  
5 go to the moon and back in the old days. Some  
6 of you all in here weren't even born as I look  
7 around the room.

8           The simply reality is everybody thought  
9 it was something to never be achieved, but  
10 everybody pulled together. Said we are going to  
11 do this. Believe it or not, we made it to the  
12 moon, right?

13           So, we are saying that we can take this  
14 below 20 percent in terms of the poverty rate.  
15 And if we all pull together, guess what, we are  
16 going to get it done.

17           So, I just want to say thank you. Thank  
18 you for your support. We are going to do  
19 everything we have to do. Identify this  
20 particular component of benefits. We can get  
21 250 million, put that, insert that into our  
22 economy on a local level. And we will make not  
23 only more significant measurable impact on  
24 individual's lives, but it will actually make an  
25 impact on the City of Philadelphia.

1           So just want to say, thank you all.  
2 Continue the awesome work. We look forward to  
3 working with you on a long term basis.

4           Thank you.  
5           (Applause.)

6           COUNCILMAN DOMB: Good evening,  
7 everyone.

8           I also want to echo Council President  
9 Clarke. By the way, this is Council President  
10 Clarke's mission. And I'm standing with him a  
11 hundred percent on this to get poverty down to  
12 20 percent. We have to do it. We have four  
13 years I think he gave us. Four years.

14           Let me just say a few things. I saw  
15 Mitch and I saw Pauline. And Will hear your  
16 comments, too. And, Eva, you are doing a great  
17 job.

18           Benefits Data Trust, I have the chart.  
19 I carry it in my pocket actually, this chart.  
20 It tells us there is \$450 million. I want to  
21 repeat that. \$450 million of federal money that  
22 doesn't come back to our residents. That's our  
23 number one goal. We should probably be  
24 inserting this in every water and sewer bills,  
25 every real estate tax bill, every PGW, every

1 electric bill, every way we can to get the word  
2 out. This is money taken out of our federal  
3 withholding tax that's not coming back to our  
4 residents that need it. Whatever we can do to  
5 expand this. I know that Eva has been a big  
6 supporter of -- she's going around about the  
7 EITC. But whatever we can do to expand this, we  
8 need to do.

9           And then I just want to talk briefly  
10 about a bill we passed in the Finance Committee.  
11 Will referred to it. It has to do with the fact  
12 of the top 50 cities in the country, sadly  
13 embarrassingly, Philadelphia taxes hits lower  
14 income people the highest. What Will is  
15 referring to is for \$25,000 income, we tax  
16 people at 18.1 percent. And almost every other  
17 City it's 7 to 14.

18           So, the bill that we put forth,  
19 basically, will reimburse wage taxes for lower  
20 income people, will effect 60,000 household,  
21 potentially 90 to a hundred thousand people.  
22 Average refund could be 500 to 800 dollars a  
23 day. In 2024, because of the ability for it to  
24 burn off, it could go up to \$1,300.

25           It's a start. It's not a finish, but

1 it's a start. We can improve on doing more like  
2 that. So, thank you for everyone being here.  
3 And thank you for all your support. And this is  
4 most important goal in our minds in Council to  
5 get this accomplished.

6 Thank you.

7 (Applause.)

8 MS. GLADSTEIN: So, I know the room is a  
9 little warm and folks have been sitting for an  
10 hour. So now is your opportunity, right? We  
11 are going to have about -- we are going to give  
12 you the opportunity to talk about 20 minutes  
13 around the set of proposals that you heard.  
14 Removing Barriers, which primarily focused on  
15 criminal justice issues, right; Growing Income,  
16 which we heard about EITC and other potentially  
17 increasing the size of the TANF Grant just as  
18 reminders; and then Benefits Access, which you  
19 just heard about.

20 Each table, I believe, has a placard  
21 saying what the conversation is going to be  
22 focused on. And if you are at the right table,  
23 that's great. If not, move to a table that you  
24 want to be at. We will give you about 20  
25 minutes. And we will have someone at the table

1 who is going to ask you some key questions about  
2 the proposals and what else you would like to  
3 suggest or input that you want to give us about  
4 those recommendations. Then we will call time  
5 and give you the ability to get up and move and  
6 have a second conversation before we end this  
7 evening.

8           Also, there is a table -- Mitch raise  
9 your hand. I think that's the table. One over.  
10 There is a table next to the water bottles,  
11 right, where Rob is. Sorry. That table, if you  
12 would want to recommend other suggestions and  
13 other proposals for this committee to review, we  
14 encourage you to go to that table. Rob is there  
15 because he already has one set of proposals that  
16 he shared with us around backwater bills for  
17 Philadelphians.

18           All right. Time to get up and move  
19 around a little bit and choose a table you want  
20 to be at.

21           (Break at 5:20 p.m. for discussions.)

22           - - -

23           (Public Hearing resumed at 6:09 p.m.)

24           MS. GLADSTEIN: Going to do a really,  
25 really quick report out, kind or rapid

1 lightening speed. I know it's warm in the room.  
2 Just like one idea that was discussed at each  
3 table. Carolyn since you are looking at me, I  
4 will ask about your table first. And we will  
5 just go around.

6 MS. BROWN: I just want to read two, and  
7 I will be real short. They both have to do with  
8 process and how we move forward once this  
9 meeting ends.

10 The first was to create an inclusive  
11 process to continue to allow members of the  
12 public to offer feedback on these  
13 recommendations. So, this isn't just a one-shot  
14 opportunity to have conversations. And also, to  
15 have more planning and communication at the  
16 grass roots level and, in particular, to engage  
17 networks of trust. So, that's involving family,  
18 friends, block captains, people who know what's  
19 going on in the community, know how to -- know  
20 what the needs are and have insight on how to  
21 meet the needs. There needs to be more of that.

22 MS. GLADSTEIN: Thank you.

23 (Applause.)

24 MS. GLADSTEIN: We can talk a little bit  
25 about what some of the next steps are when we

1 are done. Can you hand it to Sharon?

2 MS. DIETRICH: Thank you. Since I only  
3 get to put forward -- sorry, Sharon Dietrich,  
4 Community Legal Services.

5 So, I'm assuming I only get to put  
6 forward one idea. I will put forward, we  
7 discussed ways to eliminate court fines and  
8 costs and why it's so important that people get  
9 threatening letters telling them, pay lots of  
10 money in 30 days or you are going to go back to  
11 jail. Although, that was not Philadelphia  
12 County. But that certainly happens to  
13 Philadelphians who've been in other places.

14 And some of the ideas that we talked  
15 about were community service as an alternative  
16 to having to pay money that you don't have;  
17 amnesty potentially for back fines and costs;  
18 and educating the state legislature on these  
19 issues.

20 MS. GLADSTEIN: Great. Thank you.

21 Let's go to this table over here. Not  
22 sure who is going to -- great. Thank you.

23 MS. WOLFF: Hi. My name is Jennifer.  
24 I'm the Pennsylvania Health Access Network. And  
25 we combined tables for the second one, so I will

1 go over our first and second. You can talk  
2 about your first ideas.

3 We were the growing income table. And  
4 we had a very high level of agreement that  
5 people need more income, which is kind of an  
6 obvious statement to have, but worth saying  
7 anyway. So, we talked about how to maybe  
8 increase TANF. We talked about bringing general  
9 assistance type program or a universal basic  
10 income putting that back on the table, to  
11 increase the amount of income that folks have in  
12 Pennsylvania or in Philadelphia, whether or not  
13 they are at a certain percentage of the poverty  
14 level.

15 And then, we also talked about an idea  
16 that's advocacy. A little bit about the federal  
17 level, but also brought to the state or local  
18 level, the American Families Act, which is  
19 somewhat like a EITC-type program, but it really  
20 helps out families with children and making sure  
21 that they have income to take care of themselves  
22 and their families.

23 MS. GLADSTEIN: Great. Thank you.  
24 Anything else?

25 MS. SAWYER: Hi. Justine Sawyer. And



1 I'm part of Women United for Greater  
2 Philadelphia. Another couple additional  
3 elements that we discussed during growing income  
4 was the element of really savings and investing.

5 So, we all understand that, you know,  
6 this is a great element is to have more money.  
7 But we need to really educate and think about  
8 ways to really increase what we are receiving  
9 for individuals who are definitely in need. So  
10 part of the conversation was, what if we had  
11 different savings and investment accounts,  
12 certain tax credits, 2 percent or 5 percent of  
13 that was allocated into a savings and that was  
14 invested for you. And you can take it out and  
15 say when an individual family member is  
16 beneficiary turns 18, they can take it and spend  
17 it on college.

18 Or certain countries in Europe, they  
19 have savings and investment accounts for  
20 children who are born into poverty or whatever  
21 that may look like. They allocate 2000. It's  
22 invested over X-amount of years. And they can  
23 pull it and use it for secondary education or  
24 whatever that may look like.

25 Being more proactive about how we are

1 spending and educating those individuals in our  
2 community versus just giving them a certain tax  
3 allotment. So, that was part of our  
4 conversation.

5 MS. GLADSTEIN: Great. Thank you.  
6 Let's start talking about -- where are benefits  
7 heres. Is that Kathy?

8 MS. FISHER: Yeah.

9 MS. GLADSTEIN: Identify yourself.

10 MS. FISHER: Kathy Fisher, Coalition  
11 Against Hunger. And I'm going to echo the other  
12 group mentioned more grass roots and individuals  
13 with lift experience should be involved in  
14 providing comments and the messaging. So such  
15 as discussing where BenePhilly sites could be  
16 located near transit hubs.

17 The challenges to even affording getting  
18 a birth certificate or affording SEPTA fare to  
19 go get documents that are needed, tracking those  
20 down. And then also, their input on the  
21 messaging and outreach that's focused group  
22 tested and really going to speak for the people  
23 that need access to the benefits the most.

24 MS. GLADSTEIN: Great. Thank you. And  
25 this table, Benefits Access, additional idea?

1 MS. ABERNATHY: Very similar talking  
2 about being shown the information, getting out  
3 into the neighborhood where people live. One  
4 idea was electronic signs at SEPTA places. A  
5 lot of issues around transportation barriers for  
6 people with disabilities and others. And then  
7 assistance so people don't need to travel.

8 MS. GLADSTEIN: Great, thank you.  
9 And now we are in Removing Barriers.

10 MS. ROMENS: Hi. I'm Kristin Romens  
11 from PEW Charitable Trust. At our table we  
12 actually talked about Removing Barrier and then  
13 Benefits Access. We will do one on each.

14 Removing Barriers. We, in general,  
15 talked about the recommendations as being  
16 positive to help people who are really stuck to  
17 be able to move forward. You know, decreasing  
18 fines was a huge need. But at the same time, we  
19 also recognize that expungement or sealing  
20 records happens after ten years without a  
21 conviction. And to get people to ten years is a  
22 really big deal. So, the need for work while  
23 still incarcerated and transitioning out of  
24 incarceration, to really make these meaningful,  
25 we have to do something for ten years.

1 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: I'm supporting this  
2 effort through Managing Director's Office. A  
3 lot of the things that were mentioned before  
4 were also talked about here. What's interesting  
5 was the business of making sure that the  
6 information was right. Whether it be things --  
7 or where people get clothing or other things we  
8 know. And for people with disabilities, even  
9 going door to door or getting people that  
10 needing those services.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Great. Thank  
12 you.

13 Will, do you have any more from your  
14 table.

15 MR. HALL: Yes. The folks -- I'm Will  
16 Hall. I'm from the Office of community  
17 Empowerment and Opportunity. The folks that are  
18 able are not here anymore, who are really  
19 supportive of the Clean Slate and the fines and  
20 fees recommendations. And pointed out a need to  
21 focus on folks who are incarcerated and similar  
22 things that are dealt with. There were a lot of  
23 things that got thrown around.

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Great, thank  
25 you. So, has every table given us at least one?

1 So, I just really want to thank everybody  
2 because this was really great work. And it's a  
3 lot of input. It sounds like there was some  
4 themes in terms of our process, but still for  
5 getting input, making sure about accessibility  
6 being at the community and family level. To  
7 think kind of more upstream, right, so giving  
8 people information about their rights and access  
9 to supports and services, not after the event  
10 but during and before to the extent that we can.  
11 And a lot of great advocacy ideas at least at  
12 the state level for things that we can control.  
13 So, we really appreciate that.

14 I just want to speak for a minute about  
15 next steps, which makes sure everybody is aware.  
16 So, we have been on camera this evening and on  
17 tape and we are being recorded. Which means a  
18 number of other people are going to be able to  
19 see this and hear about it on Channel 64. And  
20 I'm not sure if you have Fios, what it is,  
21 right? It's 63 or something like that. So, I'm  
22 not quite sure.

23 It will probably be played a number of  
24 times. I know that they often do that. If you  
25 have access to the internet, it's going -- it's

1 on City Council's website including, like, the  
2 actual notes. And that's phila.gov/Council.  
3 And on that, I just want to make sure everybody  
4 is aware. There is a form you can fill in with  
5 as much information as you want to share if you  
6 have additional or new ideas. So, there is an  
7 ongoing way for people to provide input. If  
8 this stimulated your thinking or you want to  
9 talk to your neighbor or family member, please,  
10 use those avenues.

11 In addition, there will be a final  
12 hearing of the big committee, which is a  
13 composition of all of these subcommittees, in  
14 December. I believe the date for that final  
15 hearing, is it December 10? Not sure. We are  
16 still thinking through when that final hearing  
17 will be. So, be one more hearing or gathering  
18 which will be in City Hall for that purpose.

19 In terms of the notes that we have this  
20 evening, we have notes that people took  
21 diligently at each table that we will be  
22 collecting, summarizing, and you will be making  
23 those available, as well. And then, there are a  
24 number of Post-Its, I was happy to see, about  
25 new ideas. Not only ideas discussed at this

1 table, but there are some that are tacked up  
2 that are really pretty interesting on the back  
3 wall that we will be taking back to our  
4 committee. Did everyone sign in when they came  
5 in this evening so we have your contact  
6 information?

7 AUDIENCE MEMBER: The purpose of the  
8 hearing is to develop the ideas towards a bill  
9 or a set of bills? What's the purpose of that  
10 final hearing?

11 MS. GLADSTEIN: So, the final report --  
12 so, there will be a final hearing and then a  
13 report. We are anticipating that there will be  
14 short meeting and long term recommendations.  
15 Some will be around City Council legislation.  
16 Some may be about funding something that's great  
17 but should be expanded. And some will be around  
18 the advocacy, particularly the state or federal  
19 level.

20 So, we are looking for the report to  
21 include all of those. And I think you have  
22 heard tonight that we have recommendations that  
23 fit in all those categories because places where  
24 work is being done well, but we just need to  
25 scale it up and make sure it's more available,

1 work that might require some legislative fixes  
2 and work that might require some advocacy, for  
3 example, restoring general assistance at the  
4 state level or amplifying the impact of the  
5 Clean Slate Law at the state level.

6 So, we have recommendations that fit in  
7 all those categories and the final report should  
8 do that. The final report, I know this is a  
9 little frustrating because people also had great  
10 ideas about education, jobs and housing. So,  
11 there are other subcommittees that are  
12 addressing that. And their hearings are coming  
13 down the pike. One is on November 25. I am  
14 forgetting which one. And one is on December 5,  
15 I believe. Eric is going to get up here and  
16 tell us what's what. So, we want to also  
17 encourage people to attend those.

18 MR. BODZIN: Hi, everyone. My name is  
19 Eric Bodzin. I'm from Councilwoman Sanchez'  
20 office. Thank you for your support.

21 The upcoming hearings for the Housing  
22 Subcommittee, the hearing is next Monday from  
23 four o'clock to seven o'clock. That is at  
24 Temple School of Medicine. It's at 3500 North  
25 Broad Street. All this is on the flyer at the



1 back, which we will make sure we hand out as we  
2 leave and being held up right now in the middle  
3 of the room. That is the Housing Subcommittee  
4 Hearing. And there is a hearing on jobs and  
5 education strategies to reduce and prevent  
6 poverty. That hearing is on Thursday,  
7 December 5 from four to six p.m. at Dobbins High  
8 School on Lehigh Avenue.

9 And again, all of that information is  
10 available on the flyer which is being held up in  
11 the middle of the room and which is available on  
12 that back table.

13 MS. GLADSTEIN: Thank you, Eric.

14 (Applause.)

15 MS. GLADSTEIN: Now, I just want  
16 everybody to give themselves a round of applause  
17 for working hard.

18 (Applause.)

19 MS. GLADSTEIN: And to the subcommittee  
20 members and the staff who helped prepare the  
21 agenda, facilitate the conversation and take the  
22 notes, we really appreciate all of that. What  
23 makes for a smooth running meeting. So, I  
24 didn't do that. A lot of other people did that,  
25 so I want them to get credit for it.

1           And with that, thank you. But make sure  
2 you pick up materials at the resource table  
3 before you walk out if you haven't.

4           Thank you all.

5           (AT this time, the Public Hearing  
6 concluded at 6:28 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 that this is a correct transcript of the same.

-----  
ANGELA M. KING, RPR,  
Court Reporter, Notary Public

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