COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Wednesday, May 18, 2016
10:26 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCIL PRESIDENT DARRELL L. CLARKE
COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE L. BLACKWELL
COUNCILMAN DEREK S. GREEN
COUNCILMAN WILLIAM K. GREENLEE

COUNCILWOMAN HELEN GYM

COUNCILMAN DAVID OH

BILLS 160170, 160171, 160172, 160173, 160174,

160175, 160176

RESOLUTION 160180

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COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: This is the public hearing of the Committee of the Whole regarding Bills number 160170, 160171, 160172, 160173, 160174, 160175, 160176 and Resolution number 160180.

Mr. Stitt, please read the titles of the Bill and Resolution.

THE CLERK: Bill number 160170. An ordinance to adopt a capital program for the six fiscal years 2017 through 2022, inclusive.

Bill number 160171. An ordinance to adopt a fiscal 2017 capital budget.

Bill number 160172. An ordinance adopting the operating budget for fiscal year 2017.

Bill number 160173. An ordinance amending Section 19-1806 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled "Authorization of Realty Use and Occupancy Tax", to further authorize the Board of Education of the School District of Philadelphia to impose a tax on the use or occupancy of real estate within the School District of Philadelphia under certain terms and conditions.

Bill number 160174. An ordinance amending Section 19-1801 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled "Authorization of Tax," to further authorize the Board of Education of the School District of Philadelphia to impose a tax of real estate within the City of Philadelphia, all under certain terms and conditions.

Bill number 160175. An ordinance amending Chapter 19-1500 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled "Wage and Net Profits Tax," by revising certain tax rates, under certain terms and conditions.

Bill number 160176. An ordinance amending Title 19 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled "Finance, Taxes and Collections," by adding a new Chapter 19-4100, entitled "Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Tax," under certain terms and conditions.

Resolution number 160180. Resolution providing for the approval by the Council of the City of Philadelphia of a revised five-year financial plan for the City of Philadelphia covering fiscal years 2017 through 2021, and incorporating proposed

changes with respect to fiscal year 2016, which is to be submitted by the Mayor to the Pennsylvania Intergovernmental Cooperation Authority (the "Authority") pursuant to the Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement, authorized by an ordinance of this Council approved by the Mayor on January 3, 1992 (Bill number 1563-A), by and between the City and the Authority.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Mr. Stitt. Today we continue the public hearing of the Committee of the Whole to consider bills read by the clerk that constitute proposed operating and capital spending measures for fiscal 2017, a capital program and a forward-looking capital plan for fiscal 2017 through fiscal 2022.

Today we will hear testimony from the public in regards to the Philadelphia School District. So I would ask that you all please limit your testimony to the Philadelphia School District.

We're going to call panels up. We have a significant level of individuals here,

so it will give us an opportunity to expedite the process. And you will be given two minutes to give your testimony. I want to thank you all very much for your cooperation.

Our first panel is Karel Kilimnik, Tyrone Scott, Lisa Haver, and Damaris Alvarado. Come up, please. Have a seat there. Call the names one more time. Karel Kilimnik -- not you?

MR. SCOTT: I'm Tyrone Scott, sir.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: You're Tyrone. All right. Ms. Haver, I think I know you. Ms. Haver. We have one missing. Damaris Alvarado. Not here? All right. Thank you. Good morning. So you can decide who's going to go first. Self-selection.

MR. SCOTT: I guess I'll go first. Thank you. Good morning. My name is Tyrone Scott and I serve as the director of External Affairs for the Delaware Valley Association for the Education of Young Children. We fight for educational opportunities for children from birth to eight. I am also managing partner of TB Scott Property Management which owns

multiple units in Philadelphia. I own a business, work and pay taxes in this great City. As today's focus is on the Philadelphia School District, I won't spend a lot of time debating the health benefits of reducing sugary beverage intake, I won't dwell on the fact that the CEOs of the sugary beverage industry's top executives could personally fund the community schools and pre-K plans that the Mayor has proposed. I won't even talk about my own experience being electrocuted in a poor-quality pre-K when I was a child. I want to spend my testimony encouraging us to break down the silos while we think about the City's line items in the budget. The fact that we talk about K-12 education without discussing early education is a travesty. Currently both members of City Council and the Mayor have proposed ideas to strengthen pre-K throughout our City but it always seems to be an afterthought. These two items need to be considered in the same discussion. High quality pre-K has been shown to reduce the need for special education in the K to 12 arena. As

many of you are aware, it is much more costly to serve special needs students than students without special needs. Pre-K can help us save money by identifying and working with children starting at a younger age, eliminating up to 42 percent of IEPs required in kindergarten. The Philadelphia Commission on Universal Pre-K has estimated a cost savings of 5.6 billion per age cohort. Additionally, high quality pre-K helps reduce the need for grade repetition.

Currently the School District is paying approximately $12,500 per student, per year. And up to $22,300 for special education students. Every time a student needs to repeat a grade, we lose thousands of dollars. We get absolutely no benefit from retaining a child. It's the equivalent of going to a restaurant, ordering a steak, eating half of it, saying I'm full, then deciding you're not full and ordering another steak. We're paying twice for the same service for no reason. If we were to invest in pre-K, many of these children would be able to complete their grade levels without repeating, saving the City $16,500 per child

repeating a grade. As you consider the budget, we ask that you not be shortsighted when considering the School District and also consider early education and the Mayor's Universal Pre-K plan.

If we fund this plan through the sugary beverage tax, we only stand to save money in the long run. Our children -- excuse me. The combination of high-quality pre-K and high-quality K-12 education will serve our children better and have them better ready to enter the workforce. Perhaps even the savings to the School District one day will help cover the cost of pre-K.

Lastly, I would like to also remind folks that pre-K helps a child be socially ready for school. Most kindergarten teachers that we speak to tell us that the number one thing we can do is prepare children to be able to sit in a classroom and not cause fights with their classmates. The fact that teachers spend most of their time on redirecting and disciplining students is a direct result from not having high-quality pre-K.

I understand that's my time and I thank you for this time, President Clarke. Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank for your cooperation, sir.

MS. KILIMNIK: I just want to say good morning to all members of City Council. Thank you for asking questions yesterday. Members of our organization, the Alliance for Philadelphia Public Schools, ask questions every month at DSRC Action meetings and rarely receive answers. Your questions carry more power and we appreciate your attempts to hold the district accountable.

I'm Karel Kilimnik, a retired teacher and co-founder of the Alliance for Philadelphia Public Schools. I'm very concerned about plans for Universal Pre-K and presented testimony during the Universal Pre-K commission hearings last September.

Little history. In 2013, Dr. Hite announced that the district would shed 2,000 Headstart seats. These are certified teachers who belong to the PFT. Every pre-K student

should have a certified teacher. There should be a concerted effort to rebuild the Headstart classrooms within the district. I have included a link to an article detailing Dr. Hite's plan. Yesterday Dr. Hite seemed to think the district was asked to develop high-quality providers. He should stop closing Headstart classrooms and open new ones. After all, he claims to be for Universal Pre-K. He needs to show us. I sat all day yesterday and heard the runaround answers delivered by district staff. In 2012, Boston Consulting Group delivered a plan to close 60-plus schools. Dr. Hite seems intent on following this script with his announced closure of three schools per year. In this ongoing tale of two cities, Dr. Hite said yesterday that he wants, quote, every child to have a good school near where they live, end of quote. Why does his plan include closing three schools every year? He would not answer when asked for how many years, nor why these closures are needed. These questions need to be answered. As Councilwoman Gym noted yesterday, there have

been few academic gains from the 2013 school closures. What has occurred has been upheaval with teachers being moved around like pieces on a chessboard and students having to transfer to schools outside of their neighborhood. What is the criteria that they use for these renaissance charter schools? And how is this improving education for children? They have 20 schools in the program --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Ma'am --

MS. KILIMNIK: -- five are recommended for non renewal.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Ma'am, you can conclude. Heard the bell.

MS. KILIMNIK: Okay.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Just kind of wrap up.

MS. KILIMNIK: Okay. Basically why also would anyone want to teach in Philadelphia when the unelected, unaccountable SRC breaks the PFT contract, treats teachers like pieces in a chessboard and wants to close three more schools every year, insuring that this game of Russian roulette can continue into the future?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Ma'am, you got to wrap it up.

MS. KILIMNIK: Okay.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you. Yes, ma'am.

MS. HAVER: Good morning, Council President Clarke, members of City Council. My name is Lisa Haver. I'm a retired teacher. Also co-founder of the Alliance for Philadelphia Public Schools.

As part of our advocacy, we attend all meetings of the School Reform Commission. And I echo Ms. Kilimnik, I thank you for the opportunity to speak to elected officials here who actually must answer to the public for their actions. We appreciate the questions that were put to the leaders of the School District yesterday as we are rarely given answers to ours. In fact, we have had to file several right-to-know requests in order to get routine public information. One of those issues was how much the SRC has paid to outside legal firms for their efforts to cancel the PFT contract to not honor the seniority rights of

counselors brought back into the system and our own complaint filed 18 months ago to bring the SRC into compliance with the provisions of the Pennsylvania Sunshine Act. We're happy to hear the questions raised yesterday on the failure of the District's turnaround program, in particular the Renaissance program in which public schools, based on unreliable or nonexistent data are handed over to charter companies. Councilwoman Gym asked district officials why in September Cooke Elementary School, which was previously Cooke Middle School until the massive closings in 2013, will be managed by Great Oaks Charter which has never managed a school in this district and, in fact, has never managed a K to eight school in any district.

I'm going to skip ahead a little bit. When we filed a right-to-know request in March for evaluation committee reports, which were supposed to be the basis of Dr. Hite's recommendation for what the parents wanted in the three targeted schools this year, Cooke, Huey and Wister, we were actually told no such

reports exist. How did Dr. Hite make any recommendations based on nonexistent reports? It's important to understand that once a neighborhood school is made into a Renaissance charter -- I'm going to try to give you two more sentences -- the community losses control over that school indefinitely. Councilwoman Gym mentioned Kenderton. Those parents have no idea what's going to go on. We have had several schools that were about to be not renewed where we were told that that company which abandons the school, then gets to decide who takes over. Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: What you can do, because I know a number of people have relatively lengthy testimony, I know two minutes is a relatively short period of time, we're just trying to make sure everybody has an opportunity, just submit your testimony. We'll make sure it's a part of the record.

MS. HAVER: Thank you, Council President.

MS. KILIMNIK: Who do we submit it to?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: The gentleman will come over and get it now. And we'll make sure it's a part of the record. Thank you. Thank you so much for your testimony.

Next panel, Dr. Rob Simmons, Helen Lacheen, Joe Budd, Jr., and Patricia Eakin. One more time. Dr. Rob Simmons, Helen Lacheen. Is that you? Thank you. Joe Budd, Jr. and Patricia Eakin. All right. I'm going to call some more people up. Okay. We'll go to Judith Robinson. Ms. Robinson? Not here? William Mackey. Okay. And Khalil Washington-Mackey. Ms. Mackey, did you bring Khalil with you? Grace Palladino. Take your time. Pretty fast. I'm impressed. Okay. Good morning.

MS. LACHEEN: Good morning. Hello. My name is Helen Lacheen. I'm here to give voice to benefits of early education intervention for all children. But for me and my family, the need for early intervention came at a time of great upset and adjustment. My grandson, Julian, is hearing impaired with a severe profound hearing loss. When this was

discovered at Children's Hospital, my family was plunged into a world of sadness, anxiety and fear of what was to come. An audiologist at Children's Hospital suggested to my daughter that she contact the Clarke School For Hearing and Speech which Julian was enrolled in at the age of two. He and others like him spent four-and-a-half hours a day, five-day a week in a class designed to teach children who are hearing impaired how to live and succeed in a hearing and speaking world. The Clarke School provides children with the listening, learning and spoken language skills they need to succeed rather than through the use of sign language. It costs approximately $36,000 per child, per year. They receive the $29,000 a year from the State of Pennsylvania, leaving a $7,000 gap per year, per child. The other half of the day, Julian attends Core Early Years at LaSalle, a star four inclusive center where teachers have trained to teach children like Julian, along with typical hearing children. Although my daughter can afford $150 a week halftime care, so many families in the area cannot and may be

missing out on this excellent program. While low income working parents may be able to get a child care subsidy with the fee cap at about nine percent of their income, there is not enough to go around and hundreds of children are stuck on waiting lists. The City's plan Universal pre-K program will not only help parents access and afford these services, but it can change children's lives forever. My daughter is now exploring mainstream schools for Julian, transitioning to kindergarten. I can say without question if it was not for early education at the Clarke School, my grandson, who has no difficulty communicating with anyone, anytime, anywhere may not have been so lucky. Between 90 percent of child brain is developed in the first five years. There's no going back for children with special needs who miss this opportunity. Early education is every child's right and it is our responsibility to make it possible. Early education is needed to ensure a path so all our children have an opportunity to reach their potential. Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, ma'am, for your testimony.

MS. MACKEY: Good morning. My name is William Mackey. I'm the lead organizer for men for positive change. This morning, Council, we want to talk a little bit about your proposed youth community schools. I'd like to bring to your attention, there was a very successful youth community schools in North Philadelphia, William Penn High School, years ago which was funded by the North Philadelphia Empowerment Zone. And in the community schools, if we put one youth community school in each councilmanic district and if that community school target a issue in that community, then we can have a proven track record and do some things. What we did, we targeted zip codes and we target youth truancy. And on that, I would just like to move on to the pre-K. I think if the churches are involved and some of the local colleges, we could get the pre-K done maybe at a much better cost-effective than the soda tax or whatever. And the soda tax should be looked at as obesity

more than a revenue-driven issue. Our young people do not play in the yards and run around. And back to the School District issue. We proposed years ago, Mr. President, a youth smart card. Think about the schools swipe card as a smart card. As DHS services, as the library card, as the healthcare card, as the Transpass, and it's downloaded and Comcast can be the entity that kind of manage this. And I believe if each of the services that you're going to bring to the table through your youth community schools, maybe put five percent of their budget in or three percent of their budget in, we get these youth community schools up and running sooner than later. Youth community schools can drive a great impact if it targets an issue in that community. Thank you, Mr. President. Have a great day.

One more thing. On the desk is a testimony for C.O.P.E., Community Outreach Police Education. It needs to be a strong emphasis on teaching our young people about police and respecting police. And there's no other way around it. People have to respect

the law. Thank you. Have a good day.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you so much for your testimony.

MS. PALLADINO: Good morning.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good morning.

MS. PALLADINO: Hi, Helen. My name is Grace Palladino and I'm a resident of South Philadelphia and I'm finishing my ninth year as a public school teacher. I'm here to speak on the emergency relief that teachers really need that this particular tax could provide. Every year I have been a teacher, the School District budget has either shrank or has been under almost near constant threat of no longer being solvent enough to continue to operate, many schools being shutters. In that time, most of my contemporaries have been transferred so often that they have either left the City or they have left education all together. I myself have really truthfully very little actual incentive to remain in this field. I have not received a raise. My healthcare is under threat and the impossible task I'm

responsible for has grown exponentially. Class size is out of control. Support staff eviscerated. Virtually all responsibility within the building falls to the teachers. This takes a toll. It hurts us in our wallets, our classrooms and in our hearts. Morale is gone among teachers. But all of this is already known. What's new this year is that we have a little bit more money in the district which is fantastic. But some of the taxes that are being pushed and budgetary measures would help to make this type of relief more permanent. This is necessary because the profit this year is quite temporary, as we all know. The City of Philadelphia, namely this governing body, should implement permanent budgetary change to guarantee adequate funding for all public schools. By not automatically funding schools at the start of the fiscal year, we annually push teachers and students to the end of the plank. There's a panicked scramble that pushes parents into charter system or out of the City entirely. Funding the public education of every single child in

this City needs to be considered mandatory and treated with the priority it deserves. Instead we patchwork together skeleton budgets, expect teachers to do more with nothing. Passing this tax before you will help to ensure a funding stream that is steady and representative of the importance to students and educators deserve in this City. Thanks.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you so much for your testimony. Appreciate it.

Next up we have a panel of students from CAPA. So I understand we have swapped out a couple. So I'll read the list of which I have just been given. Samira Dawan, Cy Wolfe, Maya Peniazek, Marissa Garcia and Jake Howie.

SPEAKER: Councilwoman Sanchez, our children need 10,000 --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Hold it. Hold it. Hold it. Hold it. Time out. Time out. Time out. If you want to testify, ma'am --

SPEAKER: Councilwoman Sanchez --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: So let me tell you how it's going to work.

(Inaudible speaker.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: All right. Excuse me. Excuse me. You guys want to testify, get on the list and you can testify, but we're not going to have disruption. Okay?

(Chanting.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Okay. We haven't had one of those in awhile. Thank you. Good morning. You guys can self-select who you want to testify first.

MR. WOLFE: Would you like me to continue or --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Try it again. Please proceed.

MR. WOLFE: Hello. My name is Cy Wolfe. I'd like to thank you all for allowing me to speak here today. I live in West Philadelphia and I'm a student at the Philadelphia High School for Creative and performing Arts in South Philadelphia. And I would like to urge the City Council to pass the soda tax and other measures like it. I was very lucky to go to some of the best schools in

the district, but other students in the district have not been as lucky as I am. I am also very lucky that I will be attending a private university next year, but other students in the district will not be as lucky as I am. These students are the future of this City and it all starts at the pre-K level. They deserve just as much as me or any of the other students in this room here today. I would like to move back to the City in the future to raise my children and my family here, but I'm afraid that I will not be able to do so if the School District is not in good shape. Please vote yes on the soda tax to give all Philadelphia students a future. We are worth it. Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you for your testimony.

MS. DAWAN: Hello.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good morning.

MS. DAWAN: Thank you. My name is Samira Dawan and I am a resident of South Philadelphia. I currently attend CAPA High

School and I am the secretary for the Pearls of Wisdom Alumni Association which advocates for the betterment of the communities of Philadelphia. I would just like to talk about how, through all four years of high school, it has been extremely stressful wondering if I'm going to be able to finish high school, if I'm going to be able to graduate, not because I don't have the grades for it because I do have the grades for it. But because it has always been difficult for the City to pass the budgets to give enough money to education. And just this January they released a notice saying that we might not be able to finish the school year because the School District might shut down. And I believe that no student should have to go through that kind of stress while they're trying to focus on their education. I believe that the City needs to find a way to give enough money to education, more than enough money for education so that every student has the opportunities that they deserve so any opportunities that the City can give -- can have to give money to education is a good

opportunity. And I think the City should do anything that they possibly can to contribute as much money as they possibly can to education. Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you for your testimony.

MS. GARCIA: Good morning and thank you, City Council, for allowing me to speak today. My name is Marissa Garcia and I am junior vocal major and dance minor at the Philadelphia High School for Creative and Performing Arts. I am speaking today to plead to City Council that the soda tax should be passed because our Philadelphia public schools are struggling. Our schools are broke and are being neglected. I have seen firsthand how our schools are being ignored. Bathroom stalls are broken with no money to repair them and there are far too many students for the limited staff of teachers to handle in one classroom. Education is the number one priority for a better, wealthier and healthier life. And even schools as prestige as mine have and currently are still struggling through hard times. In

2013, CAPA did not have a school musical and still CAPA is struggling to fund their musicals. We have no money for new textbooks and they're falling apart with no covers and missing pages and proper art supplies and we have no funding to fix and renovate our theater sound system. Philadelphia Public Schools are failing. They need money and they need it now. Thank you again for allowing me to speak today. Please help our Philadelphia Public Schools. Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you.

MS. PENIAZEK: Good morning. My name is Maya Peniazek. I am also a student at the Creative and Performing Arts High School of Philadelphia. I don't want to reiterate what my classmates have already said, but I do think that in regards to all of the discussions happening about the Philadelphia School District, it is fundamentally important to listen to the voices of the teaches and the students that are being directly affected, especially those who have experienced firsthand

how powerful education can be. So as a student at CAPA, I have been blessed to have an education that is at one of the better schools in the Philadelphia School District. And what it has done for me and my confidence, what it has shown me that I can do for the world is something that I will admire for the rest of my life. The teachers that are underpaid and overworked, who have given me lessons that I will never forget, who have taught me that I can go out into the world and make change, that I can go out in the world and hopefully make change for the other students to come in the Philadelphia School District. What Cy Wolfe said about not wanting to raise your kids in the School District that you went to, it's horrifying. It's sad that I may not be able to return to the city that I love because I don't want my kids to have to fear that they'll be in the School District where the graduation rates are so low and the dropout rates are so high. So I just want to say that I really think that we should pay attention to the voices of the people that are being directly affected. And

in regards specifically to the soda tax, learning at a young age that you have the potential to go out in the world and do the things that you want to do is so important, especially in the School District where the majority of the schools have bars on the windows and bathrooms that are falling apart with no money to repair them. It is important to tell each and every child that they have a voice that matters in this world.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you for your testimony.

MR. HOWIE: Good morning, everybody.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good morning.

MR. HOWIE: Good morning. My name is Jake Howie and I am a senior at CAPA High School. And I will be continuing my studies next year at the George Washington University in Washington, D.C. I would like to offer a brief youth opinion on the soda tax. Government is about priorities and sacrifices. I can't speak for everybody, but I value

quality education, especially for young children. The future of our country should be a top priority. A small tax on sugary drinks is a minor sacrifice for such a priority. If you can't spare a few cents on a can of Coke I ask, what are your priorities. The kids, it's going to be all right, guys. Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you so much for your testimony. Our next panel -- Councilwoman Gym.

COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you very much, Council President. I just want to thank the students from CAPA who came this morning to testify. I agree with them that it is essential that we hear from their voices. We actually opened this morning with the students of Ms. Bottaro's fifth grade class at McCall School who are in the balcony watching. And I just want to acknowledge their work. And impart that we're -- you know, this is a place where we're trying to work this stuff out. It's a struggle and there are competing interests and we need to hear your voices in order to be able to understand all of these

priorities, but we're all committed to this. And just a note to Cy Wolfe that your mother has been a heroic activist on the school front and I'm sure she'll miss having you at CAPA to fight for, but thank you for your work.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Councilwoman. And good morning, McCall students. All righty. Thank you for coming down. You actually came on a day when we had a little bit of discourse, but we worked it out amicably. Thank you for coming down and witnessing your government in action.

Our next group, Latori Clark, Muhammed. That's all it says is Muhammed. Chris Bartlett. Chris. Tyrone Weaks. Tyrone Weaks. Calvin Williams and Richard Luzzi. Let me see if we can get one more. Christianne Sevinc. Christianne? Here? And Madeline Shikomba.

MR. WILLIAMS: Good morning.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good morning.

MR. WILLIAMS: How you been? I'm Calvin Williams and I want to speak a little

bit about the tax. I believe for years I have already been paying an extra tax to the food and the beverage industries. I have been bombarded from all points with free refills at fast foods and family restaurant chains. I have been bombarded with free can sodas, depends on what size hoagie I buy. Free two liter bottles of soda from my neighborhood take-out joint if I buy a large pizza. I believe they have been conspiring to get me addicted to the sugar and the sodium and the fat and the calories for years. This is an opportunity to have those guys to take those extra taxes that's on the table and bring it back to us. I believe also and I challenge you to those who said about a regressive tax is that every bill that I get from these businesses, the taxed -- eight percent tax is always rounded up to the nearest penny. I say let the local and the state entities keep the nickels and dimes. Give those pennies to the schools. If not, then why not insist that they round it down and keep those pennies in the neighborhoods. That will solve that. Again, I

just want to tell you I'm passionate about the notion that we have been for so long been driven by these two industries to fatten our children, to fatten ourselves and then downgrade our health. This is an opportunity to teach our children and the schools, to be able to get all of us out to the recreation centers to work off the fat, go to the libraries and open them up and find research on how to live healthy lives. And there's no reason why they, like the tobacco industry, should not participate in that coming about. Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you for your testimony.

Good morning.

MR. LUZZI: Good morning, Council. My name is Rich Luzzi and I'm an educator. I'm testifying today in support of increased funding for Philadelphia Public School in the hope that it will help fund our City's efforts to spread the community school strategy to fill these public schools. From 2008 to 2013, I worked in Southwest Philadelphia at Alexander

Wilson Elementary School. I was the director of Wilson Community School and I did my best to develop a community school in the truest sense of the word. One that could address the express interest and needs of the community through opportunities that supported the academic, civic, social, emotional and physical development of every child, family, community member and educator served by our school. My goal was to cooperatively construct a community school that was made of, by and for the people it was meant to serve. My inspiration for doing so was what I saw in the students, families and educators I was working with and what I believe we could accomplish by working in collaboration together. Students whose brilliance, ingenuity and sense of justice is too often ignored by adults who assume they know better. Parents, guardians and family members who are too often assumed to be spectators in their children's education and treated as strangers by their schools. Teachers and school staff who, like their students, do their best every day to persevere

under unjust conditions such as a lack of physical and human resources. Our work as a community school wasn't finished when the SRC closed Wilson in 2013. We had many areas in which we could improve and yet we were working together to do so, including our fight to keep our school open. In many ways we were what democracy looks like. Like our Wilson community, the citizens of this City are fighting for the right to create and sustain schools that are made of, by and for the communities they serve. They fight against the undemocratic assault in their schools and communities in the name of school reform, which are far too long in this City and state liberal agenda that seeks to take our greatest public good, our schools, and hand them over to private interest, more interested in profits and propagation than people. I believe that every school in this City should be a community school in which students, families, community members and educators share equally and equitably in their responsibility for creating and sustaining schools that address the

holistic interests and needs of every human being who calls that school home because that is what schools in this City of sisterly and brotherly love should look like. That is what schools in the United States of America should look like. That is what democracy looks like. Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you for your testimony, sir.

Good morning.

MR. BARTLETT: Good morning, Council President Clarke and members of Council. I'm Chris Bartlett, the executive director of the William Way Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community Center and a longtime resident of South Philadelphia. I join you today to support the Mayor's efforts to fund pre-K programs, one of the great equalizers to provide all Philadelphians with the opportunity to fully realize their lives and thus to strengthen every neighborhood of our City. In my three decades of LGBT advocacy and in my six years as director at William Way, I have seen the importance of strengthening our

educational system to help create a citizenry that will fulfill upon Philadelphia's reputation as the greatest city in the United States for its LGBT citizens of all ages.

Though on the face of it, Universal Pre-K may not seem to be a top issue for LGBT citizens, I have made the case to the LGBT community and its allies that the fate of our educational system is the most pressing issue for LGBT citizens and all Philadelphians. Universal Pre-K will help to level the playing field so that LGBT children, and particularly LGBT children of color, have improved opportunities for their education and thus for their success in society. As you know, high-quality pre-K reduces achievement gaps. This benefits not only the individual student, her or himself, but also creates a citizenry that through a stronger educational system is less likely to exhibit the homophobic, transphobic and racist attitudes that are often a function of lack of educational opportunity. High quality pre-K sets the stage for a generation of students who are equipped not

only for their roles as employees, but also as citizens of an increasingly diverse city. Mayor Kenney and the Commission on Universal Pre-K have laid out the plan for how we can do this. Funding of course is key, and I support the Mayor's push for a sugary drinks tax that would expand affordable quality pre-K for children and families who currently lack access. This sugary drink tax is the powerful means to this end. It's time that we put an end to the lies of lobbyists who have called this a grocery tax or implied that it will somehow harm the very communities it will most directly help. Similar scare mongering has been used in the past to protect the already huge profits of the corporations who are suddenly advocates for the poor when their profits are at risk. We know what's really going on. And the truth is that City Council must take bold steps to address the urgent needs of those young students who are so vulnerable and who have been abandoned by Harrisburg and many others who couldn't prove their opportunity so significantly. We have an

opportunity to expand Pre-K to serve up to 25,000 students. And when I think of those children in the aggregate, I think of their neighborhoods, their communities, their families. I think of the LGBT students among their number often facing additional challenges to success due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. It's time for us to make a bold investment in these children, their neighborhoods, their families and the diverse communities of which they are part. Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you.

MS. SHIKOMBA: Hello. My name is Madeline Shikomba. I'm here to speak on behalf of the tax. Our children are our future. Let them lead the way. They are the future leaders. What type of leaders are we creating with an educational system that doesn't have Universal K. The foundation block of any educational system is what we teachers build upon. People opposed to this tax are greedy and selfish, out to protect their own self-interest and not to protect the most

vulnerable segment of our society, our children. I repeat, when I speak to parents every time I see them giving their children sodas, I ask them why are you doing this. It's what I can afford. I look at them. I say well, you know, you have a choice. You can give them the soda which you can afford now and I hope later on you can afford the insulin and the hospital bills, the blindness, the obesity and everything else that come along with it when you give these kids this sugar. These drinks are not essential. People may lose their jobs, but they'll do like everybody else who's lost a job. Find another one. That's all they have to do. I am not going to let you destroy our children. That's every member of City Council. Place children first and not last. They are the future leaders and we're already behind the third world in terms of building leadership. The kids can't read, can't write. And how you going to build leaders to take over this country? We must now stop favoring corporate greed and selfishness and start supporting our children and give them

the foundation that they need so that they can take care of you when you get old. Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you. Thank you all for your testimony.

Next up we will have Lavon Jackson, Chuck Goodwin, Lauren Summers, Rob Buscher. Rob Buscher. I understand we have a rep for Mr. Jordan who's next. Are you going to speak on Mr. Jordan's behalf?

Good morning. Self-select.

MS. LINARDOPOULOS: All right. I'm up? Okay. Thank you. Good morning, Council President. Good morning, Council members. My name is Hillary Linardopoulos and I am speaking on behalf of PFT President, Jerry Jordan, who is -- he had to leave because he is going to attempt to negotiate a fair contract for our educators.

For too long the education of Philadelphia's children has not been treated as a must do, been treated as a negotiable line item and that practice must stop. We recognize that quality Pre-K is crucial if our children want to start school on equal footing with

their peers. As a former kindergarten teacher, I can tell you that the effect of Pre-K is well documented in studies, but it's also well documented in the experience of kindergarten teachers and students. So instead of a unified resolve to figure out how we're going to make this happen, there is now a debate on whether it's going to happen and this is simply unacceptable. There is no question that school buildings across the City are aging and that many children sit in classrooms that are too hot, too cold, or contain hazardous elements such as mold, lead, vermin. But despite the urgency of this situation, we again define the problem by talking about why it's too expensive, too difficult and just politically impossible to make buildings into healthy learning environments. Again, unacceptable. All the while, our children go without resources. And the task of providing a learning experience falls squarely on the shoulders of educators. Teachers and school staff simply cannot take any more. They have been stretched to the breaking point as you

heard Ms. Palladino testify to previously. They're asked to do more with less. They have gone without a raise for more than four years. They have had their prep times taken away from them, have been given fewer resources and more accountability. And when they don't meet arbitrary assigned benchmarks, they are being told that they are failing. Some even have to reapply for their jobs this year when schools like Rhodes, Mitchell, Roosevelt and Moran are labeled turnaround schools. We will not be successful in the way that we fund education until we change our entire approach to supporting educators and giving school children what they need.

Thank you for your time.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you very much for your testimony.

MR. GOODWIN: Good morning, Mr. President, distinguished Council members. I'm Chuck Goodwin, President of the Center City Residents Association. In order to raise 95 million per year to support Universal Pre-K and community schools, among other things, the CCRA

wholeheartedly supports placing a three cents per ounce tax on suppliers of sugary drinks. Our membership, when surveyed, gives 84 percent support to this tax. We're grateful to Mayor Kenney and this Council for highlighting the importance of Pre-K. Where parents can afford Pre-K, their kids go to Pre-K. In Center City, virtually all kids go to Pre-K at their parent's expense. If well-off Center City parents pay for pre-K, it's because they know its value. The results, many kids read before kindergarten. Almost all kids read before first grade coming out of Center City. These kids have at least one year -- a one-year leg up, maybe more, in effect because Center City is generally well off. Center City already has Universal Pre-K. So why not Feltonville or any other hard-pressed neighborhood in this City? Poverty is no reason to deny children pre-K. These are Philadelphia's children. Center City people are proud Philadelphians. Our kids are worth it. Three cents an ounce is the right amount given the money that needs to be raised. It is not onerous. It's $1.25 per

Philadelphian per week. Less than a SEPTA token. And if someone can't afford or doesn't want to pay this tax, they'll drink something else. It's not regressive either. A can of soda goes from anywhere from 25 cents at BJ's, to a buck thirty-nine at convenience stores. The tax can and will be absorbed by suppliers. If it does prove too high, it won't -- it will be easier to cut than to raise when a lower number falls short. It won't kill business. It won't kill jobs. Stores will still have shelves they'll need to fill. If soda isn't moving, they'll stock other drinks. Drinks that will be made in factories and shipped in trucks just like soda. Factory workers and truck drivers won't lose jobs. The City has already raised many taxes, real estate and sales. And stopped cutting the wage tax. Let's tax something nonessential like sugary sodas.

We submit more extensive written testimony and only summarize here. I'm happy to answer any questions. Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank

you so much for your testimony.

MS. SUMMERS: Hi. My name is Lauren Summers and I live in Graduate Hospital and I support the sugary drink tax. As a parent that has been fortunate and privileged enough to find myself and my family in a comfortable position, I was able to give my two sons a quality pre-K education. From this experience, it was only because of that security that my husband and I were able to work and support our family knowing they were both being protected, stimulated and guided by experience and resource educators. They were both ready to jump into kindergarten and start their education. We need more with resources to stand up for the families that have less in the City, whether due to family history, illness, poverty or racism, and the most impactful way is to offer residents across the City a strong start in their child's education. I came to Philly as a college student and the over two decades I have lived here, this is the first time I have seen and heard as much public discourse about our schools. The only news I

had read when deciding on kindergarten was about less resources and the problems caused by it. I now see our Mayor visit a school a week modelling the advocacy we should have been seeing all along. City efforts for decades past have gone into job growth, infrastructure and tourism, but rarely schools. Our beautiful gem of a City is pretty popular now and I see it growing with engaged citizens and families willing to get more involved if you can show us that the City and state are working to fix this problem. The City's growth has been explosive and it's an opportune time to show the rest of the country that our world-class City values education and our young. We can give a boost to an entire generation of Philly's children by growing quality pre-K programs and in the trickle-down effect we will see it reflective in our public schools. We will see more students entering our school system with a familiarity of letters, numbers, books, proper student behavior and daily structure. We'll have our overburdened teachers a little less burdened and ready to take on the next phase of

learning and growth in their classroom.

Our schools have been fortresses for years. It's time to re-open those doors and the ties to the communities. There is a growing resource in our young and old residents and parents all paying attention. Give us guidance and take a first step in showing us that you are investing in all that we care about. Set a precedent for the rest of the state and country. None of our students or families need this other grocery and it only forces big soda to use their resources to come up with an alternate plan and budget if they want to continue business here and you know they want to. Let Philadelphia fund our schools and parks. I grew up in an addicted and then single-parent home in an urban environment. I was able to build a better life for my adult self and family from the education, resources and modeling from my public schools and state university. Philadelphia's children need and deserve the same chance. Fight for fair funding, engage our community leaders and organizations,

advocate for us and support our teachers. Take the next step to make it happen by passing the sugary drink tax. Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you for your testimony.

MR. JACKSON: Good morning. My name is Lavon Andre Jackson. I'm an active advisor for the office of the mayor community services. I'm president, a member of the National Democratic Committee on Washington, D.C., on the citizen committee. I'm here to support the soda tax, and I first would like to say good morning to Honorable President Clarke, Wilson Goode, Jr., and members of City Council. I would like to commend all of you for the dignity, respect and leadership you have shown and provided for the constituents here in the City of Philadelphia. This soda tax would implement teachers, nurses to take care of students when they are in school, school police to make sure that there is no bullying and consults taken on -- this is jobs that will be coming back to our economy. I also like to support the Recreation Department that this

soda tax will also benefit from. We need to give people jobs that may not have a degree like I have. We have a lot of citizens in Philadelphia that wants to work but can't work. We have 27 police precincts here in Philadelphia that the police officers have to go to car washes to get their cars cleaned. We have individuals in Philadelphia that can provide those jobs for these different precincts to keep their cars clean and sanitized. And also, pre-K is something that we need because it's a basic education that the children need in order to go to first grade. Also, if you notice the protesters that was in here, you ask any of them, do they have children in our school system or in pre-K. This goes to show you they have no respect for their own children, as well as ours. And we're not talking about funding certain districts like North Philly and South Philly. We're talking about having funding for all ten districts here in Philadelphia. And I think that the residents of Philadelphia should put the question first that these -- the

commercials that they see on T.V., they contradict theyself. They tell you about taxes are going to go up on the people. If you go in any of these corner stores, you will see that the products are two times as much as the ones that's in the grocery store. So they're not losing any money and they say go up the hill to get free -- to get sodas. If they went up the hill also and bought their products at a lesser price, they could keep their prices the same and still make a profit. And this is what I have to say. And I'm in full support of this soda tax. And thank you very much.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you very much. Thank you all.

Councilwoman Gym.

COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you very much. I wanted to thank Mr. Goodwin, Ms. Summers, Mr. Jackson for your testimony, but I have a couple of questions for the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers. Really quickly, there has been a lot of dialogue with the School District about the situation regarding oversize classes in the School District, split grades

and the massive amount of vacancies. And it feels sometimes that we get a little bit of conflicting information about the situation is around class size. For example, the School District of Philadelphia gave us data that counted class sizes above -- 34 and above, but it's my understanding that kindergarten, for example, K through three schools would be over crowded at 31. Could you give us an update on what the situation is around the class size situation in the School District as PFT has seen it and hearing it directly from schools' principals and teachers?

MS. LINARDOPOULOS: Absolutely. Thank you for the question, Councilwoman. So our contractual limit, which is one of the things that we have been fighting so hard for as part of the teachers contract because it is good for children and educators, is 30 in grades K to two and 33 in grades four to twelve. So a class of 31, as you indicated, in second grade is oversized and a class of 34 in fourth grade is oversized. And one thing that you have pointed out previously, Councilwoman,

which I appreciate, is that these are the outer limits. This is not a standard that we should find acceptable if every class in the District is at 30 in kindergarten and 33 in four to twelve. One of the most productive years I had as a teacher was when I had 18 students in my kindergarten class and it was a total anomaly. And it was just delightful because we all got to know one another so much better and the students got to know their peers, they got to know me and we had a really great, you know, time together to interact.

So right now there are 226 oversized K to eight classes.

COUNCILWOMAN GYM: You said 226?

MS. LINARDOPOULOS: Correct. K to eight, there are 226 oversize and that includes -- as we discussed, that includes K to two that are 31 or more -- or, excuse me, K to three that are 31 or more, and four to eight that are 34 or more. So 226 for elementary and middle school oversized classes as of data that is accurate as of the 11th of May.

In high school, I believe that

there are just about that many. And I have gotten some final data this morning that I have to review, but there are 500 oversized classes in the School District of Philadelphia total. And that's -- those are just facts, Councilwoman.

COUNCILWOMAN GYM: So that's like 13,000 kids in classrooms at a minimum. And what are you seeing as kind of the outside range of these classes? I agree with you, by the way, that any class that is over the contractual maximum is extremely overcrowded, not just one or two over, but we don't want to see kindergartners with 32 and say oh, it's only two students. We have an overcrowded kindergarten class period. And it's interesting because the fifth grade class that was here this morning has 35 students, for example, at McCall School, and the students did talk a lot about what it meant to be in an overcrowded classroom. But with 13,000 students experiencing schools this year at least in overcrowded classrooms, what are some of the extreme outliers that you're seeing?

Like how far are we ranging? And I understand that we started the year with 77 in a gym class at Mastbaum. I saw somewhere 58 and another gym class in the District currently. So could you talk to that a little bit?

MS. LINARDOPOULOS: Sure. There are classes of -- Beaver Middle School is one that really sticks out to me, because the -- I think there are maybe six classes there total and four of them are oversized, and they are in the upper 30s and have been in the 40s at some point in the year. So that's a school, as you know, that is slated for closure and has simply had no relief in sight. The educators are doing their best but there is actually physical space constraints in the classroom. So that is one that is a real -- you know, something that just has stuck out in my mind all year. There are fourth grade classes at one of the Northeast schools and I can get you the name, I don't remember off the top of my head, that are 40.

COUNCILWOMAN GYM: 40 in the fourth grade?

MS. LINARDOPOULOS: Yes. Upper 30s in six through eight. You know, 38, 39. When we hear talk about one or two, you know, oversized, like you said, that is -- that makes a big difference to a teacher. I know this personally. One student, two students additional, those are -- you know, takes away from the experience of all of the students. It's not fair for those one to two that are over the limit. It's just too much. You know, it's unbearable for everybody that is experiencing that everyday.

COUNCILWOMAN GYM: In the normal process, what would happen if a teacher was confronted with a class of, say, 58 at one class or a class of 40 at another school? What would the normal procedure be under the contract and how would it have been resolved, for example?

MS. LINARDOPOULOS: These are situations that should be resolved by levelling which takes place, you know, in October. So big huge class sizes of 50, you don't wait to leveling. You address it when you see that

that is going to be a problem. You address it immediately. The contractual limit is at levelling. So those should have been addressed no later than levelling. That's the last deadline. And if they are not addressed, there are a number of different ways. There can be -- another teacher should come into the building. Sometimes they will add another teacher to the class. Sometimes they will add an assistant to the class. But these are all -- I think it just goes back to the fundamental approach to treating our children as numbers and just seeing, okay, what is the bare minimum that we can do to make this look okay. And that's one of the reasons that we have been so sort of dogged in looking at the data this year because particularly in terms of class sizes this year, because it's numbers, but it tells us the story of the students and what they are experiencing in the classroom. And it is very, very important that Council has accurate information, which I don't -- you know, which is why we have worked hard to provide it to you throughout to the year to the best of our

ability.

COUNCILWOMAN GYM: I'm asking you for your perspective only. I don't expect it to be an official, you know, opinion of fact. But from your perspective, the District has allocated -- I mean, for example, this year between K to 12 education, the District has allocated close to 30 million dollars on teachers that it did not spend. And I would be curious what you think would have been the -- among the barriers to their -- you know, the money is there. It's not an issue of money. What was the barrier to having that happen? We have raised concerns about, you know, whether teachers want to come here. We have raised concerns about why there was no chief talent officers permanent since July 2015. But from your perspective, what do you think was the key -- some of the key barriers that prevented the District from hiring?

MS. LINARDOPOULOS: The contract. The fact that the teachers in this district have gone without a contract since 2013. The fact that they have not had a raise since

January of 2012. The fact that they have not had step increases. There is only so much that a person, a professional can sustain and teaches are deeply, deeply, committed, but they are also human beings. They have families that they have to tend to, and when we have this uncertainty that seems to show no signs of abating, right, it seems to show no sign of slowing down. There is no solution in sight for too many teachers. They think well, you know, we're told just hold on, just hold on. And we have been hearing all year that, you know, we need a contract, but I think that that has been -- from the educators that I have spoken with, that has been the biggest barrier and the biggest sort of slap in the face, that they are being told we need, you know, to get more teachers, we need more teachers and the teachers that are here, they feel like they can't in good conscience invite a friend to come teach because it's so unpredictable. It's not a sustainable environment right now and no matter their commitment that they have, there are so many people that are looking to resign

and leave and they just say, you know, I can't take it anymore. It's not good for my physical, emotional health. And that is a -- that is the big situation right now.

COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Well, it feels like there's lots more to talk about but I appreciate your answering that. Thank you very much.

MS. LINARDOPOULOS: Thank you.

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank you. We have the next group. Ann O'Brien. Is she here? Okay. Tawana Tonkins. Tawana Tonkins. Is that you, ma'am? Orlando Acosta. Orlando Acosta. Oh, okay. I'm sorry. Donna Cooper. Donna is still here? All right. We'll stay with that.

Ms. O'Brien, I called you first, please. Identify yourself for the record and proceed, please.

MS. O'BRIEN: Good morning and thank you for this opportunity. My name is Ann O'Brien and I'm here to support the sugary drink tax and the Mayor's plan for Universal Pre-K.

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Hold on one second. Hold on. Please, as you're leaving, please be quiet because we're still having the hearing. Respect all the speakers. Thank you.

MS. O'BRIEN: I'm a lifelong resident of the City of Philadelphia and I'm sorry to see the CAPA kids leave because I'm also the proud mother of a graduate of CAPA who will graduate on Monday and receive a degree in vocal performance from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music. My son, Jack, was the beneficiary of wonderful School District of Philadelphia education. He also was prepared for that education because he had high-quality pre-K. In my day job, I run a nonprofit organization called Montgomery Early Learning Centers. We have been in the early education business for over 50 years and have been serving families in the City of Philadelphia for over 30 years. And not all children are prepared for kindergarten or for life like my son was. We are proud to partner with the Philadelphia School District in providing high-quality Pre-K counts. I have programs in Councilman

Johnson's district. I have two centers in Councilwoman Blackwell's district. And I will soon have a program in Council President's district with Temple University. We have a close relationship with all the Philadelphia School District schools that we have in making sure that our kids are ready to be successful in their kindergartens because we all know that when children are not ready for kindergarten when they start behind, they stay behind. The research is conclusive and it's -- you can't argue with it. Economist James Heckman tells us that the best workforce development investment we can make is high-quality early education. Law enforcement officials tell us that they support high-quality pre-K because it lowers incarceration rates. I have waiting lists for my pre-K programs, but there are no waiting lists for prison. There's lots of room there. We save the School District of Philadelphia money. High-quality pre-K reduces special education investment. The Pittsburgh School District found that after two years of pre-K, they were able to reduce their special

education in kindergarten by 42 percent. In the State of New Jersey, they were able to reduce grade repetition by 40 percent. So we don't have to wait until these children grow up to see the savings. We can see savings immediately in the School District that go back into the program that our children deserve. Pre-K also creates jobs, high-quality jobs, it attracts workers. It is a no-brainer. Please support the Mayor's tax.

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank you. Thank you, Ms. O'Brien.

Ms. Tonkins, please.

MS. TONKINS: Good morning, City Council members. Thanks for giving me the opportunity to speak today in favor of the sugary drink tax. My name is Tawana Tonkins. I'm the owner and director of Kai's Comfy Corner Childcare and Learning Center located at 1601 South 9th Street. Kai's Comfy Corner is a star three childcare center licensed for 77 children. We provide high-quality care to young children in South Philadelphia. I employ ten staff members, all from the community.

Over 14 years we have been the first stop for hundreds of children who later go on to the Philadelphia School District. Our goal is to provide high-quality care and learning opportunities for children and their families. I have been known to say to anyone who will listen that high-quality care costs. So when I heard about Mayor Kenney proposing a tax that would fund such an opportunity to all the children in Philadelphia, it was a no-brainer for me. The children of Philadelphia all deserve a chance to succeed. After all, I too am the product of good education, family and community support. I was raised in South Philadelphia by a teen parent who was a single mother. My mother understood that only education could break the cycle of poverty. She placed me in Get-Set, which is a precursor to today's Headstart, and went on to graduate from Temple University. I followed her footsteps and attended and received a bachelor's degree from Penn State University, a master's degree and a teaching certification in early childhood education from Chestnut Hill

College. But I later came back to the South Philadelphia community where I was raised and opened up my childcare center. I worked for United Communities and volunteered with the neighborhood PAL center. High-quality centers are the types of programs your tax dollars will be supporting. Those dollars would allow the possibility of expansion to give access to more children to high-equal care and create more jobs. By supporting the sugary drink tax, it doesn't mean I don't support my neighborhood stores or small businesses, as some would have you believe. I have been doing that for the past 45 years. The children and the families in these communities do that every day and will continue to do so. Maybe it's time for large corporations to also support our children's education rather than to try and convince the community that a profit now is more important than our children's education, our children's future and the future of our communities. My bottom line is this --

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Ma'am, I have to ask you to finish. If you have a written --

MS. TONKINS: I'm sorry, last sentence. We have the opportunity to choose to support our children now and we can support -- or we can support them later in the judicial or prison system. Only quality education support can break the cycle of poverty. Please vote to support our children now. Please vote for the sugary drink tax.

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank you. And, again, if you have written testimony you want to put in, we'll make sure it's all part of the record. Mr. Acosta, we called you next. Now you have -- do we have a microphone for him or -- okay. He wants to come up. I didn't know if we needed a microphone for him. You got it? Okay.

Good afternoon.

MR. ACOSTA: How you doing? I'm basically --

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Just say your name for the record.

MR. ACOSTA: Oh, Orlando Acosta. I'm here to speak on the sugary tax. Basically, you know, like everybody else, I

want children that pre-K needs quality education. Where I'm basically concerned is say that tax gets passed, then we got to make sure that that money gets used exactly for what it's allocated for because it's too many times that money's been allocated to use for certain things but the money never gets used for what it's necessarily allocated. So that's my main concern. Now, if it's going to be used for what it's intended to be used for, then fine. But if it's not and this is just a preception of saying okay, this is what it's going to be used for and then we find ourself in a hole later on or something else, then, you know, that's where I'm very concerned about. Because we have to make sure that that's exactly what it's being used for, because too many times that, you know -- you know people, you know, get behind something and they think that it is intended for that and then when it's -- when all the smoke and mirrors are gone, then it doesn't -- it's never used for what it's intended to do. So that's -- but if it's going to be used for that, then, yes, I'm in support

of it.

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Okay. Thank you.

MR. ACOSTA: But let me say this in closing. In closing, we also have to look at corporations that haven't paid the City -- their city taxes either. We have to look at, you know, corporations like banks, you know, PNC, different -- you know, and take off the tax exemptions for businesses outside of putting it on the communities too.

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Orlando. Donna, before you start, let me -- I have two more names on the list. Tomika Anglin. Is she here? Tomika Anglin. Okay. There she is. All right. Why don't you come up. And then Danielle Pettigrew. Okay. Come on up. Anyone else here? Okay. Good. That will be our last three.

Donna, why don't you start -- identify yourself and proceed, please.

MS. COOPER: Donna Cooper, executive director of Public Citizens for

Children Youth. A year ago today, 80 percent of the voters in this City said yes to the valid question on pre-K. The highest affirmative vote of any ballot measure in nine years with overwhelming results in every ward. More yes votes were cast for pre-K than for the mayoral candidates Williams, Abraham, Oliver, Diaz and Street combined. Now the Mayor's proposal to fund pre-K with a tax on sugary drinks is being met with resistance, backed by the deep pockets of the soda industry. You know this debate all too well. You went through it just a few years ago when you enacted the tax on cigarettes to fund our schools. You heard big tobacco fear mongering of our citizens turning to crime to avoid the cigarette tax and their unfounded claims that the tax will lead to lost jobs and lost tax revenue. You rejected those arguments and voted unanimously to impose the tax. It was a tough decision, but the right one and a progressive one too. We now know that the dire predictions about the cigarette tax hike never happened, but it's déjà vu all over again from

big soda. Research shows that when non-addictive products are taxed at a high enough rate and consumers have good substitutes price sensitive, lower income shoppers purchase untaxed products. In spite of big soda's claims, research shows that limited income shoppers are wise purchasers. Meanwhile, upper income and middle income shoppers show little change in their purchasing behavior in response to most taxes. That means that a sufficiently high tax on soda will be more heavily paid by middle and upper income consumers. The lower the tax rate is, the less effect it will have on purchases made by all consumers. As a result, a low soda tax will be paid equally by low, moderate and upper income consumers, making it more regressive. It's just common sense. Mexico may be far away, but research shows that consumer behaviors do not really vary much across countries. After it imposed a ten percent -- almost done -- sugary drink tax, lower income consumers shifted their purchasing to non-sugary drinks at three times the rate of upper and middle income consumers. Simply put,

the wealthiest consumers are paying the tax while the poorest consumers are avoiding it. This Council should support the tax proposed by the Mayor. It's a tax that will be paid by consumers that will afford it and will go a long way to closing the achievement gap for poor children and children of color by dramatically expanding access to pre-K.

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank you, ma'am.

MS. COOPER: I ask you, what could be more progressive than that?

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Ms. Anglin, please. Thank you. Ms. Anglin, please identify yourself and proceed.

MS. ANGLIN: Tomika Anglin. And I wanted to speak to some of the things I heard during the School District's testimony regarding the budget yesterday. The SRC -- the hearing was advertised as hold the School District accountable. The School District and the SRC are anything but accountable. They don't respond to any parental concerns. They put on a veil of transparency, but when it

comes to actually answering questions, there is limited information provided. They change the rules when they need to in order to suit their own agenda. For instance, there was a vote to charterize two schools, parents voted against it, the schools were not charterized, then they eliminated the need for a vote. They saved 65 million dollars by not hiring teachers, but then they talk about priorities. So are they saying that they did not prioritize hiring teachers last year, created all of these savings, and then now it's a priority to hire teachers? Since when does educating students not prioritize hiring teachers? Councilwoman Reynolds Brown talked about the closing of World Communications Charter School and she asked about public disclosure. The SRC is famous for doing the bare minimum for public disclosure. So there was probably some conversation in some backroom somewhere and somebody made a presentation during the SRC meeting, but that does not equal transparency. The SRC makes unilateral decisions. The district is supposed to be accountable to them

but parents have no voice, no input, and no actual decision-making in the processes that affect them most. They talk about it's all for the kids. I don't see those things happening. Thank you.

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Anglin. Thank you for your time.

Ms. Pettigrew, please identify yourself and proceed.

MS. PETTIGREW: Good morning. My name is Danielle Pettigrew and I'm coming as a parent of a three-year-old child in the City of Philadelphia. She's doing really well; however, this whole process for her starting pre-K has been very challenging, to say the least. I have had to look at the School District of Philadelphia, as well as going to districts outside of Philadelphia to try to find some type of program where my daughter will get the best education that she can get. Other parents in the City aren't able to afford schools outside of Philadelphia County. And I think that we do need to support this soda tax

so that Universal pre-K is available for all kids. But the time this is passed, she won't be in pre-K, but if I decide to have more children later on and I remain in the City, I want to be able for them to have a good early education head start.

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank you, Ms. Pettigrew. Thank you for your time.

All right. We had also scheduled sometime this afternoon. So this Committee will stand in recess until 1:00 p.m. this afternoon. Thank you very much.

(Recess.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good afternoon. I understand we have a witness, Dr. Simmons. Simmons, I'm sorry. My fault. Challenging handwriting over here.

Good afternoon, sir.

DR. SIMMONS: Good afternoon. Okay. Thank you. Just go ahead and begin? Okay. Thank you. So brief introduction. My name is Dr. Rob Simmons. This is my 44th year in public health education in California and Latin America and in greater Philadelphia

region. I am testifying and providing some information regarding the initiative, sugar-sweetened beverage initiative, but particularly how the money is scheduled to be used or planned to be used and what it's going for. A little bit of background. I worked in California on Proposition 99, which was the major tobacco tax initiative that was earmarked to health and social services in California and created a major initiative that greatly reduced the tobacco use in California for the last generation. I also was the chief of the office of school-linked and school-based health services and I reported directly to the assistant director for the Department of Health Services and the assistant superintendent of public instruction in the Department of Education in California and we particularly worked on early childhood education and community schools, which will be the focus of my testimony. You're very familiar with and heard hopefully a lot about early childhood education, the importance of it, its significant impact in readiness to school, key

determinants of school success, growth and development, social cognitive skills and a major factor of course dealing with children in poverty, and it's a tremendous key opportunity for Philadelphia both having short and long-term benefits related to supporting early childhood education. The resources are used to create quality early childhood education that increases staff/child ratios, increase teacher qualifications, reducing teacher turnover and including competitive wages. So there's a wealth of evidence about early childhood education I want to emphasize. The bulk of what I want to say is about community schools and the movement toward community schools. And California was really the start of that movement back in the 1980s and 1990s when local communities and school districts and individual schools opened up their schools to community partners in the health and social services areas and certainly used as a tremendous community resource and asset for the community. Forming partnerships, engaging the private sector. And it starts with doing a

community-based needs assessment and assets assessment of what the community needs. So what's important is it's totally tailored to the individual community and working with the local School District. A key of course is the selection of the community school coordinator. That was a major -- one of the major decisions and working for the State of California we helped oversee that and worked with our county offices of education, the state education agency, and the local education agencies in coordinating that. Certainly has a major impact in sustained funding because of working with the private sector, so it wasn't totally relied on government funding. And active involvement in parents and youth and students. Each community school typically has a unique characteristic tied to their community and there is again, active engagement in that process. In California, tremendous variance. Los Angeles, community high schools, alternative schools, working with real world learning. Frankly, dealing with -- in South Central L.A., dealing with gangs and other

issues. Northern California, the Oakland Bay area, Richmond area community school networks were formed. They call them full service schools. There's wonderful models of community schools locally in the area. New York certainly, Baltimore, Camden, New Jersey across the river, Chester in Delaware County are great examples of community schools and have wonderful resources. Academia is typically very engaged. We certainly did that in California. Here, University of Pennsylvania's Center for Community School Partnership. And this opportunity for creating community schools will more actively engage academia throughout Philadelphia. And it's a strong student voice. I have with me a logic model. You may have that information from the Coalition for Community Schools of how the planning process works. And also an article from Texas that -- of a fifth grader who actively -- the students themselves took an active role in improving nutrition and health for those schools.

The last thing I want to mention is the way this is structured. It's through the

Mayor's Office of Education. And I feel that's a really positive way of organizing this as far as community schools. Much of the work that we did in California those years were -- the money went directly to the local School Districts. That's important. But also it didn't have as much voice in the community. Parents didn't feel as much and it often -- it sometimes went to some sources that the community was not actively engaged. So I think the process as suggested here for this proposal through the Mayor's office really can connect the City Services, City Planning, Public Health, Streets Department, et cetera and tie to the 18 districts throughout the City of Philadelphia.

So that concludes my testimony and certainly open to any questions you might have.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you very much for your testimony. One quick question. Are you familiar or have you heard about the trip that the administration and Council took to Cincinnati to look at the Oyler School?

DR. SIMMONS: I have heard of it.

I don't know any details about that. What's different I can tell you since I'm talking -- my role was in the early 1992 to 1994, so that was over 20 years ago. The amount of resources and network and examples and models, learning from lessons learned what didn't work and what did work, we didn't have any of that, very little of it back over 20 years ago. So Cincinnati I'm sure has a great model for that.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: It was quite impressive. Thank you. We're going to work diligently in assuring that we implement the community schools method program in the City of Philadelphia. I have actually already identified two schools in my district that I'd like to move --

DR. SIMMONS: Great. And frankly, that was one of the things that I know we tried to negotiate because there was a lot of competition across -- over a thousand school districts in the State of California and limited resources to do that. But that's great that you have some in your district.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank

you, Doctor. Thanks so much for your testimony.

Mr. Stitt, do you have anyone else on the list to testify today?

THE CLERK: No.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: You do not. There being none, this committee will stand in recess until Tuesday, May 24, 2016 at 10:00 a.m., at which time we will reconvene in Room 400. Thank you very much.

(Hearing recessed at 1:42 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, evidence and objections noted, are contained fully and accurately in the notes taken by me on the hearing of this matter, and that this copy is a correct transcript of the same.

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SUSAN A. HURREY, R.P.R.

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