

**OFFICE OF THE CITY CONTROLLER
FISCAL YEAR 2022 BUDGET TESTIMONY
CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
WEDNESDAY, MAY 19, 2021**

Good morning Council President Clarke and members of City Council. I am City Controller Rebecca Rhyhart. I am pleased to provide testimony on the Office of the City Controller's Fiscal Year 2022 Operating Budget.

The City Controller is the fiscal watchdog and chief auditor for the City of Philadelphia. To fulfill our mission to make city government work more efficiently and effectively so that it can best serve all residents, the office uses the audit and investigative functions. Under my leadership, the office has audited every department every year, something that was not always done in the past. We have completed special audits, covering a range of issues from examining problems with the City's new payroll system, OnePhilly, to ensure employees were paid correctly, to reviewing the Philadelphia Parking Authority's on-street parking expenses to determine if more funds could go to the Philadelphia School District. We have investigated missing guns at the Sheriff's Office and the City's response to the civil unrest last year. Additionally, my office has worked on critical policy issues such as gun violence and the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. And, my office continues to perform the charter-required monitoring of payments to ensure contractual compliance before payments are issued.

For FY22, Mayor Kenney has proposed an operating budget of \$9,478,289 for my office. This level of funding makes permanent a FY21 cut of \$571,814 that my office agreed to take during the pandemic for one year. Like so many other departments, we wanted to do our part to ensure that

the City was able to balance its budget while minimizing the impact on residents. On April 5th of this year, my office requested that the cut be restored, but it was not added back to our budget. As such, the mayor's proposed budget, which continues FY21's reduced funding, is insufficient. I am requesting that the Office of the City Controller's \$571,814 reduction in Class 100 funding be restored.

Approximately 95% of the Office of the City Controller's budget is Class 100, with the remaining 5% in Class 200-400. Over the last fiscal year, my office did not fill key vacancies in order to meet the reduction in Class 100 spending. These vacancies, primarily in our audit function, have created a strain in our operations. Continuing to operate at this staffing level will result in a severe impact on my office's ability to perform its duties.

I am appealing to City Council to ensure that my office has adequate appropriations to perform the duties of our office as outlined in Section 2-300(4)(b) of the Philadelphia Home Rule Charter, which states, "...the amount appropriated to the Auditing Department shall be adequate to enable the City Controller to perform the duties of his office and of the Auditing Department." As such, I am requesting that my office's budget be restored to \$10,140,103 for FY22.

I believe we, as a government, can operate better for all residents – it is a belief I know this body shares and it is what we all work toward every day. As City Controller, it is my goal that the Controller's Office is seen as a resource, helping to move the city forward and address some of our greatest challenges by providing valuable information, data and audits.

Thank you. This concludes my testimony. I am happy to answer any questions that you may have at this time.