

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE ON LAW AND GOVERNMENT

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Thursday, April 30, 2015
1:40 p.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILMAN WILLIAM K. GREENLEE, CHAIR
COUNCILMAN W. WILSON GOODE, JR.
COUNCILMAN BOBBY HENON
COUNCILMAN CURTIS JONES, JR.
COUNCILMAN DENNIS O'BRIEN

BILLS 140724 and 150216
RESOLUTIONS 140735 and 150225

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COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Good
afternoon, everyone. This is the
Committee on Law and Government. We have
obtained a quorum with Councilman Goode,
Councilman O'Brien, and Councilman Henon.

For the record, Bill No. 140724
and Resolution 140735 will be held to the
call of the Chair at the request of the
sponsor. That's the bill dealing with
the International Trade Authority.

Ms. Marconi, will you please
read the title of the bill and resolution
that is before us today.

THE CLERK: Bill No. 150216, an
ordinance providing for the submission to
the qualified electors of the City of
Philadelphia of an amendment to The
Philadelphia Home Rule Charter
establishing and defining the
responsibilities of the Office of
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
Affairs; fixing the date of a special
election for such purpose; prescribing
the form of ballot questions to be voted

1 4/30/15 - LAW & GOV. - BILL 150216, etc.
2 on; and authorizing the appropriate
3 officers to publish notice and to make
4 arrangements for the special election;
5 and

6 Resolution 150225, resolution
7 proposing an amendment to The
8 Philadelphia Home Rule Charter to provide
9 for the creation of an Office of Lesbian,
10 Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Affairs, to
11 provide for the powers and duties of such
12 Office, and to otherwise provide for
13 incorporation of the Office into the City
14 government; and providing for the
15 submission of the amendment to the
16 electors of Philadelphia.

17 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
18 you. Our first panel is?

19 THE CLERK: Rue Landau and
20 Helen Fitzpatrick.

21 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: And while
22 they're approaching, just for the record,
23 there is written testimony submitted by
24 Allan Irving from the University of
25 Pennsylvania in support of this bill and

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2 resolution. And as you can say, while
3 the witnesses are sitting down, we are a
4 little tight on time because there will
5 be another hearing coming, so everybody
6 that submitted written testimony, it will
7 be submitted for the record and I would
8 appreciate you summarizing your
9 statements. Yes, I'm looking at you,
10 Ms. Landau, that's right.

11 (Witnesses approached witness
12 table.)

13 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Please
14 proceed.

15 MS. LANDAU: Good afternoon,
16 Chairman Greenlee and members of the
17 Committee on Law and Government. I'm Rue
18 Landau, Executive Director of the
19 Philadelphia Commission on Human
20 Relations, and I am here to express
21 support for Bill No. 150216 and
22 Resolution No. 150225, which seeks to
23 place on the November 2015 ballot a
24 measure to make permanent an entity
25 expressly focused on the concerns and

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2 plights of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and
3 transgender community in this great city.

4 I would like to take a moment to thank
5 Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown for
6 advancing this legislation.

7 As you know, the PCHR is the
8 City agency charged with administering
9 and enforcing the Fair Practices
10 Ordinance, the City law that protects
11 people from unlawful discrimination in
12 employment, housing, and public
13 accommodations. Our agency also resolves
14 issues of intergroup conflicts in
15 communities and neighborhoods throughout
16 the City.

17 Philadelphia has long been at
18 the forefront of passing laws to protect
19 members of the LGBT community from
20 discrimination. Since 1982 when sexual
21 orientation was first added to the
22 Philadelphia Fair Practices Ordinance,
23 Philadelphia has continued to extend
24 numerous additional protections,
25 including life partnership benefits in

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2 1998 and protections against gender
3 identity discrimination in 2002. In
4 2011, the law was amended again to
5 strengthen all of the LGBT protections,
6 including adding increased fines and
7 penalties for violating the ordinance.
8 Finally, in 2013, additional measures
9 were added to codify LGBT-specific City
10 administrative practices that had not
11 been written into law and also to create
12 new protections for transgender
13 individuals, including the historic
14 offering of transgender inclusive health
15 benefits to City employees.

16 Indeed, Philadelphia has made
17 great progress throughout all areas of
18 government on LGBT issues despite
19 significant obstacles at the state and
20 federal levels. In fact, for two years
21 in a row, Philadelphia has gained
22 national recognition for its LGBT laws
23 and policies, earning perfect scores on
24 the Human Rights Campaign's Municipal
25 Equality Index. Philadelphia is ranked

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2 one of the highest scoring big cities
3 that does not have statewide LGBT
4 protections.

5 While Philadelphia has made
6 great strides in areas of legislating,
7 administering, and enforcing laws and
8 policies that protect our LGBT residents,
9 workers, and visitors, there are many
10 more ongoing issues that are of grave
11 importance to the community. The Human
12 Rights Campaign recently reported that
13 four in ten youth say the communities in
14 which they live are not accepting of LGBT
15 people, and a staggering 92 percent of
16 LGBT youth hear negative comments from
17 school, the Internet, and their peers.
18 In addition, the Williams Institute cited
19 an eye-opening statistic that 40 percent
20 of homeless youth identified as LGBT. In
21 its access to healthcare study, Lambda
22 Legal reports that transgender people
23 face significant barriers to equal,
24 consistent, and high-quality healthcare,
25 resulting in their disengagement from the

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2 healthcare system.

3 Philadelphia is working hard to
4 overcome these obstacles. These and
5 other concerns demand ongoing and
6 consistent attention. Whether it is LGBT
7 youth homelessness, criminal justice
8 reform, access to healthcare or a
9 multitude of transgender-specific needs,
10 the City's Office of LGBT Affairs
11 provides essential oversight and guidance
12 for policy development, community
13 outreach, public education, and
14 capacity-building.

15 Making the Office of LGBT
16 Affairs permanent in the Home Rule
17 Charter is essential, as there is no
18 guarantee that future leaders will be as
19 protective of the rights of the LGBT
20 community as City Council and this
21 Administration have been. Permanency
22 will provide uniformity and clarity to
23 the ongoing work of this important office
24 so that Philadelphia can continue to be a
25 leader in LGBT rights.

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2 I just want to add for a moment
3 that just to take a pause and give a
4 shout-out to our friend Gloria Casarez,
5 who is absolutely sitting here at this
6 table with us now. She has taken this
7 office and moved it to great strides, and
8 thankfully Nellie Fitzpatrick was able to
9 step in and continue running with the
10 ball, because they've been doing some
11 amazing things.

12 Thank you.

13 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE:

14 Absolutely. And thank you for all the
15 work that the Human Relations Commission
16 and your staff does.

17 Before Ms. Fitzpatrick, let me
18 just recognize the presence of
19 Councilwoman Reynolds Brown, who is the
20 sponsor of this bill and resolution.

21 Please.

22 MS. FITZPATRICK: Thank you.

23 Good afternoon, Chairman Greenlee and
24 members of the Committee on Law and
25 Government. My name is Helen

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2 Fitzpatrick, but most of you know me as
3 Nellie. I'm the Director of Lesbian,
4 Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Affairs for
5 the City of Philadelphia. I am here
6 today to testify on Bill No. 150216 and
7 Resolution No. 150225, which, if enacted,
8 would place on the November 2015 ballot
9 an amendment to the Philadelphia Home
10 Rule Charter which would establish a
11 permanent Office of LGBT Affairs here in
12 the City of Philadelphia.

13 As a proud lesbian and a
14 devoted Philadelphian, it is an honor to
15 testify before all of you today. I would
16 like to express my most sincere gratitude
17 to Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown
18 for sponsoring this measure and for all
19 she has done and continues to do to
20 champion LGBT rights here in our city.
21 Like so many in our diverse community, I
22 am grateful to live in a city that has
23 made such incredible and inspiring
24 strides towards equality. As a former
25 District Attorney, current member of the

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2 Philadelphia Prisons Board of Trustees,
3 and a Civilian Trainer for the Department
4 of Justice Transgender Initiative, I'm
5 keenly aware of the enormous amount of
6 work there still is left to do to achieve
7 equality for the LGBT community here in
8 Philadelphia and beyond.

9 Currently, the Office of LGBT
10 Affairs serves to provide services and
11 information to the LGBT people of our
12 city through outreach and public
13 education. The Office advises the Mayor
14 and Philadelphia City government on the
15 needs of LGBT residents and supports
16 policy development and implementation
17 throughout the City. This Office strives
18 to create open dialogue and access
19 between the community and the government
20 that serves them through continued
21 education, collaboration, and presence.

22 On January 20th of this year,
23 Mayor Nutter appointed me as the Director
24 of the Mayor's Office of LGBT Affairs.
25 To give you all a sense of what my office

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2 does, here's a sample list of projects
3 that the Office of LGBT Affairs is
4 currently engaged in.

5 My full written testimony is
6 submitted. I'm going to do my best to
7 hack away to shorten this list as we go,
8 because I understand we're under some
9 time constraints.

10 Working with our law
11 enforcement and criminal justice systems,
12 we do this through continued education
13 and capacity-building of all Philadelphia
14 Police Department personnel on Directive
15 152, which is entitled "Interaction with
16 Transgender Individuals," which I helped
17 create while working in the District
18 Attorney's Office;

19 By establishing guidelines and
20 support structures for all Police
21 Athletic League centers to ensure that
22 LGBT children are met with safe and
23 affirming environments and officers;

24 Collaborating with Police
25 Recruitment to ensure that our police

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2 force begins to reflect the LGBT
3 community safely and openly within our
4 ranks;

5 Working with the Department of
6 Justice to ensure that LGBT issues are
7 visible and accounted for throughout
8 community-oriented police roundtables at
9 the U.S. Attorney's Office here in
10 Philadelphia;

11 Educating and discussing
12 developments within the Police Department
13 with the LGBT community so that they are
14 aware of what is happening and we can
15 increase crime reporting, safety, and
16 accountability;

17 Continued consultation and
18 education with countless Assistant
19 District Attorneys on a case-by-case
20 basis as well as with members of the
21 Defense Bar to ensure that not only
22 victims of crime but people in the
23 community who have been arrested and
24 charged with crimes are met with respect,
25 dignity, and provided with appropriate

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2 services;

3 Continuing advocacy for
4 inclusive hate and bias crime at the
5 state level;

6 Advocating for further
7 programming and awareness in our Prison
8 System regarding the high rate of
9 incarceration and recidivism within the
10 LGBT community.

11 We will continue to be in the
12 offices of every area of our City seeking
13 to ensure that there's policy and
14 corresponding education to ensure that
15 every single City department, agency,
16 initiative, branch right down to every
17 single employee has the necessary
18 education and appropriate level of
19 accountability to serve the LGBT
20 community.

21 We will be heading to every
22 single homeless shelter in this City to
23 ensure that LGBT community members are
24 able to access sheltering that is
25 available and not turned away into the

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2 streets for who they are or how they're
3 perceived.

4 Other work from this office
5 includes establishing programs for adult
6 literacy, job training, mentoring, and
7 support systems for our transgender
8 community to ensure that they're able to
9 move from unstable housing and
10 homelessness to sustaining jobs,
11 developing careers, and living safe,
12 satisfying lives; engaging businesses and
13 corporations to understand and overcome
14 the hurdles that transgender individuals
15 face in seeking, maintaining, and
16 advancing within employment
17 opportunities; working to ensure that
18 LGBT seniors are getting the services and
19 support they need as they age with
20 dignity and understanding in our city;
21 working with individual schools to
22 develop strategies and programming to
23 serve and protect our LGBT youth and
24 provide education and resources for each
25 and every teacher and administrator who

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2 comes in contact with them and their
3 families; uniting our allied forces to
4 help establish real cultural change in
5 our society, neighborhoods, and cities;
6 and helping highlight our LGBT businesses
7 in order to allow them to thrive and
8 continue to grow in our city.

9 The list goes on and on. I
10 could easily spend hours and perhaps days
11 here in Room 400 discussing the work we
12 need to do to create a more equitable
13 city and society. However, there are two
14 particular populations I would like to
15 highlight with this limited time I have
16 to speak in order to give you a sense of
17 the tremendous work we have ahead.

18 Today our LGBT youth face a new
19 world. There have been significant
20 advancements, particularly in popular
21 representations of LGBT individuals.
22 LGBT youth see themselves reflected in
23 LGBT characters on television shows like
24 Glee and Modern Family. They read about
25 actors like Neil Patrick Harris and his

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2 husband becoming fathers, and witness
3 Lavern Cox, a transgender woman, declared
4 one of this year's "most beautiful women"
5 by People Magazine. However, too often
6 our LGBT youth are not met with the same
7 level of celebration, respect,
8 opportunity or safety that is seen on TV.
9 The tragic rates of suicide and
10 homelessness are truly numbing.

11 Our nation's LGBT youth
12 comprise 5 to 8 percent of the overall
13 youth population. A statistic that you
14 will continue to hear over and over is
15 that our LGBT youth make up 40 percent of
16 our homeless youth population and have
17 been subjected to homelessness for simply
18 coming out as who they are.

19 Each year in Philadelphia we
20 have over 2,500 kids age out of DHS in
21 search of homes, jobs, acceptance, and
22 opportunity. We must seek to protect and
23 ensure opportunities for our LGBT youth.
24 We must work to create and implement
25 policy in our schools and our systems

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2 that give all of our children, including
3 our LGBT children, opportunities to
4 succeed. As a city, we must guide and
5 support our communities and our
6 neighborhoods to embrace these children
7 and not cast them away in rejection. We
8 need to ensure that our government
9 leaders, officials, representatives,
10 policymakers, and employees work towards
11 creating a safe and equitable city that
12 our youth thrive in and see themselves
13 reflected in.

14 To compound upon these
15 concerns, our transgender communities
16 trail behind our LGB communities in their
17 push towards equality. It has taken us
18 far too many years to get to the point of
19 seeing that we must work to bring the T
20 into the LGBT civil rights movement.
21 Facing terrifying rates of homicide,
22 victimization, homelessness, and
23 discrimination, our transgender citizens,
24 especially our transgender women of
25 color, must be the focus of collaborative

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2 efforts to protect and empower them.

3 Our city saw an outpouring of
4 support when two young, white, gay men
5 were assaulted in Center City last year.
6 From public officials to national media
7 outlets, the story of that horrific
8 attack was known by all in our city and
9 beyond. The same focus and response was
10 not there when Diamond Williams, a
11 transgender woman of color, was murdered,
12 nor was it there for Kyra Cordova or
13 Stacy Blahnik or the countless other
14 transgender victims of violence in our
15 city alone. We have so much work to do
16 to create housing, employment, and
17 representation opportunities for our
18 transgender communities. As a nation, we
19 have so much work left to do in order to
20 combat the stunning statistics of
21 violence against our transgender
22 citizens.

23 We know that we can write and
24 implement the appropriate policies and
25 start the work of training our first

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2 responders, our City employees,
3 appropriate school staff, prison staff,
4 hospital staff, and transportation
5 employees. As we move forward, we can
6 continue the process of holding those
7 accountable who discriminate against one
8 of our citizens because of who they love
9 or who they are. We must work to have
10 our city lead by example in creating safe
11 and equitable communities in
12 neighborhoods and expand opportunities
13 for our diverse citizens to thrive.

14 We are the birthplace of our
15 great nation. At the very steps of
16 Independence Hall, 40 individuals took up
17 signs asking for equal rights and
18 visibility for our communities almost 50
19 years ago. In 50 years we have made
20 wonderful progress for some, but not all.
21 Over the next 50, 100, 150 years through
22 the continued efforts and dedication of
23 our City government, we will look back
24 and celebrate where we came from and the
25 City of true equality that we have

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2 become.

3 Thank you for your time, and I
4 am happy to answer any and all questions
5 that you may have.

6 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
7 you.

8 Thank you both.
9 Councilwoman Reynolds Brown,
10 you wanted to --

11 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Yes.
12 Thank you. I did want to put a few
13 remarks on the record and say thank you
14 to both you as Chairman and the members
15 of this Committee and all of those in
16 attendance for joining us to learn and
17 hear about a new unprecedented action
18 that we hope to be taken by the Mayor.

19 On March 19th, 2015, I was
20 pleased to introduce this Bill No. 150216
21 and Resolution 150225 that seeks to amend
22 the Philadelphia Home Rule Charter and
23 establish a permanent Office of LGBT
24 Affairs in City government. And I might
25 note parenthetically that this really

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2 stems from my own personal experience of
3 having spent a lot of time earlier in my
4 career in the arts, and specifically
5 dance, where I made a lot of good friends
6 with members of the LGBT community and
7 was sickened by the disrespect and just
8 lack of being treated like a human being
9 when we would hang out together after
10 rehearsals. And so it comes from my own
11 personal experience, which oftentimes is
12 no different than being an African
13 American and being a woman. The
14 challenges in many ways are all the same.

15 And so this move, this action
16 seeks to try to level the playing field a
17 little bit more where government can have
18 an active role in trying to level the
19 playing field.

20 So we know that Philadelphia is
21 an international -- has an international
22 reputation as a city that both celebrates
23 diversity and has no tolerance for
24 intolerance. This bill offers the LGBT
25 community a permanent seat and voice at

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2 the table. My favorite adage is, if
3 you're not at the table, then you may be
4 on the menu. And if you're on the menu,
5 it's probably not in your best interest.

6 To a community who too often
7 faces discrimination, much like people of
8 color and women, it is imperative that we
9 have -- that you, that we have a direct
10 line to the Mayor's Office and to City
11 Council. It's my view and it's our view
12 that making this office permanent will
13 send the message that while we have a lot
14 of work to do, we're absolutely up to the
15 challenge.

16 So I want to acknowledge my
17 staff, the Nutter Administration, Helen
18 Fitzpatrick and, of course, Rue Landau
19 and all of the advocates who worked with
20 us to bring this to this milestone this
21 afternoon.

22 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

23 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
24 you, Councilwoman.

25 Any other questions or

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2 comments?

3 (No response.)

4 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Seeing
5 none, again, thank you both very much for
6 all the work you do.

7 (Thank you.)

8 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: I think
9 our second panel --

10 THE CLERK: Christopher
11 Bartlett, Nurit Shein, and Christopher
12 Alston.

13 (Witnesses approached witness
14 table.)

15 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Good
16 afternoon. Whoever would like to start,
17 please identify yourself and proceed.

18 MR. BARTLETT: Good afternoon.
19 I'm Chris Bartlett, Executive Director of
20 the William Way Community Center. Thank
21 you, City Councilman, and thank you,
22 Councilwoman Reynolds Brown, for your
23 leadership on this issue.

24 I'm going to skip over my
25 introduction, except to say that I've

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2 served on the Mayor's LGBT Advisory
3 Boards for 15 years, both under Mayor
4 Street and now Mayor Nutter, and I've
5 seen the impact of leadership, folks who
6 have the ear of the Mayor and ear of the
7 City Council and that Advisory Board of
8 bringing about incredible achievements
9 over those 15 years.

10 And today I want to focus on
11 two key points. First, why is there a
12 need for a specific permanent Office for
13 LGBT Affairs and, second, the major
14 difference that has been made by such an
15 office during the Administration of Mayor
16 Nutter.

17 Why the need? According to a
18 2007 census of LGBT citizens in
19 Philadelphia conducted by Philadelphia
20 Health Management Corporation and the
21 City of Philadelphia, about 5 percent of
22 our city's population is LGBT, and that
23 population reflects the full diversity of
24 our city with regard to race, sex,
25 income, and geographic distribution

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2 throughout every neighborhood of the
3 City.

4 In many City services,
5 including Behavioral Health, AIDS
6 activities, DHS, Police, and Supportive
7 Housing, to name a few, LGBT citizens
8 face significant disparities and have
9 unique needs. This includes a marked
10 need for services for LGBT homeless
11 youth - over 40 percent of homeless youth
12 identify as LGBT; an incredible need for
13 HIV prevention and treatment services
14 among LGBT people in general and
15 especially people of color; a need for
16 ongoing training and recruitment within
17 the Police Department and partnerships
18 with the City's Department of Behavioral
19 Health to ensure services for the unique
20 needs of the LGBT population. The Office
21 of LGBT Affairs serves as the focal point
22 of all those needs, coordinating how
23 various City departments figure into the
24 big picture.

25 This office also has had a

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2 large impact on the success and growth of
3 the LGBT sector of our economy, reflected
4 by the significant growth of the City's
5 LGBT Chamber of Commerce, the
6 Independence Business Alliance, and the
7 growth of LGBT employee resource groups
8 at the major Fortune 500 companies based
9 in the City. As LGBT Affairs Director,
10 Gloria Casarez was a key person whom LGBT
11 business people went to to address their
12 needs and concerns.

13 Focused attention on the needs
14 of this population benefit the LGBT
15 communities of the City absolutely, but
16 they also benefit the City as a whole.
17 Cities that invest in equal services for
18 the LGBT population help to create
19 economies that attract the best and the
20 brightest employees and citizens to their
21 cities. Sociologist Richard Florida has
22 said that the cities that invest in their
23 LGBT populations do better at attracting
24 not only individual employees but also
25 corporations. More and more in

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2 considering relocation to Philadelphia,
3 companies are drawn by our very strong
4 record of investment and inclusion,
5 forged largely by the efforts of Michael
6 Hinson and Gloria Casarez and now Nellie
7 Fitzpatrick and their advisory committees
8 over the past 15 years. And more and
9 more we are recognized as a leader
10 nationally in these efforts. We rate at
11 a top score of 100 on the HRC Municipal
12 Equality Index, which rated us with
13 regards to non-discrimination laws,
14 relationship recognition, employment
15 opportunities, services and programs, law
16 enforcement, and relationships with the
17 LGBT community.

18 And these successes ought to be
19 built upon. And if we were to compare
20 the achievements of the City under the
21 Street and Nutter Administrations to
22 earlier Administrations, much of the
23 success has derived, I would argue, from
24 the focused effort that results from an
25 office that is tasked with keeping its

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2 eye on the prize at LGBT equality and
3 subsequently benefits the entire City.

4 A short list of the impact
5 influence of the LGBT Office would
6 include many great achievements, often
7 shepherded and supported by this City
8 Council: the completion of the John C.
9 Anderson LGBT-friendly apartments; other
10 new initiatives to support LGBT seniors;
11 training to every class of Police Academy
12 recruits; an overhaul of the City's Fair
13 Practices Ordinance; the Equal Benefits
14 law and LGBT Equality law; growth of LGBT
15 conventions and conferences; the growth
16 of the Mazzone Center as a nationally
17 recognized center of LGBT health
18 excellence; LGBT History Month and
19 flag-raising outside the City hall; the
20 Morris Home residential treatment
21 facility for transgender Philadelphians;
22 signage and maps through the Gayborhood;
23 support for the nation's first LGBT jazz
24 festival; and an upcoming summer of LGBT
25 history on Independence Mall.

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2 I can say with confidence that
3 though some of these achievements might
4 have arisen without an Office of LGBT
5 Affairs, it's unlikely that they all
6 would have happened with such fine
7 coordination, with such powerful impact
8 for the entire City and all its citizens.

9 I've made the case that
10 investment in the City's LGBT community
11 has benefits for all. Making permanent
12 the Office of LGBT Affairs in the City of
13 Philadelphia is such an investment and
14 will lead to Philadelphia's continued
15 leadership as the City of inclusion,
16 equality, and growth.

17 Thank you.

18 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank you
19 very much.

20 Before you start, is there
21 anyone else here that wishes to testify?

22 (No response.)

23 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Okay.

24 All right.

25 Please proceed.

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2 MS. SHEIN: Thank you. My name
3 is Nurit Shein and I am the CEO of
4 Mazzoni Center. I'm happy to be here
5 today and to support the bill that would
6 propose the amendment to the Philadelphia
7 Home Rule Charter to establish and define
8 the functions of the Office of LGBT
9 Affairs on a permanent basis, and I want
10 to thank Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds
11 Brown for bringing this legislation and
12 for all the work that you have been doing
13 on behalf of the LGBT community and every
14 Philadelphian. Thank you.

15 Mazzoni Center is a
16 community-based non-profit organization
17 that provides a range of healthcare,
18 legal, and social services for the LGBT
19 individuals here in Philadelphia. We
20 have been serving this community for 35
21 years.

22 I'd like to talk about the
23 importance of the Office of LGBT Affairs
24 from the perspective of the thousands of
25 individuals we serve, many of whom are

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2 among the most vulnerable in this
3 community. Our primary care medical
4 facility sees over 17,000 patient visits
5 each year, and our policy has always been
6 to welcome patients and clients
7 regardless of their insurance status or
8 income level. We work with young people
9 who have been bullied in their schools,
10 and we see over 500 LGBT youth every year
11 through our weekly adolescent drop-in
12 program, and most of these young people
13 have been or are homeless.

14 We provide legal services to
15 LGBT individuals, many of whom are
16 struggling with access to legal identity
17 documents, affordable housing,
18 employment, protecting their children and
19 families, and more. Nearly all of our
20 services are provided at no charge to
21 low-income individuals.

22 I say this because so many of
23 the people we serve have been
24 marginalized and discriminated against.
25 Many have also felt voiceless within, and

1 4/30/15 - LAW & GOV. - BILL 150216, etc.
2 invisible to, the traditional structures
3 of power and government. They lead busy,
4 complicated lives, and most of them would
5 not have the time to track, much less
6 weigh in on, every activity of City
7 government that affects them.

8 Since 2008 when the Office of
9 LGBT Affairs was created, these people
10 have had a voice in City Hall. Thanks to
11 Mayor Nutter, to the late Gloria Casarez,
12 and thanks now to Nellie Fitzpatrick, our
13 clients and fellow citizens have had a
14 resource and an advocate in City Hall, a
15 place to turn to, a resource for
16 information, a link to vital services, a
17 strong ally when it was called for.

18 Over the past few years, it's
19 fair to say that all of our departments
20 at Mazzoni, from mental health counseling
21 to HIV care to legal services, have had
22 the occasion to call on the Office of
23 LGBT Affairs for resources or an
24 introduction on behalf of our clients.
25 It has been a great benefit to the people

1 4/30/15 - LAW & GOV. - BILL 150216, etc.

2 we serve to have this office as a
3 resource.

4 For our clients and patients
5 and for all LGBT Philadelphians to know
6 that there is an office in City Hall that
7 represents their interests and will go to
8 bat for them is incredibly important.

9 The Office of LGBT Affairs connects City
10 Hall to the larger LGBT community, which
11 is extremely diverse and represents a
12 wide range of priorities, needs, and
13 concerns, as you have heard from Nellie,
14 and the link that this Office provides
15 between -- provides a contact between
16 LGBT citizens and City Hall and benefits
17 both sides of the conversation, by
18 keeping the Mayor and City officials well
19 informed about what's going on within our
20 communities and what are our most
21 pressing challenges and priorities and
22 how we can work together to address them.

23 The existence of this Office
24 also sends a powerful message about the
25 City of Philadelphia and the values we

1 4/30/15 - LAW & GOV. - BILL 150216, etc.

2 embrace. It helps to situate us not
3 merely as an LGBT-friendly city but as a
4 leader in civil rights.

5 I've lived in Philadelphia
6 since 1995 and I've seen the progress we
7 have made. It gives me and many others a
8 feeling of tremendous pride to see our
9 city named the most LGBT-friendly city in
10 America, but it also carries a real-life
11 meaning for the LGBT citizens who live
12 and work here every day. I give credit
13 to the Office of LGBT Affairs for its
14 contributions to the existing LGBT
15 advocacy network and for helping us to
16 earn this distinction.

17 By voting to amend the City
18 Charter to make this office a permanent
19 one, you will ensure that LGBT
20 Philadelphians continue to have access to
21 this critically important resource. The
22 community will maintain a conduit to its
23 government, continue to feel represented
24 and protected, and to be fully and truly
25 engaged in the life of the City.

1 4/30/15 - LAW & GOV. - BILL 150216, etc.

2 Thank you for all the time and
3 for consideration of this matter.

4 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
5 you. Thank you for the work you do.

6 Any questions for either of our
7 witnesses?

8 Councilwoman Reynolds Brown.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I was just
10 across the hall listening to the exciting
11 developments that continue to happen at
12 CHOP, and one new initiative they are
13 looking closely at is bullying. And so I
14 put that -- I share that with you because
15 I think there's great opportunity for
16 what you do on behalf of young people and
17 what CHOP is unveiling dealing with
18 bullying in a very 21st century way with
19 high technology and the like. And it's
20 just useful and helpful to know where we
21 have healthcare institutions making
22 inroads dealing with the issue that is
23 faced by all children, but what I know
24 for sure is compounded with LGBT youth.

25 So I share that with you for

1 4/30/15 - LAW & GOV. - BILL 150216, etc.
2 you to seize the moment and sit down with
3 them because --

4 MS. SHEIN: We actually are
5 collaborating with them on this.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: You are?

7 MS. SHEIN: Yes, we are.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Very good.

9 Very, very good. Well, thank you for
10 your testimony.

11 (Thank you.)

12 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank you
13 both.

14 No other witnesses?

15 (No response.)

16 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: That
17 concludes our Committee on Law and
18 Government. The record will reflect
19 Councilman Jones, our Majority Leader, is
20 also present.

21 We will now go into our public
22 meeting, and the Chair recognizes
23 Councilman Goode.

24 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you,
25 Mr. Chairman. I move that Bill No.

1 4/30/15 - LAW & GOV. - BILL 150216, etc.
2 150216 be reported out of this Committee
3 with a favorable recommendation and the
4 rules of Council be suspended so as to
5 permit first reading at our next Council
6 session.

7 (Duly seconded.)

8 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: It's been
9 moved and seconded.

10 All in favor?

11 (Aye.)

12 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Opposed?

13 (No response.)

14 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Hearing
15 none, Bill No. 150216 reported out of
16 this Committee favorably with a rules
17 suspension.

18 Councilman Goode.

19 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you,
20 Mr. Chairman. I move that Resolution
21 150225 be reported out of this Committee
22 with a favorable recommendation.

23 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Is there
24 a second?

25 (Duly seconded.)

1 4/30/15 - LAW & GOV. - BILL 150216, etc.

2 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: It's been
3 moved and seconded.

4 All in favor?

5 (Aye.)

6 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Opposed?

7 (No response.)

8 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Hearing
9 none, Resolution 150225 is reported out
10 of this Committee with a favorable
11 recommendation.

12 That concludes the business of
13 the Committee on Law and Government
14 today.

15 Thank you all for your
16 participation.

17 (Applause.)

18 (Committee on Law and
19 Government concluded at 2:10 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the proceedings, evidence and objections are contained fully and accurately in the stenographic notes taken by me upon the foregoing matter, and that this is a true and correct transcript of same.

MICHELE L. MURPHY
RPR-Notary Public

(The foregoing certification of this transcript does not apply to any reproduction of the same by any means, unless under the direct control and/or supervision of the certifying reporter.)

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April 30, 2015

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