

ALLEGHENY COUNTY COUNCIL

REGULAR MEETING

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BEFORE:

Patrick Catena	-	President, District 4
Robert Macey	-	Vice President District 9
Samuel DeMarco, III	-	Council-At-Large
Bethany Hallam	-	Council-At-Large
Tom Baker	-	District 1
Cindy Kirk	-	District 2
Anita Prizio	-	District 3
Tom Duerr	-	District 5
John F. Palmiere	-	District 6
Nicholas Futules	-	District 7
Paul Zavarella	-	District 8
Dewitt Walton	-	District 10
Paul Klein	-	District 11
Robert Palmosina	-	District 12
Olivia Bennett	-	District 13

Allegheny County Courthouse
Fourth Floor, Gold Room
436 Grant Street
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15219

February 11, 2020 5:02 p.m.

SARGENT'S COURT REPORTING SERVICE, INC.
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Pittsburgh, PA 15219
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IN ATTENDANCE:

Jared Barker - Director, Legislative Services
Jack Cambest - Allegheny County Council Solicitor
Ken Varhola - Chief of Staff
Sarah Roka - Budget Assistant

PRESIDENT CATENA: I would like to call this meeting of County Council to order. We'll begin with the Pledge of Allegiance. Please stand.

We'll now have a moment of silence.

Thank you. Please be seated. Roll call.

MR. BARKER: Mr. Baker.

MR. BAKER: Here.

MR. BARKER: Ms. Bennett.

MS. BENNETT: Here.

MR. BARKER: Mr. Demarco.

MR. DEMARCO: Here.

MR. BARKER: Mr. Duerr.

MR. DUERR: Here.

MR. BARKER: Mr. Futules.

MR. FUTULES: Here.

MR. BARKER: Ms. Hallam.

MS. HALLAM: Here.

MR. BARKER: Ms. Kirk.

MS. KIRK: Here.

MR. BARKER: Mr. Klein.

MR. KLEIN: Here.

MR. BARKER: Mr. Macey.

MR. MACEY: Here.

MR. BARKER: Mr. Palmiere.

MR. PALMIERE: Here.

MR. BARKER: Mr. Palmosina.

MR. PALMOSINA: Here.

MR. BARKER: Ms. Prizio.

MS. PRIZIO: Here.

MR. BARKER: Mr. Walton.

MR. WALTON: Here.

MR. BARKER: Mr. Zavarella.

MR. ZAVARELLA: Here.

MR. BARKER: President Catena.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Here.

MR. BARKER: All 15 members are present.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Thank you. I believe we're going to skip 11390-20. That's going to be presented at a later meeting.

MR. BARKER: Correct.

PRESIDENT CATENA: 11391-20.

MR. BARKER: A proclamation congratulating 2020 Junior Achievement Young Professional Awardees sponsored by Council Member Baker.

PRESIDENT CATENA: 11392-20.

MR. BARKER: A proclamation recognizing Thomas Kelley upon receiving the Eagle Scout Award sponsored by Council Member Kirk.

PRESIDENT CATENA: 11393-20.

MR. BARKER: A proclamation recognizing the 30th anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act sponsored by Council Member Catena.

PRESIDENT CATENA: 11394-20.

MR. BARKER: A proclamation honoring the life, memory and legacy of Glenn David Twinderhooker sponsored by Council Members Hallam and Palmosina.

PATRICK CATENA: Thank you. We'll now have public comment on any agenda items.

MR. BARKER: We have a number. First up is David West.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. President, point of privilege. I wanted to co-sponsor your proclamation for the ACLU. I wanted to add myself as a co-sponsor.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Thank you. Is there anyone else?

MR. PALMIERE: Mr. President, me also, please.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Are there any objections? Seeing none, I will add everybody. Thank you, everyone. Please state your name and address.

MR. WEST: My name is David West. 2352 Rochester Road, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15237. Thank you. My name's David West. I am an Allegheny County Franklin Park resident. More importantly to this topic, I am the president of the Pittsburgh chapter of PFLAG, a national organization dedicated to supporting members of the LGBTQ communities and their allies; and, I'm the father of an LGBTQ teenager.

I'm here tonight to speak against proposed Ordinance 11397-20 introduced to replace another proposal banning conversion therapy for minors. Under the guise of religious liberty and freedom of speech, this ordinance introduces into our county something hurtful to minors. Conversion therapy both in the form of harmful physical interventions and in a form of therapy that seeks to cure has been scientifically discredited many times over in research publication after research publication such as the ones I have provided for you tonight. The evidence is clearly laid out. Reputable professional organizations whose sole purpose is serving people's physical or mental well-being such as the American Psychological Association,

the American Association of Pediatrics, the American Psychiatric Association, or National Association of Social Workers stand together in their opposition to conversion therapy.

Not only has this dangerous practice been discredited, it has been shown to cause great emotional and physical harm. How can any on us support a practice proven to harm our children?

I'm very concerned that this ordinance would create the false impression for minors and their parents that the success of the practice of conversion therapy is evidence based. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Mental health providers have a responsibility to provide treatments that are evidence based, not ones that are discredited and harmful. This ordinance would allow these harmful practices to occur. This ordinance uses misdirection falsely claimed to protect the right of minors to set their own treatment goals. A ban on conversion therapy would not limit minors' ability to do so. It would only limit what mental health providers could do as part of treatment interventions they offer.

It is certainly the county's best interest to make sure that mental health providers are only providing valid treatments, not scientifically discredited or harmful ones. A full ban on conversion therapy ensures that licensed mental health providers work within regulated practice regardless of what the client may request. As representatives from the residence of Allegheny County, you have an obligation to encourage valid interventions by mental health providers as a way of protecting consumers of mental health services.

Please do not allow yourselves to be distracted by this smokescreen that a conversion therapy ban is about limiting minors' choices. There's solid research in place which indicates that conversion therapy not only does not work, it is actually harmful to our children.

PFLAG Pittsburgh exists to support those who are allies of LGBTQ youth. If our organization can assist in any way in the discussion on the topic of conversion therapy, please feel free to contact us. Thank you.

MR. BARKER: Next up is Joanne Goodall.

MS. GOODALL: Good evening, I'm Joanne Goodall. I'm she/her pronouns. I've been a nurse practitioner at the Center for Adolescent and Young Adult Health within Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC for 26 and half

years. I work with transgender and gender expansive youth over the past 7 and a half years after attending a training in 2012 in Philadelphia.

In that time I have worked with over 375 clients, so I have quite a bit of experience working with transgender and gender expansive youth. We provide care with a four hour radius of Pittsburgh, so we have a variety of people from all walks of life coming in to our clinic.

I ultimately myself provide medical care, but in the early visits often help young people and their families come to understand gender identity, gender dysphoria and the options available for intervention. This can be a very overwhelming time for young people and their loved ones. We always encourage clients to be in therapy if they have not already done that before, they have come in to help sort out what they think, how they identify, how they want to proceed, how their family can be supportive and accepting, how to deal with a body that doesn't match your gender identity and perhaps to obtain assistance in dealing with anxiety and/or depression which are very common.

We follow standards of care of the major advisory boards WPATH, UCSF, The Endocrine Society to name a few. We know that open affirming therapy that allows a young person to explore what is right for them is the most useful. We have no agenda on the outcome. We want the young person to thoughtfully explore their feelings and identity and come to the right conclusion for them, and no one else can say what that is. Only a person can say who they are gender-wise.

The currently proposed bill that would allow parents to choose conversion therapy for their child is quite the opposite of what we know to be useful and supportive for LGBTQ people. It can be abusive and lead to poor self-esteem, anxiety and depression and even suicide.

We cannot change a person's sexual orientation or gender identity, nor should we try. The human rights campaign says that these practices are based on the false premise that being LGBTQ is a mental ailment that needs to be cured. This theory has been rejected by every major medical and mental health organization in the state.

Non-physical treatments can be very emotionally painful and abusive. Trying to destroy who someone is

internally or change who they love. There are no guidelines for conversion therapy which can lead to abusive practice. It can lead to further distress and dysphoria which can then lead to harmful outcomes and coping mechanisms such as drug and alcohol use to numb the pain, sexual activity to prove that you're cisgender or you're straight when that's not right for you, depression, self-injury and suicide.

I had called in December after the first time that this was brought forward and offered that a team which is expansive would be happy to come and educate if that would be helpful. We didn't hear back, but we found out about this a couple days ago, and again, we offer that. We have a huge collaborative in town. We'd love to come and educate folks on the realities of care. Thanks very much.

MR. BARKER: Next up is Tracy Baton.

MS. BATON: My name is Tracy Baton and I live at 586 East End Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA. I am a licensed social worker licensed by the State of Pennsylvania, a therapist that works with children, adults and families in Homewood and McKeesport. I am a generalist, not a specialist. I think you'll hear tonight from many people who have specialized practices, but from the point of view of a generalist conversion therapy is particularly problematic. I have parents come in who have been mistaken by snake oil salesmen that conversion therapy could potentially work for their children.

They come in because they are deceived and we have to talk about how it does harm. How the AMA and the National Association of Psychologists, the NESF all condemn this practice. Conversion therapy is a dangerous and professionally discredited practice, and they're most frequently aimed at children. At the core of this practice is the false claim that it is possible to change a person's sexual orientation, gender identity or expression.

According to the UCLA School of law, talk therapy is most commonly used, but a variety of electro shocks, snapping electric bands and other really aggressive practices have been used around the country this year. Not ten years ago, this year.

The National Association of Social Workers soundly condemns conversion therapy. Social workers do the majority of the actual handle on therapy in Allegheny

County and the NASW sees conversion therapy as an infringement on the guiding principles inherent to social worker ethics and values. The NASW feels that there should be a ban on all forms of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity and this includes conversion therapy. The NASW condemns the use of so-called conversion or reparative therapy by any person identifying as a social worker or any agency that provides social work services.

Social work services include therapeutic services in most cases. Conversion therapy is also not without significant harm. That harm is most extensive and most frequently discussed in specialist practices, but in generalist practices I have parents coming in with expectations that I would call snake oil from the point of view of a professional can be obtained to somehow treat their children.

We have to sit with those parents and work with them around the reality of the facts. Allegheny County protects people against all forms of medical malpractice. We don't let doctors practice without a license. We don't let people sell random prescriptions on the street. We cannot let people perform a form of therapy that has been roundly condemned by all kinds of medical organizations around the country. Thank you.

MR. BARKER: Next up is Elaine Cummings.

MS. CUMMINGS: Hello. My name is Elaine Cummings. I live at 153 Trump Road, a joke, Cheswick, PA 15024. I am here in support of expediting the passage of Ordinance 11395-20 sponsored by Council Member Klein in order to protect the health, safety and well-being of minors living in Allegheny County.

Conversion therapy is a faith-based issue, a statement based on my own beliefs and experiences and not in any way meaning to offend those who believe differently. I have always believed life is a spiritual journey. Were it not for my faith I would not be here before you. I am the acting godmother of a 21-year-old transgender niece. I believe that as parents and guardians we have a responsibility to protect and guide the souls we have been charged care for. They were God's before they came here and to God they will return.

A few years prior to my niece coming out to me at the age of 16, I had noticed a growing depression, an isolation, a withdrawal, if you will, from the world

around her that was different from the average normal adolescent angst. I knew something was wrong and troubling for her. When at 16 she called me and asked me the heartbreaking question do you think transgender people deserve to be loved. I told her that we are all God's children and we all not only deserve to be loved, but are already and forever fully loved and I don't think we can ever be separated from the love of God.

I wish I could say same about our own parents, but over 35 percent of cases in CYS in Allegheny County are there because they identify as LGBTQ.

I have - I heard an overwhelming sigh of relief as I told her that, and the weight of the world seemed to be lifted off her young shoulders. She was not alone.

I asked her if she thought she was transgender, and after a long pause, I heard a quiet yes. I admitted I knew nothing about what transgender was or what body dysphoria was until we talked to people who could help her sort that out and help me help her.

The first instinct was to turn to the medical and psychological experts, so blessed that we have them in Pittsburgh. I urge all of you to do the same. As a Christian, I run to God to get through this in my life. It's only more that I am not alone on the journey. Even when I do not understand, I still believe the path before us is all part of God's plan. It is not our place to question or judge how anyone was created whether by chance or design, but to lead them where they are as Christ did and love, to help one another carry the crosses we bear, not add to the weight of them. To unconditionally love one another as God loves us. Please vote to support the Klein proposal and end the unregulated mentally and spiritually abusive practices of conversion therapy. Thank you.

MR. BARKER: Next up is Charlene David.

MS. DAVID: My name is Charlene David. I'm a Clinical Nurse Specialist. I live at 384 Cavan Drive in Pleasant Hills, District 6. Mr. Palmiere is my representative. So let's see here. I'm here to speak to the counsel about homosexuality and gender identity. I'm not here to speak whether it's right or wrong, whether it's in line with your personal beliefs or religious preferences. I am not here to speak about whether sexuality is a choice or whether sexuality is predetermined at birth.

I am here today solely as a representative of the healthcare profession, and I will only speak to how the bills will affect healthcare provider's practice, license and their liability. I am here before you to support the Klein bill, and am in opposition of the DeMarco bill.

I come before you as a Clinical Nurse Specialist. As a CNS, I have an advanced degree in the certification specifically that relates to the application of research into best practice in furthering healthcare outcomes through the application of evidence based practice. Clinical Nurse Specialists focus on the role of the notes, examining practice and determining how that practice can be improved to aid health outcomes for patients that they serve.

As part of this, I must have a deep understanding of the laws that govern an advanced practice nurse and registered nurse's license. I understand what an advanced practice nurse and a registered nurse can do and what they cannot do as it relates to the law. I must and do have an understanding of the ethical principles as it relates to advanced practice nurses and registered nurse practice.

I am actively practicing in this role. I am not retired. I am not part of administration. I will cut to the chase here.

As a registered nurse, we must not do harm. Therefore, conversion therapy, as all the other speakers have stated, is it will cause harm. There is no basis in evidence, in research, that this works. Therefore, I am obligated as a healthcare professional to report a parent and a provider to the state abuse line if they are practicing such practice of conversion therapy.

I also want to point out the liability. If you do not pass the Klein bill, basically what you are saying - and you pass the DeMarco bill, basically what you are saying is that you are putting all the practitioners at risk, liability risk. They are at risk for their license, and Allegheny County's at risk as well.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Thank you.

MR. BARKER: Next up is Christa McClusky.

MS. MCLUSKSY: My name is Christa McClusky. I live at 123 Orchard Drive, Pleasant Hills. Councilman Palmiere is also my representative. When I signed up to speak, I did sign up as a member of PFLAG, but I also want

to say that I'm a Democratic committee person for the Borough of Pleasant Hills. I vote. I vote often, and I'm very careful with my vote.

And I also want to say that I have been a licensed social worker for 30 years, so I've always worked in the child welfare field with children and with families. I'm not going to sit here and say I'm a specialist, but I do have a few decades of experience working with particularly at-risk children.

Regarding conversion therapy - and I am here to speak obviously in favor of Councilman Klein's idea, but regarding conversion therapy, the idea of conversion therapy works with the idea that the LGBTQ is a problem. Something that could be or should be fixed offering a solution to fix a problem of being LGBTQ and that at its very basis is wrong. It is simply wrong.

Our sexuality is a part of our identity. Sexuality is individual. It is not a problem to be fixed by any one of us. What LGBTQ children need, what individuals need as part of that community is respect, caring, and the knowledge that they will not be bullied, discriminated against, or isolated for their identity because our sexuality is a part of us.

We know that LGBTQ children and adolescents are at higher risk for depression, social isolation, bullying, and even suicidality, and I just want to add that when I became a social worker in 1990 the percentages of depression and all those issues have not changed. They are still much higher for children and adolescents in that community, which I find extremely depressing.

We need a society of inclusion and safety for everyone, not where a person's very identity needs to be fixed; because, if we consider that an LGBTQ person can be fixed, then we are saying that these people are defective, and that if a person chooses not to get fixed, then that is a problem, because once you say that a person is choosing not to get treatment and not to be fixed, then you can allow discrimination. Right?

When you have chosen to be part of the LGBTQ community, therefore you don't need protection from workplace discrimination and housing discrimination and violence and that is dangerous.

And I guess the last thing I want to say is, the American Academy of Pediatrics is probably the most respected organization to talk about things like

conversion therapy and LGBTQ issues and I certainly would encourage you to look at their information.

MR. BARKER: Next up is Paul Overby.

MR. OVERBY: Hello. My name is Paul Overby. I live at 6665 Kinsman Road in Pittsburgh. I'm a resident of Allegheny County and am speaking in favor of Council Member Klein's proposed ordinance 11395-20.

Families with loved ones who are part of the LGBTQ community can choose to support and protect them or they can choose to hurt them. There's overwhelming evidence that choosing conversion therapy will hurt them. Scores of organizations have denounced conversion therapy including the American Academy of Pediatrics as we just heard, the American Medical Association, the American Psychiatric Association, the American Psychological Association, the World Health Organization and many, many others.

Loved family members who are LGBTQ and who are rejected by their families for their identity including being subjected to conversion therapy are over eight times more likely to report having attempted suicide, almost six times more likely to report high levels of depression, almost three and a half times more likely to use illegal drugs and almost three and half times more likely to be at high risk for HIV and sexually transmitted diseases.

The proposed ordinance favors the protection of fundamental human rights and should be supported. If you vote for this ordinance, you are voting to protect the lives of beautiful, special people throughout our region. And if you vote against it, you are voting to endanger those same, beautiful people.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Thank you.

MR. BARKER: Next up is Ian Price.

MR. PRICE: Hello. My name is Ian Price. I live at 210 Gross Street in Bloomfield. I'm in DeWitt Walton's Council District 10. I am a member of the Steel City Stonewall Democrats. I am an LGBT activist of 20 years, and I am an out and proud member of the LGBT community.

I am speaking out in favor of Councilman Klein's ordinance and against Councilman DeMarco's ordinance. I would like for the council to consider this an issue of consumer protection. My parents, the parents of all the people I know, when we were kids, our parents wanted the

best for us. They wanted us to grow up to be happy, and they would go to any lengths for us to be happy.

Now, imagine that you have these parents who desperately want their children to be happy, and the only thing they know, the only thing they've ever gone through is heteronormative straight marriages and the thought of their children not being able to have that kind of marriage, that kind of life, those kinds of children they are heartbroken and they are willing to look for anything, and that's where they as the consumer need to be protected, because there are those people selling snake oil and you've heard a lot about the statistics. They're not just immediate.

People who undergo conversion therapy will for years after struggle. They will struggle for decades with depression. They will struggle with thoughts of suicide. They will struggle with low self-esteem. They will struggle to form committed relationships at worst, and these are people I've known. These are not theoretical people. These are my friends.

You're talking about whether my friends will get damaged or not. So some of them, if they are very unfortunate, will enter into heterosexual marriages to make their parents happy, at which point they will involve other people and make that spouse who entered in good faith in a bad marriage go into a failed marriage.

We are not just talking about individuals here. We are talking about individual family units, future family units. We are talking about an entire community that is dependent on you to stop this toxic product from staying on the market. I really - for myself and my friends I implore you to pass Councilman Klein's ordinance. Thank you very much.

MR. BARKER: Next up is Joe Pasqualetti.

MR. PASQUALETTI: Good evening. My name is Joe Pasqualetti, 720 South Negley Ave. The charter project hotline is 1-866-488-7386. Anyone who is in a dark place or struggling with self-harmful thoughts call that hotline. I'm here because I'm --- I'm here in favor of the Klein bill 11395, and to strongly condemn the DeMarco bill 11397. I'm here because I'm angry. I'm angry that we still have to deal with this. I'm angry that a half solution is on the table. I'm happy that states such as Utah just passed a ban through their psychological board and that a bill passed - cleared the Virginia state house

and that Kentucky will soon pass a ban on conversion therapy and I'm very disappointed that Allegheny County hasn't done that yet.

We need a complete ban. The problem with the DeMarco bill is it reports to be against harm, but what it doesn't address is that psychological harm is still harm. It doesn't manifest physically and immediately. It's often invisible, but it does manifest.

It manifests in self harm. It manifests in suicide attempts and worse. Any form of conversion makes all non-minors vulnerable to it through coercion, duress, through financial coercion. And that is not freedom. And that is not pro-family.

We need to protect our children and make sure that even their well-intended families against their own best wishes do things that they don't fully understand to make sure that their own families don't become their first bullies. Pennsylvania needs anti-discrimination laws for employment and housing and that will promote more economic activity which is something that I'm sure Councilmember DeMarco can agree with and work with us on.

My story is that I had to move to Pennsylvania to become safe. If I had stayed in New York, I would not have been safe. I am over 18 when I was at Grayhurst firm's practices and so this protects youth. It would not have protected me. I love Allegheny County, and I love Pittsburgh. But to have to move in order to be physically safe from your own family is too much.

I wouldn't feel safe running into them in a coffee shop and I hope that you all support the Klein bill.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Thank you.

MR. BARKER: Next up is Sean Meloy.

MR. MELOY: Hello. My name is Sean Meloy. I live in Hampton. I'm also the chair of the Pennsylvania Democratic State Committee's LGBTQ Caucus. I am also a member of the Steel City Stonewall Democrats and serve on that board, and my profession day to day is actually as the political director of the LGBTQ victory fund which works to get LGBTQ people elected into office.

And the reason that's important is because role models and seeing yourself being represented is extremely important, and over the last almost 30 years, victory fund and so many other LGBTQ organizations have worked to help bend the curve and help make sure that LGBTQ people are

better represented so that young people can have something to look forward to so that they can be themselves. They can come out.

Sadly, we have knowledge --- we teach you folks currently elected on council, but we have some amazing allies. And I'd like to thank the allies including Councilman Klein who have listened to the LGBTQ community over the last many months around the differences between his proposal and Councilman DeMarco's.

You can send a message to people in Allegheny County and in Pennsylvania. This is an election year. People are looking right here right now. You can have an outsized impact by passing the Klein bill, and I implore you to do so.

The DeMarco bill will have no practical effect and is pretty open with loopholes. It's been brought to my attention that there are at least four places in Allegheny County right now that we can easily identify where conversion therapy is happening. You can have an impact today. Not only by sending the message that openly LGBTQ people are welcome and that children should thrive and become those individuals, but to also help put a stop to those practices. I implore you to please be great allies tonight and help pass the Klein bill. Thank you so much.

MR. BARKER: Next up is Loreen Lubin.

MS LUBIN: Hi, my name is Lori Lubin. I live at 1187 Fox Terrier Drive in Bethel Park. I'm here to speak in favor of the Klein bill and specifically the conversion therapy ban. My husband of 35 years and I have two children who are both gay. Our son is 27 and our daughter is 25. Yesterday I asked them how they would have felt if their dad and I had suggested conversion therapy when we learned of their sexuality. My son responded as follows.

I am sure I would have felt my whole life was a lie that my own parents would do that to me. And my daughter's response was, if you and dad would have suggested conversion therapy, I would have felt like a disappointment. It takes a lot of strength, courage and time to come out to just one single person let alone your parents and everyone else in your life. You can make a choice to come out, but your sexuality isn't a choice. People don't come out for the fun of it because it isn't always a positive reaction and not everyone is accepting.

So basically, I would have felt that even though I am confident in who I am in your eyes that wouldn't have been good enough. And yes, I cried a little writing this.

I cannot imagine any parent not wrapping their arms around their child and reassuring them unconditional love, letting them know that the way they fell is okay and that our sexual preference and who we love is only a very small part of who we are. Instilling in them what truly defines us and what matters is how we treat one and all, our families, our friends, our neighbors and those in need by being kind honest caring giving and not judging. LGBTQ youth should not be encouraged or coerced to undergo any therapy that attempts to convert them into who they are not or who someone else thinks they should be. What they need is love, support, acceptance and to be treated as equals. Thank you for your time.

MR. BARKER: Next up is Gerald Montano.

MR. MONTANO: Good evening. I'm Dr. Gerald Montano. I live in 1700 Middle Road in Glenshaw, Pennsylvania, and I am here to support the Klein ordinance 11395-20 and oppose the DeMarco bill. So I am a licensed pediatrician that works at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh and I'm also the medical director of the gender and sexual development program there. I work with LGBTQ youth for the last seven years, and medical professionals all agree what the LGBTQ community knows already, that being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender is not a pathology. There is nothing to fix because nothing is broken.

The only thing that is broken is how society treats LGBTQ people and how it harms their health and well-being. There is no evidence that conversion therapy works, whether it is through any physical means like electrocution or through talk therapy or religious therapy. What we do know as medical professionals is that it can lead to further harm. Those that have gone through conversion therapy have increased depression, increased anxiety and are more likely to think about or commit suicide.

We have a responsibility as a society to protect our children from things that can harm them. We do not hesitate to ban cancer causing chemicals, and we do not hesitate to ban toys that can be unsafe for children. Conversion therapy can be just as dangerous, if not more than these things. Therefore, I am asking you to support

the Klein ordinance to ban all types of conversion therapy. Thank you so much for your time.

MR. BARKER: Next up is Scott Pospisil.

MR. POPISIL: First I thank the council members for your service to our county. I realize you don't have easy jobs, and I'll be praying for you. I'm a pastor with a counselling degree, and I want to make comments about the Klein bill and DeMarco bill.

I will assume that both bills are motivated by a desire to help others. Because of the lack of time, let me get to the point. I do believe the DeMarco bill is better than the Klein bill. The DeMarco bill protects minors from hurtful forms of therapy while still letting minors and their parents choose what is best for them. Here are my concerns about the Klein bill, which would prevent licensed therapists from helping minors decrease their unwanted same-sex attractions.

First, it is against free speech as has been ruled by courts in other states to be unlawful. In Tampa, Florida, it was ruled the City of Tampa had overstepped its bounds by instituting a regulation forbidding therapists from helping minors and there is a website that talks about that.

I do respect gays. This is not primarily a gay versus straight issue. I believe this is a free speech issue. If you pass the Klein bill and are taken to court, you could likely lose because of what's been decided in other states like Florida.

My second concern about the Klein bill is this. It's making a huge unproven assumption. It is wrongly assuming that the cause of every minor same-sex attraction is that this attraction is a permanent unchangeable part of who they are. Even Dr. Lisa Diamond, a lesbian researcher, does not assume this, and you can see her website.

I've been looking at the professional literature on this. There is no agreement in the literature on what causes or contributes to same-sex attraction, or SSA. Here are some of the potential causes or contributing factors that are in the literature, and you can read those.

Some of the literature says it's an inborn characteristic. Other literature says that same-sex attraction is a result of environmental factors. Others

say that being sexually abused can contribute toward it or accidental homosexual encounters when kids are little.

There's just several reasons why in the literature, professional literature, why someone might have a same-sex attraction. For those that have been hurt, as a pastor, I believe that Jesus Christ is the answer to those hurts.

Now, here's the deal. If there's several reasons in the professional literature why a minor might have SSA, how can you let that minor explore with a professional what is contributing to that SSA and let their parents and them decide what to do about it.

Now, there are some who say that the reason for SSA is that it's an inborn characteristic, but if you look on websites and in books on the internet, there are many gays that leave the gay lifestyle each year and get married to heterosexuals and have children. I have known people. We have all known people, so how do you explain that?

In closing, I have some very close gay friends and some very liberal friends who believe the Klein bill is not what's best, so Council, do what is compassionate. Support the DeMarco bill. Thank you very much.

MR. BARKER: Sarah Rosso.

MS. ROSSO: Good evening, everybody. I stand before you today as the state commissioner on LGBT affairs and executive director of the Humane Foundation and former council member for the City of Pittsburgh LGBTQA advisory council.

Most of the work that I do is with youth and families. I am a consultant to the Department of Human services and I help them implement practices and services that will make sure that youth and families get the support that they need. So I want to tell you that as part of that work in starting and supporting families we see every day the harm that conversion or reparative therapy causes to youth. We see the numbers of youth that have detrimental health disparities and that comes as a result of going through these particular kinds of interventions, and I think that we want to be very cautious about even calling them therapy because they're not.

We see time and time again the detrimental impact this type of intervention has on youth. It is harmful and the parents believe they want to do what's in

the best interest of their child and they rarely get the guidance and support that they need to be able to make informed decisions. So while we don't want to dictate what parents should do to be able to help their children, we have already demonstrated in so many ways that it is the responsibility of elected officials to set reasonable standards to ensure well-being and this assuredly is one of those areas.

Every major medical and behavioral health organization at the national level has come out against conversion and reparative therapy. There is not a single reputable organization that suggests that this is helpful or effective to anyone.

San Francisco State University conducted a study that demonstrated youth who had gone through conversion therapy were three times more likely to attempt suicide as a result of having participated in those interventions. Even the most conservative churches, those who believe being gay is a sin, for example, have come out and told their parents they need to support, love, honor and embrace their children. This includes the Roman Catholic faith and a number of others that submit statements about how parents should show up for their youth. The Allegheny Department of Human Services has implemented seven standards of practice right here in Allegheny County. We already have standards of practice that tell us how we should show up and work with youth and families, and they prohibit, expressly prohibit, any staff person or any contracted provider from working with or employing someone who provides conversion or reparative therapy.

I'm going to leave behind the standards of practice for you to review the full language, but again, they expressly refer referrals because of the serious harm that this causes to youth.

So I strongly urge you to follow the leadership of many other municipalities, states and cities and approve the Klein bill tonight. So thank you very much.

MR. BARKER: Last up is Ciora Thomas.

MS. THOMAS: Good evening, Council. My name is Ciora Thomas. I am the founder and director of Sisters PGH, a confirmed only local black lead non-profit community center and counseling provider for transgender communities of Pittsburgh. I am also the president of our LGBTQIA advisory council of Pittsburgh at the Mayor's

office as well as the commissioner of Pennsylvania's commission on LGBTQ affairs.

I'd like to start by asking the council by a raise of hands very quickly who identifies as either transgender, non-binary, lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, asexual or intersex.

By the number of hands not raised, I think it's fair to say you're going to need the expertise of those who have not only experienced conversion therapy, but also the heart of the LGBTIA community of Allegheny County. There is absolutely nothing wrong with us, and there is no way conversion therapy or even homophobic, transphobic, biphobic, queerphobic, asexuaphobic or intersexphobic parents can do to cure us through therapy we do not need.

In fact, as a mental illness happens to be homophobia, transphobia, biphobia, queerphobia, asexual phobia, intersex phobia and any phobia that causes uncomfortableness or uncomfortable sexual feelings for cisgender heterosexual people which is also a mental illness that should be met with therapy.

What we need in this county - or, we need a county that is more accepting to all. A county that provides jobs to LGBTQ people a county that provides housing, a county that provides protection for our communities in Pittsburgh especially those of color and especially those that are black in Allegheny County.

In 2007, a task force of the American Psychological Association undertook a thorough review of the existing research on efficiency of conversion therapy. The report noted that the therapy doesn't work. I don't have to go through this. A lot of people have talked about this, because it doesn't work.

In contrast, I would like to just close with I am in favor of the ordinance bill 11395-20 proposed by Councilman Klein so that we can continue becoming a city and county that is safe for LGBTQIA adults in senior.

Councilman DeMarco, I would advise you to seek some therapy so that you understand the damage you are attempting to inflict upon the LGBTQIA community in Allegheny County and also remind you that your grandchildren and great grandchildren can also be born LGBTQIA like the rest of us, and I pray it's not too late for you to see the rainbow in its full glory.

MR. BARKER: A motion to approve the minutes of the October 22, 2019 regular meeting of council.

PRESIDENT CATENA: So moved.

MR. MACEY: Second.

PRESIDENT CATENA: All those in favor signify by saying aye.

(Chorus of ayes)

PRESIDENT CATENA: Opposed? Motion carries.
11369-20.

MR. BARKER: A motion to approve the minutes of the November 19, 2019 regular meeting of council.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Who wants to make a motion?

MR. MACEY: So moved.

MR. FUTULES: Second.

PRESIDENT CATENA: All those in favor signify by saying aye.

(Chorus of ayes.)

PRESIDENT CATENA: All those opposed? Motion carries. We'll now have presentation of appointments.
11384-20.

MR. BARKER: Approving the appointment of Mario C. Browne to the Drug and Alcohol Planning Council for a term ending on December 31, 2022 sponsored by the Chief Executive.

PRESIDENT CATENA: That will go to appointment review. 11385-20.

MR. BARKER: Approving the appointment of Representative Dan Frankel to the Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council effective January 1, 2020 and ending on December 31, 2023 sponsored by the Chief Executive.

PRESIDENT CATENA: That will also go to appointment review. 11386-20

MR. BARKER: Approving reappointment of Christine Michaels to the Mental Health/Intellectual Disability Advisory Board for a term ending on December 31, 2022 sponsored by the Chief Executive.

PRESIDENT CATENA: That will also go the appointment review. 11387-20.

MR. BARKER: Approving the reappointment of Geralyn A. Dugan to the Mental Health Intellectual Disability Advisory Board for a term ending on December 31, 2022. Sponsored by the Chief Executive.

PRESIDENT CATENA: That will go to appointment review. 11388-20.

MR. BARKER: Approving the reappointment of Kenneth Allshouse to the Council of Friends for North Park

for a term ending on February 11, 2022 sponsored by Council Member Kirk.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Since this is friends of the park, who wants make the motion?

MR. MACEY: So moved.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Somebody want to second?

MS. KIRK: Yeah, I'll second.

PRESIDENT CATENA: All those in favor signify by saying aye.

(Chorus of ayes.)

PRESIDENT CATENA: Opposed? Motion carries.
11389-20.

MR. BARKER: Approving the reappointment of Gerard J. Aufman Jr. to the Council of Friends for North Park for a term ending on February 11, 2022 sponsored by Council Member Kirk.

MS. KIRK: Recommend a motion to reappoint Gerry Aufman to the council of Friends of North Park.

MS. HALLAM: Second.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Motion has been made and seconded. All those in favor signify by saying aye.

(Chorus of ayes.)

PRESIDENT CATENA: All those opposed? Motion carries. We'll now have unfinished business. The committee on appointment review for the second reading.
11377-20.

MR. BARKER: Approving the reappointment of William Ondek to the Board of Property Assessment Appeals and Review for a term to expire on December 31, 2022 sponsored by the Chief Executive.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Councilwoman Hallam?

MS. HALLAM: The committee on appointment review met on January 29th and this person was affirmatively recommended.

MR. FUTULES: Second.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Motion has been made and seconded. All those in favor signify by saying aye.

(Chorus of ayes.)

PRESIDENT CATENA: Motion carries. 11378-20.

MR. BARKER: Approving the reappointment of Wayde Fargotstein to the Board of Property Assessment Appeals and Review for a term to expire on December 31, 2022 sponsored by the Chief Executive.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Councilwoman Hallam.

MS. HALLAM: This person was also affirmatively recommended at the January 29 meeting of the committee on appointment review. I make motion to approve the reappointment.

MR. MACEY: Second.

PRESIDENT CATENA: We have a second. All those in favor signify by saying aye.

(Chorus of ayes.)

PRESIDENT CATENA: All those opposed? Motion carries. 11379-20.

MR. BARKER: Approving the appointment of Jenna R. Cramer to Allegheny County Conservation District Board for a term to expire on December 31, 2023 sponsored by the Chief Executive.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Councilwoman Hallam.

MS. HALLAM: The committee on appointment review approved the appointment of Jenna R. Cramer on January 29th, so I motion to approve.

MR. MACEY: Second.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Perfect. Couldn't have said it better myself. All those in favor signify by saying aye.

(Chorus of ayes.)

PRESIDENT CATENA: All those opposed? Motion carries. 11380-20.

MR. BARKER: Approving the appointment of Maria Grantiani to the Allegheny County Conservation District Board for a term to expire on December 31, 2023 sponsored by the Chief Executive.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Councilwoman Hallam.

MS. HALLAM: On January 29th the committee on appointment review affirmatively recommended Maria Grantiani to the Allegheny County Conservation District Board. I would make a motion that we approve this appointment.

MS. BENNETT: Second.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Motion has been made and seconded. All those in favor signify by saying aye.

(Chorus of ayes.)

PRESIDENT CATENA: All those opposed? Motion carries. 11381-20.

MR. BARKER: Approving the reappointment of Margaret M. Paris to the Allegheny Health Choices Incorporated Board for a term to expire on December 31, 2023 sponsored by the Chief Executive.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Councilwoman Hallam.

MS. HALLAM: On January 29th the committee on appointment review affirmatively recommended Margaret Paris to the Allegheny Health Choices, Inc. Board, so I motion to approve this appointment.

MR. FUTULES: Second.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Motion has been made and seconded. All those in favor signify by saying aye.
(Chorus of ayes.)

PRESIDENT CATENA: Motion carries. We'll now have liaison reports. Not to put Councilwoman Hallam or Councilman DeMarco on the spot about the election board meeting today, but would either of you two like to elaborate on what took place at the election board meeting just to give a public update since it's obviously so important to the county?

MS. HALLAM: I'll just point out there was a lot that went on. This was the first meeting on the new board of elections and we had a lot of information to go over. Act 77 is a piece of Pennsylvania legislation that was instituted with a lot of changes that we are dedicated to making sure the community members are familiar with. A lot of things have been instituted as of that act. Certain things include 50 days prior to the election you are able to request mail in ballots. You are able to register to vote up to 15 days prior to the election.

MR. DEMARCO: I think one of the big things is, today while we were sitting here Allegheny County issued a press release announcing to go live of our website called alleghenyvotes.com. Alleghenyvotes.com is a place you can go to to obtain information, get answers to frequently asked questions, to learn more not just about processes, but about what we're planning on doing in rolling these out in the community to get the citizens the opportunity to see the machines, understand how they work, understand the processes, things of that nature and be able to ask questions.

MS. HALLAM: I want to add one more thing on top of that is that it was brought up to the administration regarding voting rights and access to absentee ballots for people who are incarcerated in the Allegheny County jail and the administration has promised to work with us to make sure that is a reality and that those are accessible to everyone.

MR. DEMARCO: There are a lot of questions out there in our division of elections. I want to thank Director Boyce, Director Diskevitch, the assistant director, the entire county team. These folks were forced into some of these things. It was Governor Wolf's settlement with Jill Stein back in 2017 that led to the purchase of new voting machines that had to be in place for the 2020 election with no funding mechanisms or nothing else was put in place. So that's what's led to that just happening how. So here we are going into a presidential year where the turnout will be unprecedented and we had to introduce new machines, new processes and things like that to people, which are going to be a challenge.

In addition, the state legislature on October 31 of 2019 dropped Act 77 on us, the law they took and put in place and said here's what the law is. There was no processes or recommendations on how to implement and follow through with those that were introduced.

So this has represented a challenge to all of us including yourselves. We recognize that and the board is diligently working with our director and with our division of elections. We will be having more frequent board of election meetings leading up to the primary to help inform you, and the other thing, last thing I would say, we talked with Director Ivanto, our marketing department, there is going to be an unprecedented marketing campaign which will consist of TV, print, radio, social media, Spotify, I mean just the whole buses, bus stations and things like that through the months of March and April to educate people here, and then they will repeat that in September and October. So, you know, if I know many folks will go about their lives and raising their families and working their jobs will say, well, I didn't see anything. We understand that. We're going to do our best to make sure that we get it out there so you do see it.

MS. HALLAM: I'll just say if you do go on the website that Councilman DeMarco mentioned there will eventually be a list of places that the public can go to test out the new machines. That hasn't been completely solidified where and when yet, but if you keep an eye on that website, you can go and test the machine prior to election day.

MR. DEMARCO: Oh, please, yes. And what they're doing the - initially we partnered with the Carnegie

Library of Pittsburgh and the Allegheny County Library Association where they will be taking these --- kind of, if you look to your local library you will have the opportunity hopefully to be able to visit this summer coming up in the future.

PRESIDENT CATENA: I apologize for putting you two on the spot. Obviously, it's something many members have come before us month after month and we've heard you loud and clear obviously talking about the voting concerns and the voting machines and process, and that's why I thought it was important to give everyone an update firsthand so everyone hears the same message. I attended the meeting today along with Councilman DeMarco and Councilwoman Hallam along with Councilman Klein and I thought it was one of the best election board meetings in some time for the information that came out of it. It was very --- it provided a lot of information. Like Councilman Demarco said we have a monumental effort between now and April 28 to make sure all of this happens, but I have every faith in the county elections bureau that they will accomplish this and I really have to give my hats off to those, so thank you.

Councilman Baker.

MR. BAKER: Thanks, President Catena. I would add as the chair of the board of county elections, last week was proof of how thankful I am of the process from last year how much we collaborated with Ron, Julia and all of our colleagues to make sure we got a system that was going to work. That is the most terrifying thing I think as we went through the process and I do feel it's going to take a lot of work as Council Member Hallam and DeMarco said, but I feel like with our friends that are always advocating, getting the word out and making sure that their groups are supporting us keeping us accountable as public officials, I think they had a really good 2019 and then the regular board's back in place for this year.

So I usually report on five to seven events, but I will not tonight, but I do want to just acknowledge some special people that are with us tonight. Everyone has heard of the Pittsburgh Job Corps center, and I was walking up about ten years ago to get on the community relations council there. I have been the vice president for the last nine years, and we have two staff members from the job corps center here with us tonight and seven students including the whole student government

administration. I will say job corps got really personal for me on a personal level last year when my little brother --- we have been matched through Big Brother Big Sisters for over ten years now. We're are pretty much best friends. My two-year-old calls him Uncle Eric, Uncle E.

He went to job corps in 2019 and graduated from the CNA program. He now makes more at 21 than I could have even dreamed of when I was 24, so he is doing well as a certified nurse's assistant coming out of job corps center working at the Southwest PA Veteran's Center, so really proud of Eric.

With us here tonight are Ms. Sypher and Mr. Shaw. They're the staff members that are here with us. I will say job corps got it right when they elected the president. President Baker is here with us tonight which is awesome. That's President JR Baker. We have vice president George. We have Secretary Adkins, Treasurer Ramirez, Sergeant at Arms Wilson, Ambassador Johnson, Ambassador Bennett, Chief Justice Gerard. We have the whole job corps crew with us tonight from The Student Government Association. It's a wonderful, wonderful, wonderful resource here in our community. Please, for our friends who are here tonight, please say hi to them.

They will be doing a group photo again. Then we'll also do a Q&A, so every year for the last six years after this meeting when job corps comes, it's me and whoever else of my colleagues wants to stick around and do a little Q&A and hopefully make sure that President Baker is Councilwoman Baker someday. Wouldn't that be fun?

So thanks for being here. A big round of applause for job corps.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Any other liaison reports?
Councilman Macey.

MR. MACEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and council members. You know, just recently you saw the news where a couple rocks come down into the Port Authority rail system, and you've heard about the landslides over the last several years, especially the one on Route 30 that took a while and a lot of money to put together. I just want to say that with all the moisture all the rain and, of course, freezing and thawing --- now we haven't had a bad winter. That's yet to come. So if you think or you see or you feel that there's issues in your neighborhood especially around the hilly areas and those areas that

maybe near to creeks and streams, please notify your local public works department. I'm chairman of public works in the county.

You may not always know which road is a county road or which is a state road, but generally there's signs there. But get ahold of someone. Let them know that you feel that your property or there's an issue with a hillside roadway or stream. It's real important. We can be able to stop those things before a tragic situation happens. Thank you.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Thank you. Councilman Walton.

MR. WALTON: Thank you. On Friday, the Pennsylvania Secretary of Labor, Jared Oleksiak, came to Pittsburgh to tour the Pittsburgh A. Phillip Randolph Workforce Development Program. If you listen to the Governor's state of the state message last week, he talked about increasing investment in education, workforce development and a host of other areas.

One of those areas, workforce development, is an area that I have a specific interest in. Along with Secretary Oleksiak came funders from a host of programs and members of the Pittsburgh Black Elected Officials Coalition to tour the A. Phillip Randolph Institute to see the work that goes on in assisting young men and women from underserved, underrepresented and our previously incarcerated communities to build the skills, have family sustaining careers.

It is with that kind of state support and leadership that we transform communities one person at a time to have family sustaining careers, to raise per capita income, to increase home ownership and as a result improving public safety.

I'd like to say it was a privilege to have the secretary here and we really appreciate the support that the Governor provides on a daily basis to improve the lives of residents in Pennsylvania and specifically Allegheny County. Thank you.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Thank you. We'll now go into new business. 11395-20.

MS. HALLAM: Mr. President, point of order.

MR. WALTON: A point of personal privilege.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Yes.

MR. WALTON: I'd like to move that we waive the scheduled reading on this ordinance.

MS. HALLAM: I second that.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Okay. We'll do that. Can you just read the ordinance?

MR. BARKER: I can indeed. 11395-20. An ordinance amending and supplementing the Allegheny County code of ordinances Division 5 entitled health and sanitation for the creation of a new Chapter 540 entitled sexual orientation and gender identity conversion therapy in order to protect the health, safety and well-being of minors living within the county, sponsored by Councilmembers Klein, Duerr, Hallam, Bennett, Futules and Prizio.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Thank you. So what the process actually is is what's required at this point in time for a motion to waive the second reading, it obviously needs a second reading which we got. After that, we would have two thirds which requires basically ten votes to waive the second reading. Then there'd be a roll call. If there were ten votes, we'd take the motion on the ordinance 11395-20. At that point in time it would need a second and then a simple majority obviously which is 8 votes to pass.

So are there any questions on technical procedure?

MR. WALTON: Yes, Mr. President. I'd like to ensure that we have a roll call vote on this waiving of the second reading, please.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Okay.

MS. BENNETT: Second.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Okay. So we have the motion and the second. So we'll have a roll call vote.

MR. BARKER: On the motion to waive the second reading. Mr. Baker?

MR. BAKER: No.

MR. BARKER: Ms. Bennett?

MS. BENNETT: Yes.

MR. BARKER: Mr. DeMarco?

MR. DEMARCO: No.

MR. BARKER: Mr. Duerr?

MR. DUERR: Yes.

MR. BARKER: Mr. Futules?

MR FUTULES: Yes.

MR. BARKER: Ms. Hallam?

MS. HALLAM: Yes.

MR. BARKER: Ms. Kirk?

MS. KIRK: No.

MR. BARKER: Mr. Klein?

MR. KLEIN: Yes.

MR. BARKER: Mr. Macey?

MR. MACEY: Yes.

MR. BARKER: Mr. Palmiere?

MR. PALMIERE: Yes.

MR. BARKER: Mr. Palmosina?

MR. PALMOSINA: Yes.

MR. BARKER: Ms. Prizio?

MS. PRIZIO: Yes.

MR. BARKER: Mr. Walton?

MR. WALTON: Yes.

MR. BARKER: Mr. Zavarella?

MR. ZAVARELLA: Yes.

MR. BARKER: President Catena?

PRESIDENT CATENA: Yes.

MR. BARKER: Ayes 12, noes 3. The second reading has been waived.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Thank you. We'll now have a roll call vote on council 11395, but I'm going to entertain public comment on this ordinance first. So I'll let Councilman Klein go first since it's his ordinance and then Councilman Demarco. I'll let you because you have an ordinance as well, and then I'll open it up to everybody else.

MR. KLEIN: Thank you, Mr. President. I'd like to thank all of those who took the time to come here this evening and speak in support of the ordinance that I've introduced, and I'd really like to thank your thoughtful, eloquent and often moving insights and wisdom that you've shared this evening. So this evening along with many of my council colleagues we introduced legislation that is intended to address what has been regarded as the discredited practice of conversion therapy in Allegheny County. This bill is intended to protect minors in our county from the practice regarded by many mental health professionals as in many respects dehumanizing. This is a practice premised on the belief that identifying as LGBT is a mental illness that should and can be cured. This practice has also been referred to as reparative therapy, and it has been rejected by virtually every professional organization in the mental health universe. In an attempt to neutralize this harsh practice it is often referred to by proponents as talk therapy.

Call it what you will, this practice causes real harm and as such is a public health and safety threat. According to a report by the American Psychological Association, treatment at issue has been associated with depression, suicidal thoughts and substance abuse while having little or no potential for achieving changes in sexual orientation.

It has been estimated that close to 700,000 LGBTQ people in this country have undergone some form of conversion therapy. According to the Williams Institute at the UCLA School of law, 20,000 LGBT youth between the ages of 13 and 17 will undergo conversion therapy by a licensed healthcare professional before the age of 18. Forty-seven (47) years ago the American Psychiatric Association determined that homosexuality was not a mental illness and the organization maintained that attempts to change sexual orientation or identity by this practice is unethical. The American Psychiatric Association has been joined over the years in this assessment by the American Academy of Pediatrics, The American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, The American College of Physicians, The American Counselling Association, The American Medical Association, The American Psychological Association, The American School Counselors Association, The American School Health Association, The National Association of Social Workers and the Pan American Health Organization of the World Health Organization.

To date up to this point, conversion therapy has been banned in 19 states, and 67 municipalities across this country. Just three weeks ago the Governor of Utah signed an executive order in his state banning the practice of conversion therapy, and last week the Virginia house of delegates passed a conversion therapy ban that is expected to pass in the Virginia State Senate and will ultimately be signed into law by the Virginia Governor bringing to 20 the number of states that now ban conversion therapy.

Here in Pennsylvania, 11 municipalities have now banned conversion therapy including Erie, Bethlehem, Allentown, Reading, State College, Bellefonte, Yardley, Doylestown, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh.

With this proposed ordinance, we do not seek to interfere with the parent/child relationship. Parents would do well to seek guidance as their children struggle to navigate the challenges and uncertainty that come with

growing up. Nor is our intention to dictate to faith communities in our region. This bill is applicable to licensed mental health providers and is intended to protect the most vulnerable of our members, young people or minors.

Sexual identity as we have come to understand it is something more than biological assigning. For those who struggle to understand it, it is a journey, and it is our purpose in proposing this legislation to make it a safer one free from fear, coercion, intimidation and the undue influence of people who hold a position of trust in the lives of young people.

As much as this measure before us today is about bringing to an end as a matter of law a harmful and discredited practice, it is also about preserving human dignity. What all marginalized groups in our society share is that their worth, their value, is questioned. They are told in many ways that there is something wrong with you, that you matter less. They share, they carry, the burden of exclusion. Their humanity unrecognized. In Hebrew, the word for dignity is Kavod, K-A-V-O-D. It means weightiness. If you occupy space, you have worth. More richly, it means your dignity comes by virtue of your birth.

So the poet, Edward Estlin Cummings, also known to many as E.E. Cummings wrote this, to be nobody but yourself in a world which is doing its best night and day to make you everybody else, means to fight the hardest battle which any human being can fight and never stop fighting.

Let's legitimize, let's validate, the inherent humanity in each person as they struggle to figure it all out on this journey.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Thank you. Councilman DeMarco.

MR. DEMARCO: Thank you, Mr. President. First let me express my disappointment that these bills aren't going to committee where we would have had the opportunity to talk and try to come to some sort of arrangement in which we would have been able to obtain all council support, so I'm disappointed in that.

My bill that I put forth isn't about conversion therapy. My bill is about, in my view, freedom. Freedom for counseling and freedom for choice. I think all of us here should respect the rights of LGBTQ folks to be able

to take and choose to identify the way they want. The freedom of choice. We should all be able to pick and choose and determine our right to love whomever we want, so if we have that right of self-determination to do that, why are we trying to strip them of the self-determination to be able to choose the therapy, the goal, that they may want? My issue with Councilman Klein's bill was that I felt that his bill bans the goals of any type of therapy.

So it banned changing behaviors, and that ban of licensed therapist is in effect even if that change is not the primary goal of treatment. So I felt that it was taking and precluding licensed therapists for being able to help folks for fear they would jeopardize their license or things like that.

I also felt that by banning a goal that this council would be siding with the viewpoint that any effort to change or alter or manage your identity or your same sex attraction would be wrong, and I believe it's illegal for a government agency to be taking sides on any issue and taking one viewpoint over the other.

This is professional speech that has been protected by the Supreme Court under the First Amendment in NIFLA versus Becerra. Additionally, I felt that by taking, siding, with one viewpoint over another we were stripping minors of the ability to determine their own options.

When I introduced by bill, it was because when Councilman Klein brought his bill up it became apparent that there's been some abhorrent behavioral methods that have been used under the guise of therapy out there in this county previously. So what I tried to do was to ban those harmful methods for any type of therapy regardless of what your goal had been.

So they banned an effort by a counselor to force a method on a minor to which that minor does not consent. My bill bans any physically harmful methods of treatment regardless of consent. It recognizes that minors who may want to change their desires or behavior could potentially benefit from counseling that's done in a loving and non-abusive way. By banning methods rather than a goal, this council is not taking sides on which viewpoint is right or wrong. By banning methods rather than a goal, this council is not regulating speech, but rather practices. By banning the method rather than the goal, but still giving a minor the right of refusal for any harmful

method, this council is giving minors the freedom to self-determine their own goals.

I heard from a great number of speakers today, and I believe you all, all care and want to help and protect people, you know, here. I hope you feel the same way about --- when you may disagree on some form of the issue, that same interest in trying to help people is present in us up here. They're trying to help these folks. Okay? A couple other things here.

By not going to committee, I don't believe we've fully weighed some of the potential repercussions here. I understand that other municipalities in states have passed similar legislation, but again, this was ruled - in violation of trying to take and hamper professional free speech was ruled unconstitutional.

New York City, certainly not a conservative bastion, in 2019 September, they repealed their conversion therapy ban. Corey Johnson, the council speaker, who's gay, said the council would explicitly repeal the ban. The move is a gambit designed to neutralize a federal lawsuit filed against the city by a conservative, Christian, legal organization. Yet the case will be heard by the Supreme Court. An advocate for the LGBTQ community feared that the panel could issue a ruling that would severely damage attempts to ban or curtail conversion therapy.

What we're doing is we're taking and enacting an ordinance that is certain to be challenged in a court of law. We heard from Curtis Schube from the Independence Law Center here in fourth quarter of last year where he talked about when these things are challenged, and this is sure to be challenged, when they're struck out, the loser of the case is forced to pay attorney's fees for the folks that won and he said those attorney fees typically range in the range of \$400,000.

What happens here is there are a number of things for us to consider and one was, again, I don't want to take and violate someone's free speech rights which is what we're doing by taking and banning therapists. I don't want to take and violate the right to self-determination from children by forcing them not to be able to take and obtain the help that they seek. We're opening ourselves up to significant legal costs, and we're opening up ourselves or this entire community by having this

challenge potentially be heard in the Supreme Court and be used in something which is struck down.

So thank you very much, Mr. President, for giving me the opportunity just to share why I had issues, you know, with the thing.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Thank you. Since this is going to be basically everyone's time to speak and I assume everyone has comments since this is an important issue --- and let me turn on my mic so you can actually hear me.

We'll just go down the line actually. We'll start with Councilman Baker if you have any comment.

MR. BAKER: I did. I think it should have gone to committee. I'll be breaking with my own party tonight actually and voting yes for Councilman Klein's bill tonight, so I'll be voting with the majority.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Thank you, Councilman Baker. Councilwoman Bennett?

MS. BENNETT: I'd just like to note that I listened to all the comments and I noted that many of the comments that were supportive of Councilman Klein's bill were people who actually identify within the community and that's most of what I heard tonight that those who are opposing Councilman Klein's bill are not part of the LGBTQIA community.

So when I'm thinking about this bill and gathering whether I agree, which obviously I do, I want to believe those that live in the community as Ciora spoke.

She asked us who identifies within that community. We don't, so we should be listening to you and I stand with you.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Councilman Duerr.

MR. DUERR: Yeah. Just a couple comments on this. A large part of my campaign when I ran, I did not shy away from talking about this issue with my constituency. After this run, the county - it is an issue that I promised we would tackle as soon as I could on council and I thank my colleagues for seeing the necessity to get this done and get this done quickly.

I knocked on over 4,000 doors in my race and this was one of the issues that came up time and time again, and if the members of council need any determination as to at least what District 5 believes on this issue, look no further than to the election results from my election this past November.

On a personal note to, you know, all the LGBTQ members and activists here tonight and to all the LGBTQ citizens in our county, you know, we have a chance here tonight to really send a message that this county is one of inclusion. One where everyone is welcome. As someone who has struggled with depression and anxiety his entire life, who attempted to take his life on two occasions, I don't want to do anything to ever put anyone else in a situation to send them to that dark place. Banning conversion therapy takes that off the table for LGBTQ community, and I want you all to know that while this is a starting point, this certainly isn't the end. We will continue to fight to make Allegheny County an open and inclusive area for everyone part of every community, and I look forward to being a strong ally to you and to the entire LGBTQ community going forward, so thank you all very much.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Mr. Futules.

MR. FUTULES: Thank you. I want to start by thanking everyone who came in this evening all 15 speakers. We heard from parents. We heard from doctors. We heard from people who've gone through this. You know, I was not knowing who they were yet.

Somebody had asked me a question, do you think parents have parental rights, and I said well, yeah, sure, they do, so I'm trying to put myself in the position of a parent. My child says to me dad I think I'm gay. The first thing you say to your child is are you sure because are you sure.

So the first thing as a parent, you say would you like therapy, would you like to talk to me, what would you like to do. So if I did the wrong thing as a parent, I wouldn't be too happy about that. What's best for your children is the best thing in the world obviously. We all care about our children the most.

So this ordinance doesn't prevent you from taking your child to a therapist to find out or discuss the issue. It just gives them that opportunity to find out who they are with a professional if needed. It's not about trying to convert you. And this bill is overdue, and also, I want to remind everybody the fact that we are waiving the second reading here this evening is this bill was introduced last year.

Early in the year actually and it's been on the table for 10-12 months now almost, just about nine months.

And during that time period, I personally contacted my staff, Jared, and I asked him to give me the specifics of this ordinance and what was good about it, what wasn't.

The good part outweighed the bad big time. The therapies were dangerous to children and on and on and on, and that's when I had made my decision about doing my own due diligence and finding out just what it was all about. And listening this evening to compelling speeches from everyone certainly, certainly has a lot to do with my decision as well because nobody knows but the people who've gone through this.

As a parent that never had to, I can't --- I have a hard time understanding how I would feel if I were you, so I'm in favor of this as you know. I'm cosponsor. So that's it. Thank you for coming.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Councilwoman Hallam.

MS. HALLAM: Yeah, so obviously I'm in favor of this bill as well because I'm cosponsor, but I want to start off with by saying there actually is one thing in relation to this bill that Councilman DeMarco brought up and that's, he said his bill was not about conversion therapy. And that's the problem with it. It's not a conversion therapy ban at all.

The only conversion therapy ban on the table today is Councilman Klein's legislation. If you read through the language of Councilman DeMarco's bill, there is absolutely no mention of the term conversion therapy whatsoever. So when we're talking about a conversion therapy ban, I don't know how he could even be considering that from the beginning.

Something that I want to mention is something to actually paraphrase one of the speakers that spoke earlier and they said it is our duty as elected officials to set reasonable standards to ensure the well-being of our community, and to me that is what we're doing tonight. Supporting this conversion therapy ban is ensuring the safety of our community members, of our LGBTQ community members. And you can bring up the cost of the hypothetical legislation that could be hypothetically be brought against us, but at the end of the day it's about lives that are being lost.

How many lives have we lost to this practice in Allegheny County? How many people have been harmed by this practice in Allegheny County? How many people have attempted to take their own lives or have taken their own

lives because of the experience of this practice right here in our home county in the year 2020?

This isn't an archaic practice. This is something that's happening every day. I do not see any reason to postpone this any further. We need to vote today. We need to pass this legislation today. Thank you.

MS. KIRK: As chairman of the health and human services, I am very disappointed it didn't go to committee. Contrary, I don't want to say you're wrong there, Councilman Futules, but there are major changes. Before the first bill that Councilman Klein introduced, it included all people. It included non-licensed people. That disappeared. Now, it's just licensed people, which actually concerns me because we're not the state board regulating. We don't regulate psychiatrists, we don't regulate nurses, and we don't regulate the practice. I've actually had several physicians stop me in the hall at the hospital saying who do we think we are, had a few choice words about it. How am I telling them how to practice their practice?

Their state board regulates what they can do and what they can't do, and they discipline. And in the bill, it lists numerous therapists who are licensed, so that would be, like, a state board of nursing, a state board of psychiatry, a state board of so and so and so.

And none of them were talked to --- and I wanted to hear their thoughts, but we'll not. We declined the opportunity. I don't know if it's going to be the new practice of my fellow colleagues that we don't have an opportunity to really reach out because they're might be a couple things, a couple tweaks, but we don't have that opportunity now.

I'm not sure what I would have done with the bill because I didn't get the opportunity to really understand a couple of the things because we're not taking it to committee, and I don't know if this is going to be the practice from now on just to bulldoze things through and I don't think that's good practice. It hasn't been. I hope this isn't a precedent.

That said one last thing I'd also take with Councilman Futules, I think if you're kid comes up to you and says I think I'm gay, I don't think the first thing you say is are you sure. I think you say I love you. Get those words out right away, and then you can talk about

the rest. So that's not the issue here. I just have concerns that we're --- it's not our purview.

I can't even get a physical in this town without people coming up to me there, I'll stop there and asking why I think we can control a doctor's practice when he said I want to know how many psychiatrists are on your council. I know you have an accountant maybe and a barber and a so and so. That's what they know, and they want to know how we know more than their state board. And the state board has outlined all matters of therapy.

That's why I'm very disappointed that it didn't go to committee, so we could have a public hearing. We were just talking prior to this meeting about scheduling a public hearing, and now we won't have that opportunity and I think that would have been a good education for the community and for all involved.

And that is why I'm not for fast tracking something that we could have got done in a couple weeks.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Thank you. Councilman Macey.

MR. MACEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, members of council and people in the audience. This particular bill has languished in committee since last year, not this bill, but bills and discussions and historically and according to our charter, we take these ordinances and we vet them in the committee.

Now, I wanted to hear from experts. I wanted to know more information about this issue. I was on the fence, but you individuals came here and you testified. You're the experts. You live it. You work it. So I was convinced that we don't need to make this thing languish anymore. We need to move forward, so people can live their lives and be who they are and we don't have to fix you. Thank you.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Thank you. Councilman Palmiere, did you want to add anything?

MR. PALMIERE: Mr. President, enough said. Let's get on with the vote. Thank you.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Councilman Palmosina.

MR. PALMOSINA: I agree with that, but I also want to thank all the speakers here tonight and for the last nine months, and I think that's the key here. It's been nine months. Nine months going back and forth. We've made no decision here. What's happened in nine months? How many folks have we lost to depression? We've heard nothing but misery, misery, misery. How about we

say let's love one another. That being said --- and I agree with you. There are things that should be discussed in committee, but that would effectively take another two weeks. Can we lose more lives in two weeks? No.

It's time to do it now, and it's time to do it tonight. Thank you.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Councilwoman Prizio.

MS. PRIZIO: I'll be short, too. I agree with what my colleagues said and I would really thank all of you for coming and I will definitely be voting supporting the solidarity called upon today.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Councilman Walton.

MR. WALTON: Thank you. This statute now, we discussed this and I shared with many of my colleagues that in this instance we needed to cut the crap and waive the second reading and do business. There is a reason that that procedure of waiving second readings was developed and implemented. One of the speakers and Member Hallam spoke of the need to have reasonable standards to protect the population. This is clearly an instance where protecting your rights and privileges of our population was needed and I applaud Councilman Klein for his leadership because we talked about this months ago and I shared with Councilman Klein that the original bill was stronger.

In an effort to be collaborative, he modified his legislation to what he thought would get passed, and he and I had a disagreement. I told him the language should have been stronger and not modified, but he did what he believed was right. We have an opportunity to pass it tonight, and I say let's do that. And I also want to close my comments before the vote to say the issue of reasonable standards to protect the rights of residents of Allegheny County should not be limited to banning conversion therapy. It also should apply to an upcoming independent police review board legislation.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Councilman Zavarella.

MR. ZAVARELLA: Yes, just briefly. I'd like to thank all those that have come forward in the past 10, 11 months to express their views, and I'm confident that council as a body, as a whole, will make its own willing and intelligent decision and I'm certainly in favor of it and in favor of voting for it tonight.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Thank you. The only thing I want to add I'd like to thank Councilman Klein personally.

Councilman Klein and I worked on this one during the summer months trying to come to some sort of mutual agreement that would make everybody happy. And I said, Councilman Klein, I said, I'm getting a lot of concern from some of the parishioners and some of the churches in my area and I said the only thing I ask is if we're going to consider this ordinance that we exempt pastors from this that - the church because, like I said, I'm a Catholic and I try to believe and work with everybody, but the City of Pittsburgh ordinance basically defines licensed therapists and that's what Councilman Klein changed this to so that it reflects licensed therapists.

So I'd just like to thank Councilman Klein. I think Councilman Duerr, one of the words - or one of the things we heard best was we want to make Allegheny County inclusive for all and those words couldn't be truer tonight, so at this point in time, I will ask for a motion to formally vote on this bill.

MS. HALLAM: Motion.

MR. FUTULES: Second.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Motion has been made and seconded. Roll call vote, please.

MR. BARKER: On the motion to approve bill 11395-20, Mr. Baker?

MR. BAKER: Yes.

MR. BARKER: Ms. Bennett?

MS. BENNETT: Yes.

MR. BARKER: Mr. DeMarco?

MR. DEMARCO: No.

MR. BARKER: Mr. Duerr.

MR. DUERR: Yes.

MR. BARKER: Mr. Futules?

MR. FUTULES: Big yes.

MR. BARKER: Ms. Hallam?

MS. HALLAM: Yes.

MR. BARKER: Ms. Kirk?

MS. KIRK: No.

MR. BARKER: Mr. Klein?

MR. KLEIN: Yes.

MR. BARKER: Mr. Macey?

MR. MACEY: Yes.

MR. BARKER: Mr. Palmiere?

MR. PALMIERE: Yes.

MR. BARKER: Mr. Palmosina?

MR. PALMOSINA: Yes.

MR. BARKER: Ms. Prizio?

MS. PRIZIO: Yes.

MR. BARKER: Mr. Walton?

MR. WALTON: Yes.

MR. BARKER: Mr. Zavarella?

MR. ZAVARELLA: Yes.

MR. BARKER: President Catena?

PRESIDENT CATENA: Yes.

MR. BARKER: Ayes 13, noes 2. The bill passes.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Again, thank you for everyone coming out this evening and testifying on behalf of what you believe. It really makes a difference when you come out and speak the issues. Again, thank you.

11396-20.

MR. BARKER: An ordinance authorizing the County of Allegheny levying an Allegheny County demolition fund of \$15 on each mortgage and deed recorded in Allegheny County for the use of the purpose of funding demolition of blighted properties in the county in accordance with the provisions of 42 Pennsylvania Statutes Section 2502.2, sponsored by Council Members Macey, Hallam and Prizio.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Thank you. We'll send that to economic development. 11397-20.

MR. BARKER: An ordinance amending and supplementing the Allegheny County Code of Ordinances, Division 5 entitled "Health and Sanitation," through the creation of a new Chapter 540, entitled "Therapy," in order to protect the health, safety and well-being of minors living within the County, sponsored by Council Member DeMarco.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Councilman DeMarco, can we skip that for now?

MR. DEMARCO: Sure.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Thank you. 11398-20.

MR. BARKER: An ordinance of the County of Allegheny, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, authorizing Nate's Reptile Rescue to use a structure on Brownsville Road in the County's South Park, sponsored by the Chief Executive.

PRESIDENT CATENA: We'll refer that to the committee on parks. 11399-20.

MR. BARKER: An ordinance of the County of Allegheny, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, authorizing use of property for construction of three livestock shelter structures in the County's Round Hill Park in conjunction

with the Allegheny County Parks Foundation, sponsored by the Chief Executive.

PRESIDENT CATENA: That will go to parks as well. 11400-20.

MR. BARKER: An ordinance of the County of Allegheny, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, authorizing the continued use of a portion of Allegheny County-owned land in North Park as a leaf composting area by the North Hills Council of Governments sponsored by the Chief Executive.

PRESIDENT CATENA: That will go to parks as well. 11401-20.

MR. BARKER: An ordinance of the County of Allegheny, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, authorizing Tristar Productions, Inc. to use certain County-owned real and personal property in connection with filming a motion picture, sponsored by the Chief Executive.

PRESIDENT CATENA: That will go to parks as well. 11402-20.

MR. BARKER: An ordinance authorizing the County of Allegheny in conjunction with the Department of Public Works and the Law Department to convey by special warranty deed two parcels of County-owned vacant land being more particularly described as 5,955.04 square feet of land being part of Lot and Block 362-A-60 and 12,002.08 square feet of land designated as roadway right-of-way, both parcels of land being situate in the Municipality of Bethel Park, Allegheny County, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to FC Bethel, LLC, a Pennsylvania limited liability company, for the purpose of inclusion into the Bethel Pines Subdivision development, sponsored by the Chief Executive.

PRESIDENT CATENA: That will go to committee on public works. 11403-20.

MR. BARKER: A resolution of the County of Allegheny amending the Grant and Special Accounts Budget for 2020, sponsored by the Chief Executive.

PRESIDENT CATENA: That will go to budget and finance. Is there any new business?

MR. BARKER: We have none other than that.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Notification of contracts?

MR. BARKER: None.

PRESIDENT CATENA: We'll have public comment on general items.

MR. BARKER: First up is Jay Walker.

MR. WALKER: My name is Jay Walker. I'm the chair of the Green Party of Allegheny County. I live in Council District 11. Paul Klein is my council person.

Dear members of the Allegheny County Council, The Green Party of Allegheny County requests resident input on the selection of new appointees to the Allegheny County Board of Health. As you're aware, Allegheny County has demonstrably some of the dirtiest air in the country with correspondingly high levels of asthma and lung disease compared to the rest of the nation.

The US Steel Mon Valley works plants have been large contributors to the toxicity that threatens our very lives. In recent history, that corporation has been issued relatively small fines and actions that have failed to rein in the toxins dumped into the atmosphere.

In December of 2018, an explosion at the Clairton Koch works forced local residents to stay indoors for several weeks. We now know that accident resulted in massive pollution emissions. Ten years of pollutions were emitted in a little over three months.

Now we are faced with the continuing expansion of fracking and petrochemical industries in our region that will further decrease the quality of breathable air. As devoted environmental actors and residents of the world's former steel epicenter, we call upon the Allegheny County Health Department to exercise their authority as the watchdog of the health of Allegheny County residents.

Independent minded board members can resist and defy the interests of Rich Fitzgerald, Allegheny County Executive. Fitzgerald's radical denials of the health impacts related to fracking presents a clear and present danger to every resident in Allegheny County. It is time the Allegheny County Health Department resist the temptation of corporate growth and short-term job stability at the expense of environmental health.

Instead, the Green Party of Allegheny County calls upon the board to embrace independence, pursue justice and ensure quality of life for the residents they have the privilege to represent. Thank you.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Thank you.

MR. BARKER: Next up is Stuart Strickland.

MR. STRICKLAND: Good evening, honored members of council. My name is Stuart Strickland, 8219 Eleanor Street in McCandless Township in Councilwoman Kirk's District. I have served as an appointed judge of election

almost 20 times in 3 precincts over the last 13 years. One of these is Pittsburgh Ward 4 District 8, the city's largest of 4,405 registered voters in November 2008. My concern is poll worker training. I fear we will not have enough poll workers, and those we do have may not receive enough training. Of all the elections I've worked the longest lines occur when precincts are understaffed and when those on staff take an inordinate amount of time to process a voter. Long lines in turn dissuade potential voters from getting or staying in line.

The largest districts thus also have the lowest percentage of voter turnout. Each polling place is supposed to have five poll workers, but more than once just my wife and I ran it for the whole day. She put voters in booths while I did all three jobs at the desk plus judge.

Despite that, I kept the line moving by processing every voter in only 60 to 90 seconds. I have also seen staffs that regularly take upwards of three minutes to process each voter. I believe if a team of 3 cannot routinely process a voter in under 90 seconds someone else should have the job.

With the crush crowds we expect this year, we cannot afford to be either short staffed or so poorly trained or capable. Almost entirely absent as poll workers are young people. Where are the high school seniors who have the day off? Where are the college students? Shouldn't we be getting the young generation intimately involved in the election process? Google recruit young poll workers for useful suggestions.

Here is my ask. I want council to require the elections department to develop a targeted recruitment and training drive for under 24 voters to become poll workers. Videos, simulations, games whatever would speak to this audience should be developed and made available to bring this age segment up to speed and also enlist their help for both the primary and general elections.

I would be willing to assist with such a project. Thank you for your time.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Thank you.

MR. BARKER: Next up is Juliet Zavon.

MS. ZAVON: I too was at the board of elections meeting earlier and it was an excellent beginning, the first update we've had since the decision on the new voting equipment. It was a long time in coming. My

comments are what's going on with the election administration. Elections are national security. We need regular updates on preparedness. How we run elections, the risks and failures that lead to fiascoes, it's all in the news every day. The public no longer views elections as business as usual. Elections are part of national security. Why should we trust Allegheny County elections in spite of all the news we read? Why?

Until the board of elections special meeting today, we had zero updates and neither did you. I came before you in December to voice some of the concerns I have about this and I've copied those into the bottom of your comment. We had some answers to some of that. Partial answers need to be pursued rigorously not just oh, everything's okay. We've got it under control. So do they have it under control, in every election district where there's been a fiasco or a failure.

The public's heightened worries about elections make it imperative that the County provide more information. Just as we get regular updates about air quality and flu deaths, we need regular updates about election preparedness. Two examples.

How will the county tackle the expected increase in applications for mail-in ballots? More staff? What's going on? We don't know.

How are people going to be able to track the processing of their absentee or mail-in ballots from receipt of the application through receipt of the completed ballot? This is key to election integrity since these ballots cannot be audited the same way as polling-place ballots. What are we doing?

So why don't we get regular updates? We don't have the resources is the typical answer, but that's not necessarily accurate. The work force in any office can be redeployed to improve productivity and efficiency. Outside specialists can help with this. Other resources including community volunteers can be called in. The tools are available, but the administration must first decide that providing more information to the public is important.

County Council can ask for regular updates at its meetings just as the county executive gives regular presentations here. That's just one of many options, but I'm asking you to represent the public interest and our

national security to push for more and regular updates on preparedness. Thank you.

MR. BARKER: Caiden Frantangelo. She is not here with us. Ron Bandes.

MR. BANDES: I'm Ron Bandes. I'm a retired computer security analyst. I'm a judge of election, President of VoteAllegheny and a director of the League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh.

Women in the United States began advocating for equal rights as early as the 1840s. Progress was halted during the Civil War. Black men won in law the right to vote in 1870, but could be murdered for exercising that right. Born in 1883, Daisy Lampkin was an early women's suffragist in Pittsburgh. After women won the vote 100 years ago, Ms. Lampkin continued to make the world better as vice president of the Pittsburgh Courier newspaper and field secretary of the NAACP.

Two other early local women's suffragists were Elia Kennedy Smith and her sister, Lucy Kennedy Miller. They helped form the Allegheny County Equal Franchise Federation which worked to secure equal rights for women. Lucy was also the first president of the Allegheny County League of Women Voters.

At about the same time the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage was very popular in Allegheny County even among women. By 1919, 15 of the 48 states allowed women to vote. Pennsylvania was not among them. Pennsylvania women only got the vote upon the ratification of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Immediately following that, the league of Women Voters was formed by the merger of several women's suffrage organizations. The first convention of the Pennsylvania League of Women Voters was held in Pittsburgh in the County of Allegheny. The league had members in Allegheny County from the very beginning.

In 1947 there were six local leagues in Allegheny County: Mt. Lebanon, Pittsburgh, Bethel Park, Upper St. Clair, Monroeville and the North Hills. These since merged into the League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh, which in turn is part of the Pennsylvania and national leagues.

Today the League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh is the largest local league in the Commonwealth. So what does the league do?

We register voters at public events and at naturalization ceremonies, which are truly moving experiences. We also conduct voter registration with training about voting at high schools and colleges. We conduct many candidate forums before each primary and election. These events take tremendous planning and involve the efforts of 9 to 12 people. Most forums are live-streamed and can also be viewed later online.

We publish the pamphlet facts for citizens which shows all elected office holders along with contact details and salaries. Now we are collaborating with the county to educate voters about the new voting system and hopefully the new election laws in Act 77.

Count on the league to be helping Allegheny County for the next 100 years. Please join us for the League's 100th birthday celebration at the Heinz History Center this Saturday February 15th. Thank you.

MR. BARKER: Last up is Charles Shoaf.

MR. SHOAF: Hello, my name is Charles Shoaf of 5 Goldstrom Avenue, Dravosburg, PA. This is in regard to a property in 1800-1890 Homeville Road, West Mifflin, PA known as the Village Shopping Center, Lot and Block Number 240R200.

I believe that County Council passed an ordinance a few years back that gave Century Three Mall, Century Square Mall and the Village Shopping Center all a tax break on new incoming tenants that the square footage that the new tenants would occupy would get up a tax break for the first six years with the first year or two being a hundred percent refunded. Year three is, like, 75 percent. Year four is 50 percent. Then it goes to 25 and back up to the beginning. This property was sold Village Shopping Center back in May of 2015 and the sales price was recorded wrong. It was recorded at \$285,000 with an assessment of \$1.9 million that was lowered from \$7.9 million in 2014 by the board of viewers.

So this went on for the last six years until I sent an email on January 28 to the board of property assessments that says property is under-assessed as the purchase price was \$2,850,000, not \$285,000 as stated on the assessment page for this property. It should be raised to the correct purchase price or more, and then I put my cell text number in as Charles Shoaf, a concerned citizen of Allegheny County.

So I stopped in on February 3 to the Board of Assessments over there and I hollered over to Steve. I don't know his last name, another gentleman, and what they told me was they had the deed pulled and it does show the sales price was \$2,850,000. Had the West Mifflin School District known that or the Borough or even the county, they would have went to raise these taxes six years ago or five years ago, which would have been 2015 or 2016, but nothing was done because the sale price, whether a mistake or done on purpose, who knows, was recorded 285,000. So you're not going to go ask for a hearing and have the taxes lowered.

First of all, they never should have been lowered from \$7.9 million to \$1.9 million. Who gets a 75 percent reduction in Allegheny County on their taxes? I have never seen another property reduced by 75 percent, commercial or residential. Thank you for your time, and I hope someone looks into this because it's a loss of revenue for Allegheny County, West Mifflin School District and the Borough of West Mifflin. Thank you.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Motion to adjourn.

MS. HALLAM: Motion.

MR. DEMARCO: Second.

PRESIDENT CATENA: Motion made, second. All those in favor signify by saying aye.

(Chorus of ayes)

PRESIDENT CATENA: Motion carries.

MEETING CONCLUDED 6:59 P.M.

CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify, as the stenographic reporter, that the foregoing proceedings were taken stenographically by me, and thereafter reduced to typewriting by me or under my direction; and that this transcript is a true and accurate record to the best of my ability.

Dated the 7th day of April, 2020

 _____

Jeremy Harris,

Court Reporter