



Testimony of Beth McConnell
On Behalf of the Philadelphia Association of Community Development Corporations
Asociación Puertorriqueños en Marcha
HACE
Habitat for Humanity Philadelphia
LISC Philadelphia
Mt. Vernon Manor CDC
New Kensington CDC
People’s Emergency Center CDC
Project HOME
Rebuilding Together Philadelphia

On Bill Nos. 180739, 180740, 180744
Before City Council Committee on Appropriations
September 26, 2018

Good morning and thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Beth McConnell, and I’m the Policy Director of the Philadelphia Association of Community Development Corporations. I’m testifying today on PACDC’s behalf, as well as of Asociación Puertorriqueños en Marcha, HACE, Habitat for Humanity Philadelphia, LISC Philadelphia, Mt. Vernon Manor CDC, New Kensington CDC, People’s Emergency Center CDC, Project HOME, Rebuilding Together Philadelphia. These groups wanted to be here today to testify but are very hard at work in our neighborhoods and could not attend.

We support the passage of Bill Nos. 180739, 180740, and 180744. This package of bills will transfer \$19 million in General Funds to the Division of Planning and Development to develop new affordable homes, repair or preserve existing affordable homes, and support down payment and closing cost assistance; will memorialize in ordinance an agreement between the Kenney Administration and City Council to transfer an additional \$53 million over the next four years; and will create a new sub-fund of the Housing Trust Fund to receive future payments.

We applaud Mayor Kenney and City Council for reaching this agreement and want to specifically acknowledge the leadership of Councilwoman Sanchez, Council President Clarke, and Councilman Squilla in sparking the policy debates here in Council that led to it.

As you know, PACDC and our members advocated strongly for language in the sub-fund ordinance to guarantee that at least half of the revenue go to support households under 30% Area Median Income (AMI). While we are disappointed that language was not included, we still support this package of bills. We also remain committed to advocating that as decisions are made about how the resources are spent, the lowest-income households are the priority. We can use some portion of the funds for moderate income households to help them preserve their homes or become homeowners. This work has value in all neighborhoods, but particularly in middle-neighborhoods, and rapidly gentrifying neighborhoods where moderate income residents are getting priced out. But the quality of life of our lowest-income households is severely harmed by lack of affordable homes, and they are desperate for help.

This \$73 million agreement is a significant investment in the affordable housing needs of Philadelphians. But with more than 100,000 households searching for safe, quality, affordable homes, we can't stop here. We applaud Council for pledging to find ways to boost that investment to a minimum of \$100 million over the five years, and we stand ready to work with you to make it happen. We also call on Council and the Kenney Administration to agree to a mechanism to make annual these annual appropriations permanent and dedicated, so they extend through FY24 and beyond.

Again, thank you City Council and Mayor Kenney for this significant step in solving Philadelphia's growing affordable housing crisis.

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