

**Testimony of Will Gonzalez, Executive Director of Ceiba,
on Bill Nos. 180739, 180740, and 180744
Philadelphia City Council Committee on Appropriations
Hon. Maria Quiñones Sánchez, Chair**

Buenos Dias - Good Morning.

My name is Will Gonzalez. I am the Executive Director of Ceiba. Ceiba is a coalition of Latino community-based organizations in Philadelphia.

Ceiba's mission is to promote the economic development and financial inclusion of Philadelphia's Latino community through collaborations and advocacy aimed at ensuring their access to quality housing.

Ceiba supports the passage of Bill Nos. 180739, 180740, and 180744.

Thank you Councilwoman Sanchez, Council President Clarke, and Councilman Squilla in leading the efforts in City Council over the last few years to address issues related to affordable housing and equitable development. We thank you for reaching a compromise with Mayor Kenney that resulted in the bills now before us and the promise to continue to tackle these issues. The Mayor will be issuing a Housing Action Plan soon. We hope that City Council becomes fully engaged in that effort to forge a holistic road map to equitable development for Philadelphia.

Any Housing Action Plan will need resources to successfully carry it out. We see these Bills as a good beginning, not the only source of resources and legislation to execute that plan. Accordingly, we respectfully request that Council continue to work hard to find ways to boost the Mayor's commitment to invest in the Housing Trust Sub Fund. This includes raising the investments outlined in the Bills before you to at least \$100 million over the next five years. You should also codify similar annual appropriations for beyond FY24.

Ensuring that we secure at least \$100 million over the next five years is important to address the needs of households at or below 30% Area Median Income (AMI). This is vital to the Latino community of Philadelphia as Hispanics have the highest rate of poverty in the City (37.9%) and the Hispanic community is expected to grow. However, we also recognized the benefits to our children of supporting middle income families and promoting mixed income communities. Ensuring that the commitment is at least \$100 million over the next five years will help to ensure that most of the resources are earmarked to address housing challenges for low income people. To further guarantee the outcome of helping low income families, we respectfully request that you find a way to get the Housing Trust Sub Fund to commit at least half of the new investment to support measures that meet the needs of households at or below 30% AMI.

We respect your work at arriving at a compromise and recognize that compromises are difficult to forge. Compromise is not a dirty word. It is one of the key ingredients used to make democracy work. We urge you to continue working hard on affordable housing issues. Although perfection is elusive when it comes to legislation, we know that the quest for excellence in its execution is possible.

Gracias for giving us the opportunity to testify today. Ceiba remains committed to working with you on equitable development issues.

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