



Testimony Regarding City Council Bill # 210917
Regarding Disclosure Requirements in Leasing of Commercial Property
Andrew Toy for PACDC
November 30th, 2021

Good day Chairperson Squilla and Members of City Council's Committee on Commerce and Economic Development. My name is Andy Toy and I am the Policy Director for the Philadelphia Association of Community Development Corporations (PACDC). I am writing on behalf of PACDC and our constituent CDC's in support of Bill Number 210917, a Bill that will require commercial leasing disclosures from the Lessor to the Lessee.

We know from our Members, many of whom work closely with small businesses and commercial corridors, that there have been times when tenants sign leases to rent spaces within buildings assuming they can operate their businesses there. Many of the businesses we see are very small with minimal understanding of zoning or other requirements for operating legally. They are just trying to make a living while pursuing their entrepreneurial dreams. In many neighborhoods they may be immigrants, women and people of color who cannot afford zoning attorneys or other advisors that larger businesses often have.

When businesses sign commercial leases they normally assume they will have a right to operate in the space they are leasing. But that is sometimes not the case and the landlord often retains the rents for months when the business may be stuck in the Zoning process and may even be denied a Variance to operate at the end, having lost their investment of rent for multiple months with nothing to show for it.

To eliminate this unnecessary hardship and wasted cost for some, and to help commercial tenants better understand their rights and what is or is not allowable, Bill # 210917 would be a good remedy. This requirement allows both the lessor and lessee to be better informed and to be on the same page as far as the Zoning for the property and what the Code allows.

We greatly appreciate Councilmember Parker's and City Council's leadership on this issue.

In support of Bill # 210917, thank you!
PACDC

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