

1 HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
2 HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

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3
IN RE: Public Hearing on Prison Escapes

4
HELD AT: City Hall
5 478 Broad Street
 Philadelphia, PA

6
7 In attendance:
8 THOMAS R. CALTAGIRONE, CHAIRMAN
 CHRISTOPHER SAINATO, BOARD MEMBER
9 JOHN R. EVANS, BOARD MEMBER
 MICHAEL P McGEEHAN, BOARD MEMBER
10 DANTE SANTONI, JR., BOARD MEMBER
 MARK LONGIETTI, BOARD MEMBER
11 DOM COSTA, BOARD MEMBER
 TIM SEIP, BOARD MEMBER
12 DAVID AXELROD, STAFF COUNSEL

13
14 HELD ON: Thursday, November 18, 2010

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16 REPORTED BY: Justin Davis, Professional
 Court Reporter

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1 (Whereupon, the hearing

2 commenced at 3:43 p.m.)

3 CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE: I would like to
4 open the hearing. I'm State Representative
5 Tom Caltagirone. I'm Chairman of the House
6 Judiciary Committee. I have a very good
7 friend, Michael McGeehan, he had an issue here
8 dealing with prison escapees and he had
9 requested that I come to Philadelphia to hold
10 a hearing to address the issue.

11 With that, I would like to turn the
12 hearing over after the members from my right
13 to left would introduce themselves for the
14 record, then I'll turn the hearing over to
15 Chairman McGeehan.

16 MR. AXELROD: Good afternoon. My name
17 is Dave Axelrod (ph). I'm staff counsel to
18 the Committee.

19 REPRESENTATIVE SAINATO: I'm
20 Representative Chris Sainato from Lawrence
21 County.

22 REPRESENTATIVE EVANS: Good
23 afternoon. I'm Representative John Evans. I
24 represent portions of even Erie and Crawford

1 counties.

2 REPRESENTATIVE MCGEEHAN: I'm Mike
3 McGeehan from Philadelphia County.

4 REPRESENTATIVE SANTONI: Dante Santoni
5 from Berks County.

6 REPRESENTATIVE LONGIETTI: Mark
7 Longietti from Mercer County.

8 REPRESENTATIVE COSTA: Representative
9 Dom Costa, Pittsburgh and Allegheny County.

10 REPRESENTATIVE MCGEEHAN: I want to
11 thank Chairman Thomas Caltagirone for agreeing
12 to this important hearing. As soon as I
13 informed the Chairman about the situation in
14 Philadelphia, he said, how can he help and
15 when. So I'm grateful to you, Mr. Chairman.

16 I know you are the busiest committee
17 in the House, and to rearrange your schedule,
18 I'm very grateful to you. I want to express
19 the gratitude of the people I represent for
20 accommodating our needs and our concerns.

21 I want to thank the members who have
22 attended as well. From Western Pennsylvania,
23 my dear friend John Evans who comes from
24 Erie. He's closer to Canada than he is to

1 Philadelphia. He's certainly logged a long
2 way to get here, but I'm grateful to the
3 members for being here today.

4 We're going to have an agenda shortly,
5 but I do want to recognize the great council
6 person Donna Reed Miller, who is Chairperson
7 of the Public Safety Commission here in the
8 City of Philadelphia.

9 And I want to begin the testimony by
10 introducing the Councilwoman and ask you to --
11 it's unusual for you to be on that side of the
12 table, Councilwoman. We're grateful to have
13 you here.

14 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Good afternoon.

15 REPRESENTATIVE MCGEEHAN: Good
16 Afternoon.

17 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Thank you for
18 inviting me to testify today. And as you did
19 state, I am Chair of Public Safety. As public
20 officials, we expect a baseline of competency
21 when a crisis occurs. We absolutely expect
22 that certain reasonable measures are met, that
23 law enforcement is notified, that the public
24 is notified and emergency systems are

1 activated and relevant public parties are made
2 aware of the facts.

3 When Kevin Turner decided he had
4 served enough time at CFCF and left, I don't
5 believe that none of those basic core
6 competencies were met. The confusion
7 surrounding this situation, the correction
8 staff was still looking for him inside the
9 prison the following day exposing a gapping
10 hole in the public notification process.

11 Our objective should not be to avoid
12 bad publicity, but should instead be to
13 provide the best level of public safety we can
14 to the residents of the surrounding
15 community. When you buy a house near a
16 school, you know there is going to be busses
17 and a substantial amount of traffic during
18 certain hours of the day.

19 When you buy a house near a
20 playground, you are well aware there will be
21 children playing throughout much of the day.
22 When you buy a house near a prison or near
23 five prisons, there is some uncertainties
24 built into that decision as well.

1 There is a possibility of an escape or
2 the possibility of some type of action that
3 can lead to the problem in your community.
4 You may agree and accept that dozens of van
5 loads of prisoners will, by necessity, travel
6 back and forth to your community to transport
7 prisoners to and from the criminal justice
8 center.

9 That transport system has remained
10 secure, but there are always an element of
11 chance built into each situation. This case
12 specifically clarifies why immediate community
13 notification has to be the first priority
14 because the criminal who escaped immediately
15 returned to crime.

16 He didn't try to flee the city to
17 Canada or South America to escape detection,
18 he simply rearmed himself and begin to rob and
19 evidently kill in the surrounding community,
20 but a popular business William Glatz had to
21 die to bring closure and return the community
22 to normalcy.

23 It's a separate tragedy that makes
24 this failure of our prison system so much more

1 disappointing. When systems fail and in this
2 case, a six-foot 208-pound man escaping
3 undetected is certainly a major failure.
4 There is an expectation that the community
5 will be given fair warning of an increased
6 danger.

7 We get storm watch and flood watch and
8 any other early warnings well in advance of
9 their approach and despite the fact that they
10 frequently may not even ever occur. The
11 neighborhood deserves the earliest warning
12 possible when a violent criminal takes the law
13 into his own hands and escapes.

14 I believe that the conduct of prison
15 officials in delaying the community
16 notification, regardless of their reason for
17 doing so, was a disservice to the surrounding
18 community. Prison officials have a
19 responsibility and an obligation to alert the
20 neighborhood and failed to do so in a timely
21 manner. That's my testimony.

22 REPRESENTATIVE MCGEEHAN: Are you
23 available for questions, Councilwoman?

24 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Yes.

1 REPRESENTATIVE MCGEEHAN: Thank you
2 very much, Councilwoman, for your testimony.
3 And there is some sentences here that
4 absolutely speak to the absolute sentiment of
5 the neighborhood involved in some of the
6 community groups today.

7 I want to just point out that there
8 are six correctional facilities there and now
9 they're reusing the Holmesburg prison, which
10 is a Civil War hero prison, now along State
11 Road.

12 Councilwoman, I know you understand
13 the immediate nature because I think it's
14 probably unique in the country in that this
15 volume of correction facilities planted smack
16 dab in the middle of a residential and
17 commercial neighborhood. It speaks to the
18 concerns that members of this Committee have.

19 There is a school, as you referenced,
20 less than four tenths of a mile from this
21 facility. My office is eight tenths of a mile
22 from this facility and I live less than a mile
23 from the facility, so you understand the
24 nature of neighborhood. And most of these

1 facilities, if not all of them, except for the
2 Holmesburg Prison, the homes were there before
3 these prisons were.

4 So this is a burden they weren't aware
5 of when they bought their home and has since
6 been hoisted upon them. So I think your point
7 is absolutely correct that the system owes a
8 greater obligation simply because of the
9 unique nature of the whole prison complex in
10 Philadelphia.

11 So we're grateful, Councilwoman, to
12 you for understanding the nature of the
13 problem in Holmesburg and for you providing
14 testimony today.

15 Are there members with other
16 questions? Thank you very much, Councilwoman.

17 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Thank you. You
18 have to always put yourself in other people's
19 shoes and certainly if I lived near a
20 facility, I just wanted to be notified if
21 anything is going on, so I can be alerted and
22 get prepared. So I think it's important.

23 REPRESENTATIVE MCGEEHAN: Thank you.
24 We're next to hear from Louis Giorla, he's the

1 Commissioner of the Philadelphia Prisons.

2 Commissioner, will you take a seat,
3 spell your name for the court reporter and
4 begin when you are comfortable.

5 COMMISSIONER GIORLA: My name is Louis
6 L-O-U-I-S, Giorla, G-I-O-R-L-A. Good
7 afternoon, Chairman Caltagirone,
8 Representative McGeehan, members of the
9 Pennsylvania House Judiciary Committee. As I
10 stated, I'm the prison Commissioner Louis
11 Giorla in Philadelphia. I would like to thank
12 you for the opportunity and to all of the
13 testimony on the subject prison escapes.

14 The Philadelphia Prison System is the
15 county jail for the City and County of
16 Philadelphia, comprised of six major and four
17 satellite housing and program facilities. The
18 Philadelphia prisons admitted approximately
19 35,000 inmates and had an average daily
20 population of 8,364 inmates in the fiscal year
21 ending June 30, 2010.

22 The Department is served by 2,300
23 part-time civil service employees as well as
24 along with several hundred contract employees

1 in the fields of custody, food service, social
2 services, maintenance, physical and behavioral
3 health care.

4 During the last year, Philadelphia
5 prisons have had three escapes from facilities
6 under our supervision. It first occurred
7 November 26, 2009 first occurred on November
8 26, 2009, from the Curran-Fromhold
9 Correctional Facility in Philadelphia.

10 The second occurred October 12, 2010,
11 also from Curran-Fromhold. The third happened
12 October 17, 2010 from 2010 from Hoffman Hall,
13 a treatment facility contracted to the
14 prisons, also located in Philadelphia. Each
15 of these escapes were discovered during
16 scheduled counts of the inmate population
17 taken several times a day.

18 None involved firearms, weapons or
19 violent means and did not result in the taking
20 of hostages. In the most recent case at
21 Hoffman Hall, evidence indicates the escapee
22 may have had the assistance of a staff
23 accomplice. In each instance, one male
24 escaped custody.

1 To date, one escapee has been
2 apprehended, the second was killed during the
3 commission of a robbery while at large and the
4 third has not been apprehended. Two of the
5 inmates escaped via visiting areas by hiding
6 among members of the public. The third was by
7 way of a food service loading dock adjacent to
8 the facility kitchen.

9 Departmental investigations disclosed
10 that in each instance procedures were in place
11 to prevent such events. The escapees, in
12 fact, either distracted on duty staff or took
13 advantage of staff members who failed to
14 follow established policy.

15 The first occurred on Thanksgiving
16 Day, 2009. On November 26, sometime between
17 4:00 and 6:30 p.m. Oscar Alvarado walked out
18 of the family visiting area at CFCF,
19 undetected. His absence was discovered at
20 approximately 7:00 p.m. during a routine
21 evening head count.

22 After a thorough search of CFCF and
23 the surrounding grounds, police were notified
24 of the escape at about 9:30 p.m. Alvarado was

1 recaptured by Philadelphia Police on December
2 15, 2010 and returned to CFCF. He was
3 subsequently convicted of robbery and
4 sentenced to 8 to 20 years in prisons.

5 He has since been transferred to the
6 state correctional system. The prison's
7 investigation led to disciplinary charges for
8 12 correctional officers who, in one way or
9 another, failed in their duty on the day of
10 Alvarado's escape. One was dismissed, one was
11 exonerated, 10 officers were issued
12 suspensions without pay.

13 The second case involved inmate Kevin
14 Turner who escaped from the Curran-Fromhold
15 Correctional Facility between 3:00 and
16 8:00 a.m. on Tuesday, October 12, 2010.
17 Turner, an inmate kitchen worker was last
18 accounted for at 3:00 a.m. That was during
19 the regularly scheduled evening count.

20 When the scheduled 7:00 a.m. count
21 failed to clear, an armband count was
22 conducted to confirm the identity of each
23 inmate in the facility. Kevin Turner was
24 confirmed missing from the facility and

1 Philadelphia Police were notified at
2 approximately 11:00 a.m.

3 Staff searched the kitchen area, which
4 takes up an acre of the facility, to determine
5 if Turner was hiding in the kitchen or
6 anywhere else around the facility. As a
7 result, As a result of our departmental
8 investigation into the Turner escape, several
9 correctional staff are presently facing
10 administrative disciplinary charges; two
11 contracted employees have been dismissed. The
12 staff disciplinary process is ongoing at this
13 time.

14 I do want to take the opportunity to
15 say that like everyone in our Department, like
16 everyone in the city, I'm acutely aware that
17 Philadelphia jeweler, William Glatz, died in
18 the course of a shootout with Kevin Turner
19 some nine days later.

20 Turner, who was killed in the robbery
21 attempt was accompanied by a second assailant
22 has since been apprehended. As a longtime
23 resident of Northeast Philadelphia and a sworn
24 officer of 28 years, my heart goes out to the

1 Glatz family and to the many residents who
2 mourn his passing.

3 The third case involved Khatif Mays, a
4 35-year-old inmate held at Hoffman Hall, a
5 contracted facility managed by Community
6 Education Centers, Incorporated. Mays was
7 being held pretrial on a drug charge.

8 He left Hoffman Hall after a visit by
9 two civilians on October 17, 2010, and has not
10 been apprehended. Five employees of that
11 contract facility were dismissed by the
12 contract agency after an internal
13 investigation.

14 In each of these cases, once the
15 escape was confirmed, Philadelphia Police were
16 notified and provided with a description and
17 all information gathered within the Prison.
18 Reports of the escapes were confirmed to all
19 inquiring media outlets.

20 in the wake of the Kevin Turner
21 escape, my office scheduled meetings with the
22 neighborhood civic associations that border
23 our complex to discuss the escape and the
24 issue of community notification.

1 I have met with members of the Tacony
2 Civic Association and the Holmesburg Civic
3 Association, Holmesburg being the nearest
4 neighbor to the PPS. We have schedule
5 appearances at the next meetings of the
6 Mayfair, East Torresdale and Upper Holmesburg
7 Civic Associations as well.

8 I deeply appreciate their concern for
9 themselves and their families. I have pledged
10 to work with them to find the best, the most
11 immediate and the most convenient community
12 notification system to use in the event of a
13 similar incident in the future or any other
14 emergency on the prison campus.

15 This concludes my testimony and I'd be
16 pleased to answer any questions you may have.

17 REPRESENTATIVE MCGEEHAN. Thank you
18 very much Commissioner for being here and
19 providing your testimony to the members of the
20 Committee.

21 What kind of prisoners are held at
22 that facility? You are talking about a daily
23 count of 8,000 prisoners.

24 What are the charges?

1 COMMISSIONER GIORLA: There are a
2 combination of detainees and sentenced
3 prisoners within our custody. Detainees whose
4 charges may range anywhere from retail theft
5 or disturbing the peace to murder or multiple
6 murder charges. They run a range of custody
7 levels and offense levels, male and female,
8 adult and juvenile.

9 REPRESENTATIVE MCGEEHAN: Has the
10 population gone up? What is the trend line
11 for those facilities?

12 COMMISSIONER GIORLA: The trend line
13 probably for the last 20 years, with the
14 exception of the last year-and-a-half, has
15 been a four-and-a-half percent increase per
16 year. During the last year, we've seen it at
17 a significant reduction and I don't know the
18 actual percentage, but in February 2009, we
19 had a population of 9,827. Today, we have
20 7,852 inmates.

21 REPRESENTATIVE MCGEEHAN: That speaks
22 to my concern that this incredible volume of
23 prisoners who are being transported through a
24 very small window in the communities of

1 Holmesburg they are being really inundated and
2 tremendously burdened by this daily traffic.

3 I think, and you and I have had a
4 frank discussion on the phone, and I
5 appreciate your willingness to be open with me
6 about that, and I want to place that on the
7 record. My concern is for the people who live
8 in that immediate community. You are not
9 doing enough.

10 I spoke with a charter school who is
11 less than four tenths of a mile from your
12 facility. A natural gateway for anyone who
13 escapes from any of those facilities is up
14 Broad Street, as you know, or along the State
15 Road corridor. There is a recreation facility
16 just catty-corner to that public school and
17 there is a densely populated row house
18 community in Holmesburg in Tacony and in Upper
19 Holmesburg that is within a mile of your
20 facility.

21 We're talking about 9,000 violent
22 dangerous criminals who are housed right on
23 top of those people and it took eight hours,
24 between 3:00 and 8:00 a.m.; is that correct,

1 that you notified police at 11 o'clock in the
2 morning, if I recall your testimony?

3 COMMISSIONER GIORLA: Sir, we after
4 investigating we determined that he escaped
5 somewhere between 3:00 and 8:00 a.m. by hiding
6 in a car in a loading dock. We had to review
7 the video to know what. We had to conduct a
8 canvas of the facility inmate by inmate, photo
9 by photo to determine who actually was
10 missing.

11 There were no hard breeches in the
12 facility there were no broken windows, tunnels
13 there was no alarms. In order for us to
14 conclude who was missing, we had to go through
15 those steps. I want to correct the impression
16 that anyone is sitting around or indecisive
17 about when to notify the Philadelphia Police.

18 As soon as we had information that
19 this individual was missing, we gathered the
20 phone records, visiting records, address
21 records, information from his cell and we
22 turned it over to the Philadelphia Police.

23 REPRESENTATIVE MCGEEHAN: I wasn't
24 suggesting, Commissioner, that you were

1 somehow laxly notifying the Philadelphia
2 Police. What is missing in all of this
3 notification is the public. We know that you
4 follow the state guidelines and we have,
5 through the Philadelphia Emergency Management
6 Agency, a way to notify the public.

7 But you have to understand that not
8 everyone has a cell phone, and that system,
9 obviously, is opt-in system where people have
10 to take it upon themselves in order to
11 register. I'm going to tell you, I
12 represented that community for 20 years. I
13 grew up in the shadow of those prisons my
14 whole life.

15 I wasn't aware there was a PA ready
16 system. No one ever told me that I could
17 opt-in no one told, I would imagine, any of
18 the people who live within a very short
19 walking distance from these facilities.

20 My point is that the public didn't
21 know that a prisoner escaped until he shot and
22 killed a jeweler. No one knew about that. My
23 point is what do we do now. We've had three
24 escapes in the last year. How do we warn and

1 forearm the people that live in the community
2 that is being unduly burdened by this
3 incredible amount of prisoner traffic through
4 their neighborhoods every single day?

5 COMMISSIONER GIORLA: I would first
6 like to say that in response to the incident
7 there were three media outlets that inquired
8 within minutes of our notification of the
9 escape. I believe it was KYW, the Inquirer and
10 another media outlet.

11 We confirmed that there had been an
12 escape. We gave description information, we
13 gave identity information. In addition to
14 that, we notified the police as soon as we
15 determined there was an escape we had no
16 specific information on his planning, how
17 complicated, what his intentions are and where
18 he was about to go.

19 It was reported that evening on the
20 news outlets in Philadelphia. It was reported
21 the next day in the newspapers in
22 Philadelphia. The public was notified.

23 REPRESENTATIVE MCGEEHAN: With all do
24 respect, people were going about their daily

1 lives and maybe not tuning into the
2 television or waiting for the next day for the
3 newspaper to come out. We have an elderly
4 population, we have people going about their
5 everyday business.

6 As soon as you found out that prisoner
7 escaped, that community, with all do respect
8 to your notification system, is going about
9 their daily business. That prisoner could be
10 standing in front of my home within five
11 minutes of an escape.

12 I can't wait for the 6 o'clock news or
13 the 9 o'clock news or the 10 o'clock news when
14 I get home or the next day. We need an
15 immediate notification system in the
16 community. They are people that are doing
17 their business, they are shopping, they're
18 going to school, they are picking up their
19 children, they are playing sports at their
20 athletic fields.

21 That's just not good enough. That's
22 not warning them of the immediate and imminent
23 danger they all face. And it's true,
24 Commissioner, based on the tragic history in

1 this case that there was an immediate danger.
2 Fortunately it didn't happen in Holmesburg,
3 unfortunately it happened on Rising Sun
4 Avenue.

5 People need to be warned. I don't
6 know what offences this criminal was being
7 held incarcerated for. I didn't know how
8 dangerous he was, I didn't know what he looked
9 like. That kind of system needs to be in
10 place. Your system has an immediate
11 obligation and a higher obligation than any
12 prison system in this state or in this
13 country, simply because of the very nature in
14 which your facilities are situated.

15 I don't think -- and we've done some
16 research. I don't think there is a prison
17 system in America that is so densely
18 concentrated among and amidst a residential
19 neighborhood. So I think it's incumbent upon
20 you, Commissioner, to do more. It's fine that
21 you are meeting with the civic associations
22 and that's laudable, but that's simply not
23 enough.

24 The public relations part of it is

1 fine. You need to do more. You need to do a
2 public safety initiative and that is warn the
3 public, warn them immediately, and we need to
4 work together to find out the best way to do
5 that.

6 COMMISSIONER GIORLA: Mr. McGeehan, my
7 office and my staff would be glad to work with
8 you in any shape or form. We would be glad to
9 meet with you in not only this case, but in
10 any other cases. When we met the Holmesburg
11 Civic Association, you may know as a resident
12 of the community, at one time the prisons had
13 an emergency siren that was located at the
14 Holmesburg Prison that was sounded.

15 There was community complaints that
16 had that system shut down. We're having that
17 system repaired at the request of the
18 Holmesburg Civic Association, and we'll begin
19 to test it, as we did in the past, which had
20 it shut down. And we will begin to test it
21 again. Unfortunately, that my create some
22 apprehension in the community, but it's
23 something we have to do.

24 REPRESENTATIVE MCGEEHAN: I'd rather

1 be nervous than to be ill informed. I
2 remember the siren. The Curran-Fromhold
3 Facility, as a young child, I remember that
4 day, I remember the sirens. I grew up a mile
5 from the Holmesburg Prison, but when the
6 warden and the officer were killed at that
7 facility.

8 I remember it clear as day warning the
9 public, warning the citizens in that immediate
10 area. We need to not only do a public alert
11 system an immediate public alert system. We
12 also need to investigate whether the cable
13 companies can communicate and cooperate with
14 us.

15 As Councilwoman Miller talked about,
16 we have storm warnings or tornado watches,
17 those type of things, that have a crawler
18 across the bottom of the screen. I think
19 that's something that we should work together
20 on to deal with, at least, our cable franchise
21 and services in the northeast part of the
22 city.

23 We also need to do maybe an emergency
24 response as we all recall from the early days

1 of television, the emergency broadcast system
2 and a siren. It's something that I hope we
3 can work together as individuals and as a
4 Committee to find out what other correctional
5 facilities are doing around the state.

6 My point to you, Commissioner, and I
7 know you are a resident of that community and
8 I know you understand the unique nature of
9 where all of those facilities are at. It's
10 unique not just in this state, but around the
11 country. You are under a greater obligation
12 to satisfy the safety concerns of the people
13 who are paying for the system and who live by
14 that system.

15 COMMISSIONER GIORLA: Yes, sir. And,
16 as you stated, I am a resident of that
17 community. I live about 1.2 miles away from
18 our correctional facility. I lived there for
19 28 of the last 30 years. I have family in
20 that area. And the school that you described,
21 I do have relatives in the school.

22 I do have a concern and I do have an
23 interest. I understand and I know we need to
24 do more. We should do more. And there are

1 capabilities now, some of which existed in the
2 past and some of which didn't exist in the
3 past that we need to use to notify the
4 community.

5 REPRESENTATIVE McGEEHAN: I'll end,
6 Commissioner, and open it to any other
7 members. I thank the committee for their
8 indulgence. We're never going to stop prison
9 escapes. Since the days of Dillinger you are
10 going to have it is the nature of correctional
11 facilities.

12 My concern, obviously, is one, yes,
13 are you doing enough to keep prisoners
14 contained, but more importantly is that if the
15 unanticipated does happen that people
16 forewarned and forearmed.

17 COMMISSIONER GIORLA: Will do.

18 REPRESENTATIVE McGEEHAN: I'll open it
19 up to any other members that have -- yes,
20 Representative Costa.

21 REPRESENTATIVE COSTA: Thank you,
22 chairman. Commissioner, I too am a police
23 officer for 28 years, and I commend you for
24 your service then and now. I guess my

1 question is after the discovery of the escape
2 and the reasoning following your follow-up
3 investigation, you said correction officers
4 were disciplined and so on, some terminated.

5 Have you taken any steps to train
6 these officers, and if you have, I'm not
7 asking what type of training, but I'm asking
8 do you have the funding to get them trained?
9 Because, as we well know, I was a command
10 staff officer for 12 years in the Bureau of
11 Police in Pittsburgh and we can't anticipate
12 everything that can happen.

13 Sometimes we try to be as proactive as
14 we can, but sometimes we have to be reactive.
15 But being reactive is also correcting the
16 situation. And it's easy so say, retrain, do
17 this, but if you have no funding to do that,
18 that's my concern. If that's a problem, maybe
19 you can let us know.

20 COMMISSIONER GIORLA: Representative
21 Costa, you know, having been a veteran of law
22 enforcement, you never have enough money to do
23 the things you want to do. We do have a
24 certified training academy that is inspected

1 and certified by the state annually.

2 We would like to explore greater
3 technology. We're looking at means to secure
4 our parameters. At this point, we're
5 identifying an iris identification system that
6 we feel may help us secure our parameters. On
7 Monday we're looking at a device that detects
8 heartbeats in vehicles and containers, so that
9 we can determine whether or not that
10 technology is useful.

11 There are some things, you know, as
12 well as I do, in law enforcement that can
13 either be detected by technology, but if
14 someone doesn't use the technology properly or
15 they are basically eye balling it -- there is
16 vigilance and observation that has to take
17 place for that to happen.

18 That's what caused calls the
19 discipline in these cases. Officers -- there
20 are procedures in prisons to count, identify,
21 authorize and determine the identity of the
22 people passing through our checkpoints. And
23 some cases these were adhered to and some
24 cases they weren't.

1 We conduct limited roll call trainings
2 in-service training for 40 hours for our
3 staff. When something like this happens, we
4 review our policies. If our policy needs to
5 be changed, we revamp it. In this case, it
6 wasn't necessary, but we did hold policy
7 training for the involved officers just to go
8 back and retrench.

9 There is a human factor involved in
10 this. There is fatigue, there is sometimes
11 distractions. In one of these cases, some
12 inmates created a diversion in the visiting
13 room that allowed the inmate to disrobe and
14 take off the jump suit and get into civilian
15 clothes.

16 In another case, an officer
17 miscounted. He intentionally disregarded our
18 policy and miscounted that allowed the inmate
19 to hide in an area. It's unfortunate. It's
20 something that we constantly try to minimize.
21 As the Representative stated, as long as there
22 are prisoners, they'll be escapes, but we
23 don't want to have them.

24 And we'll do everything we can to

1 avoid and prevent. We'll work with anybody we
2 need to work with. We'll take whatever steps
3 we need to protect the community because
4 basically that's our job, keep the doors
5 locked and keep people in.

6 Nothing can happen, nobody can leave
7 until they're properly adjudicated. We
8 understand that and we will look forward to
9 work with you.

10 REPRESENTATIVE COSTA: Maybe we ought
11 to look at something when we put these pieces
12 together that we priorities funding for
13 prisons in the congested areas like this
14 because they need it more than the others one
15 do. Chairman, thank you very much. And,
16 Commissioner, I commend you and thank you.

17 REPRESENTATIVE MCGEEHAN:
18 Representative Evans.

19 REPRESENTATIVE EVANS: Thank you,
20 Representative McGeehan. I commend you for
21 bringing this issue to light and holding this
22 issue today. And my good friend Chairman
23 Caltagirone I want to commend you for brining
24 this issue forward as well.

1 This is something that is not unique
2 to Philadelphia. I can tell you that three
3 years ago in our district, I represent SCI
4 Albion, three years ago, Thanksgiving weekend,
5 as a matter of fact, we had an escape from a
6 kitchen, a very similar type of scenario.
7 That inmate was on the lose for close to six
8 months, I believe, before he was recaptured in
9 California.

10 We have many issues in a residential
11 community. The prison is located very close
12 to a small municipality. Because it was a
13 weekend, Thanksgiving weekend, word simply did
14 not get out. When you talk about remedies to
15 this, there are many. You talked about
16 potentially re-installing sirens, notifying
17 the media, opt-in systems where people can get
18 a text message or a phone call or E-mail or
19 website notification.

20 Frankly, I think it has to be all of
21 the above. Commissioner, in your testimony,
22 one thing that did trouble me somewhat in your
23 testimony you mentioned that reports of the
24 escape were confirmed to all inquiring media

1 outlets.

2 Did your department do anything to
3 provide information to the media before they
4 contacted you?

5 COMMISSIONER GIORLA: When we notified
6 the police, it was approximately 11:30 p.m.
7 We didn't have a chance to reach out to the
8 media, they reached out to us. About 11:44 we
9 got the inquiries from the media. We didn't
10 have a chance to issue a press release, one
11 was being prepared.

12 REPRESENTATIVE EVANS: This is
13 something, I think, that, as you examine your
14 protocols -- obviously, this is a very rare
15 occurrence, but it's something that can be set
16 up very easily these days. There is
17 technology that have those lists of people
18 that you need to get the message to.

19 You can have a template in order that
20 can be plugged in with very simple
21 instructions and then hit the key and it's
22 out. Again, that's not the only answer, but
23 this is a very tough situation. And even when
24 the media is involved they don't have a

1 newscast on Sunday morning.

2 If a prisoner escapes on a holiday
3 weekend at 5:00 in the morning, there is going
4 to be a time period where people are not
5 aware, so I would encourage maybe an
6 educational program. As Representative
7 McGeehan mentioned, some type of an outreach
8 to let people know that this opt-in does
9 exist.

10 We are fortunate in this community
11 that it does because many communities don't
12 have that type of a resource. It's something
13 that can be done at very low cost, but people
14 at least know that they can get their
15 notification. So many folks have the cell
16 phone and have the ability.

17 Once they're informed, they can tell
18 their neighbor as well. That type of word of
19 mouth with the social networking is a critical
20 component to getting the message out in the
21 event of emergencies.

22 I just wondered if you care to comment
23 on possible changes to your protocol?

24 COMMISSIONER GIORLA: We're working

1 with -- we have an automated victim
2 notification system an opt-in victim
3 notification system that we subscribe to.
4 We're not connected with the Twitter or
5 facebook. We don't have sites on that.

6 Our public notification has been media
7 contact so far in the past. The first case I
8 mentioned we head a press conference in our
9 facility in order to get the message out
10 simply because we hadn't had a widespread
11 inquiry.

12 In the second case, we had media outlets
13 supplied to us. Quite frankly, we're all
14 working with our Office of Emergency
15 Management who, I think you'll hear from
16 shortly on the ready certified PA system.

17 We know what Mr. McGeehan said that
18 the opt-in or registry system isn't totally
19 sufficient, it doesn't reach all of the people
20 that need to be reached. So some type of
21 involuntary notification system will have to
22 be instituted.

23 In the past, we somewhat relied on the
24 local authorities, public authorities. We are

1 limited in our authority to pursue escaped
2 individuals unless we have a clear line of
3 sight or we have a hot trail to go and pursue
4 the individuals in the community. We will
5 take on the responsibility and we'll institute
6 the changes we need to correct this.

7 REPRESENTATIVE EVANS: Thank you.

8 REPRESENTATIVE MCGEEHAN: That you.

9 Mr. Chairman, if I may just follow up. Are
10 you doing this in-house or are you doing this
11 in coordination with the Emergency Management?

12 COMMISSIONER GIORLA: We're doing
13 both. Our policy --

14 REPRESENTATIVE MCGEEHAN: What are you
15 doing, then we can talk to Emergency
16 Management people.

17 COMMISSIONER GIORLA: Our policy is to
18 contact the local counties in Pennsylvania and
19 sample their community notification systems.
20 As Representative Evans said and you said,
21 this is a densely populated areas. Most of
22 the other counties in Pennsylvania don't have
23 facilities in densely populated areas. They
24 don't have a community notification system.

1 We don't have a template, at this
2 point, other than the emergency -- we're
3 working with the Emergency Management to
4 become a member of the ARSAN (ph) System. We
5 registered as a member of the ARSAN System to
6 send messages to registrants. We don't have
7 any registrants as yet because we just signed
8 on to this system.

9 In the event that something happened
10 today, we would assemble the media and put the
11 message out any way we could we would dispatch
12 all of the transportation in the Correctional
13 Emergency Response Team to notify in various
14 sites in the school whether it be the school,
15 the supermarket or -- a radius around the
16 surrounding area until we get something better
17 in place.

18 And the siren that you mentioned has
19 been diagnosed. It's in disrepair. It's
20 solar powered and it's out loaded. We have to
21 acquire another one, bring the company in to
22 fix. That's already been ordered, but we
23 don't have that. We plan on testing it on a
24 weekly basis as we did in the past.

1 REPRESENTATIVE MCGEEHAN: I would
2 imagine there are representatives from the
3 Upper Holmesburg Civic Associations here as
4 well.

5 Is there a date certain or can you
6 give us a timeline of when that will be
7 operational?

8 COMMISSIONER GIORLA: I can't give you
9 a date certain on the siren because the
10 company hasn't come out and evaluated the
11 equipment yet. We made the request and they
12 haven't been there. Our own maintenance
13 individuals have determined that the power
14 source to the site is inadequate, it's not
15 working.

16 The batteries in the solar panel that
17 powers the device are no longer useable. They
18 have to be replaced, so that's why we had to
19 call in a private vendor. We don't have that
20 equipment on hand. We don't have the
21 individuals who are qualified to work on it.

22 REPRESENTATIVE MCGEEHAN: I hope that
23 once it's done, Commissioner, that you will
24 inform the members of this Committee and

1 Chairman Caltagirone, so he's able to
2 disseminate that to communities throughout the
3 Commonwealth

4 COMMISSIONER GIORLA: The information
5 I gave when I appeared at the Holmesburg Civic
6 Association last week, and I'm appearing at
7 the Upper Holmesburg Civic Association this
8 evening, will be that when we have it in
9 operation and we are trying to do that as soon
10 as possible.

11 But not only will we notify, but we'll
12 demonstrate it during their meetings, so we
13 can show them what they expect to hear and how
14 they can expect the notification.

15 COMMISSIONER GIORLA: Thank you,
16 Commissioner. Also just to reiterate the
17 point that I'm certainly an old timer. I'm
18 not on facebook and those other media outlets,
19 but that is certainly is an excellent,
20 excellent suggestion.

21 The world around me is on facebook,
22 but that's a way in which -- we need to have
23 the prison systems in all cities go into the
24 21st century because, obviously, this is the

1 way young people and the residents of society
2 are communicating.

3 So I would hope that your department
4 would work with Emergency Management to have
5 an absolute saturation notification. That you
6 for your testimony. I'm going also to also
7 recognize the presence of Representative
8 Seip. Thank you for being here today.

9 We're going to next hear from Stanley
10 Cywinski. He's the president of the Upper
11 Holmesburg Civic Association. Just spell your
12 name for court reporter.

13 MR. CYWINSKI: Good afternoon the last
14 name is spelled C-Y-W-I-N-S-K-I. First off, I
15 would like to thank the Committee for allowing
16 the Upper Holmesburg Civic Association to
17 provide this brief testimony. Believe it is of
18 paramount importance that local communities
19 like ours have an opportunity to weigh in on
20 current issues as well as future strategies
21 that may effect our areas.

22 I would also like to thank the prison
23 commissioner for making himself and his staff
24 available to our community as mentioned

1 several times today. Commissioner Giorla has
2 been kind enough to attend several of our
3 community meetings in the past and, in fact,
4 he will be addressing our community this
5 evening.

6 Over the years, like most other larger
7 metropolitan environments, we have seen
8 minimal change in our core infrastructures.
9 The Holmesburg prison of yesteryear is still
10 in Holmesburg, it just occupies a larger
11 footprint and houses more inmates than ever
12 before.

13 It has new brick and mortar, yet
14 escapes and violent crime associated with
15 inmates continue. Years ago, our local
16 communities had an audible notification system
17 when an issue occurred. Today, we have
18 silence instead of downsizing a prison
19 population that has been hosted by Upper
20 Holmesburg for years, city officials now want
21 to expand it and reopen the original
22 Holmesburg Prison on Torresdale Avenue.

23 I suggest it is time for change.
24 Mixing a heavy prison population in a largely

1 residential community without all the required
2 tools is a recipe for disaster. Officials
3 need to start planning the next phase of our
4 prison strategies including downsizing the
5 geographic demands on Upper Holmesburg,
6 dynamics associated with community growth and
7 prison management must be understood and
8 collectively recognized.

9 Technologies and funding to support
10 those technologies must be incorporated into
11 our solutions whenever possible. Bottom line,
12 the same old same old is not going so get us
13 to where we need to be. Thank you for
14 allowing me to testify.

15 REPRESENTATIVE McGEEHAN: Thank you
16 Stan for your strong testimony. Thank you for
17 being an advocate for years without pay and
18 many times without thanks. I want to be the
19 first to thank you for being here today to
20 take time out of what is your normal working
21 day to stand up and speak on behalf of the
22 community that you so proudly have spoken for
23 the many, many years since I've known you.

24 The commissioner had referenced the

1 annoyance and the nervousness caused by the
2 alarm. My point was I'd rather be nervous
3 than caught unawares.

4 MR. CYWINSKI: Agreed. We talked
5 about this a little bit. Unfortunately, the
6 old Holmesburg Prison that actually housed
7 that local system was in Upper Holmesburg and
8 not Holmesburg, so I'm not sure why Holmesburg
9 was speaking for our community.

10 Just to clarify, we would like to have
11 that local system reactivated. We feel it is
12 a benefit to us. I'm sure it's going to annoy
13 some neighbors, but the annoyance I think, is
14 far outweighed by the benefits of these
15 notification systems.

16 REPRESENTATIVE MCGEEHAN: Thank you.
17 Are there questions from the Committee
18 members? Stan, thank you very much. Good
19 luck tonight and I'm interested to hear the
20 results of tonight's meeting.

21 MR. CYWINSKI: All right, we'll talk.

22 REPRESENTATIVE MCGEEHAN: Thank you.
23 Our next testifier is Samantha Phillips, who
24 is the assistant managing director of the

1 Philadelphia Office of Emergency Management.

2 Good afternoon. Please special name
3 for the court reporter.

4 MS. PHILLIPS: Sure. Samantha,
5 S-A-M-A-N-T-H-A, Phillips, P-H-I-L-L-I-P-S.
6 Good afternoon I'm Samantha Phillips,
7 assistant managing director of the City of
8 Philadelphia, Office of Emergency Management.

9 I want to thank Chairman Caltagirone and the
10 members of the Pennsylvania House Judiciary
11 Committee for providing an opportunity to
12 discuss Philadelphia ReadyNotifyPA.

13 I have been asked to provide an
14 overview of this community alerting system and
15 describe how this system is currently being
16 used within the City of Philadelphia.

17 Philadelphia ReadyNotifyPA is an
18 Internet-based emergency communication system
19 that is used by government and select partners
20 to send emergency alerts, notifications and
21 updates to cell phones, pagers, BlackBerry
22 devices, personal digital assistants, or other
23 E-mail enabled devices.

24 Philadelphia ReadyNotifyPA is a system

1 that is free to the general public, however,
2 individual users are required to subscribe in
3 order to receive emergency alerts,
4 notifications and updates. Registration for
5 the system can be performed on line at
6 www.readynotifiedpa.org or directly through a
7 mobile device.

8 The ReadyNotifyPA system is funded by
9 the Southeastern Pennsylvania Regional Task
10 Force using the United States Department of
11 Homeland Security grant funds. The
12 ReadyNotifyPA system was launched in April
13 2008 and is rapidly expanding its subscriber
14 base. Currently there are approximately
15 10,327 enrolled users within Philadelphia.

16 The system presently covers the five
17 counties in Southeastern Pennsylvania: Bucks,
18 Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and
19 Philadelphia. Each respective county is
20 responsible for managing the alerts,
21 notifications, and updates sent within that
22 county.

23 in the event of a large scale emergency
24 within the City of Philadelphia, Philadelphia

1 ReadyNotifyPA can be used to send emergency
2 messages to all subscribers within the City
3 with important instructions and updates as a
4 situation unfolds.

5 The Philadelphia Office of Emergency
6 Management is the lead in sending citywide
7 text alert emergency messages to all
8 subscribers. The general criteria for sending
9 citywide emergency messages to all subscribers
10 i n the system are:

11 First, An emergency or event has the
12 potential to cause a significant threat to
13 life, health, or property, such as when the
14 Mayor declares an emergency or an evacuation
15 or shelter-in-place order is issued.

16 Secondly, a weather event that has the
17 immediate potential to cause injury or death,
18 such as when a tornado watch or warning is
19 issued by the National Weather Service or snow
20 emergency declarations by the City of
21 Philadelphia.

22 Thirdly, An emergency or event will cause
23 major disruptions of traffic or transit in a
24 large and/or densely populated area of the

1 City, such as in Center City or University
2 City.

3 Fourth, A drill or other realistic
4 simulation of an emergency or other major
5 incident has the potential to create alarm or
6 confusion amongst members of the public.

7 Lastly, Other events as determined by
8 the Office of Emergency Management, Deputy
9 Mayor for Public Safety, managing director or
10 mayor.

11 While the primary purposes of Philadelphia
12 ReadyNotifyPA is to provide citywide emergency
13 information during large scale emergencies,
14 the system includes several opt-in groups that
15 offer specialized information that may be of
16 interest to certain subscribers.

17 Opt-in groups provide increased
18 flexibility in the system and prevent users
19 from being oversaturated with information that
20 they may not find relevant. The opt-in groups
21 that currently exist are as follows:

22 Weather alerts with approximately
23 3,000 subscribers. Traffic alerts with
24 approximately 2,900 subscribers. Health

1 alerts with approximately 3,500 subscribers.
2 Police alerts with approximately 1,800
3 subscribers. Sunoco Refinery Alerts with
4 approximately 400 subscribers. And SEPTA
5 Alerts with approximately 1,000 subscribers.

6 Philadelphia ReadyNotifyPA allows for
7 virtually an unlimited number of groups to be
8 created for a variety of notification types.
9 Any city agency or select partner that may
10 need to communicate vital public safety
11 information can make a request to the
12 Philadelphia Office of Emergency Management to
13 add groups to the Philadelphia ReadyNotifyPA
14 system to meet their individual notification
15 needs.

16 Those requesting organizations manage
17 the notifications, including the processes and
18 procedures that dictate when emergency alerts,
19 notifications and updates are sent, as well as
20 the content of the messaging.

21 For example, SEPTA has the authority
22 to independently send service alerts, at their
23 discretion, using their own internal
24 procedures to the subscribers that have opted

1 into that user group.

2 At the present time the Philadelphia
3 Office of Emergency Management is work
4 Commissioner Giorla and the Philadelphia
5 Prisons System to determine the feasibility of
6 utilizing the Philadelphia ReadyNotifyPA
7 system for emergency notifications.

8 If decided that this is the
9 appropriate method for community notification,
10 an additional group will be created for those
11 interested in receiving notifications from the
12 Philadelphia Prisons System.

13 The city is always looking to expand its
14 capability in the area of public warning and
15 welcomes the opportunity to discuss options
16 going forward. I hope this information is
17 useful in your examination of the matter at
18 hand. Once again thank you for the
19 opportunity to testify. I welcome any
20 questions that you may have.

21 REPRESENTATIVE McGEEHAN: Thank you
22 very much, Ms. Phillips. Obviously, this is
23 not -- we're a city of a million-and-a-half
24 people and you just enunciated a couple

1 thousand people who have been notified of some
2 emergency.

3 MS. PHILLIPS: 10,000, yes.

4 REPRESENTATIVE MCGEEHAN: On the face
5 of it, it's ridiculous.

6 MS. PHILLIPS: It's an opt-in system.

7 REPRESENTATIVE MCGEEHAN: On the face
8 of it, it's ridiculous. You are not doing
9 enough. I have never heard from your office.
10 I assume elected officials would be an
11 integral part of this notification system. I
12 never knew they system existed.

13 What is the extent of your outreach?
14 If it's anything like this alert system and
15 the subscriber to the alert system, I'm not
16 sure if it speaks to your outreach to the
17 community of Philadelphia.

18 DEPUTY MAYOR GILLISOF: If I may?

19 REPRESENTATIVE MCGEEHAN: Will you
20 identify yourself?

21 DEPUTY MAYOR GILLISOF: Deputy Mayor
22 Gillisof for the City of Philadelphia,
23 Department of Public Safety. On the issue of
24 notification, Representative, one of the

1 things that we did, and it was not only given
2 to all of the elected officials in the area,
3 but this was a five-county roll out
4 approximately two years ago.

5 We have been constantly trying to
6 expand the reach of this particular tool. We
7 spend a lot of Homeland Security money in
8 making sure that this was done. And I just
9 have to differ with you on the fact that there
10 has been adequate notice.

11 What we're trying to do is build the
12 system. I know that the Office of Emergency
13 Management has worked tirelessly in creating
14 different subgroups so that people can be
15 notified. We're always looking for, and my
16 office is always looking for additional
17 groups.

18 REPRESENTATIVE McGEEHAN: That's good,
19 Commissioner, thank you.

20 DEPUTY MAYOR GILLISOF: Deputy Mayor.

21 REPRESENTATIVE McGEEHAN: Pardon me,
22 Deputy Mayor.

23 Could you enunciate some groups you
24 have appeared before in the immediate vicinity

1 of Holmesburg?

2 DEPUTY MAYOR GILLISOF: I have
3 actually appeared in front of most of the
4 groups in the Holmesburg area. We had a
5 couple of things when I took over in the chair
6 in 2008. When I began, immediately the
7 Holmesburg groups that were up there, I
8 directed the commissioner to reach out to the
9 various groups.

10 There have been a number of different
11 problems that we've addressed and had a number
12 of great relationships with the various
13 groups. I think that this particular instance
14 does point out that there are additional --
15 sometimes the publicity that is associated
16 with these kinds of effects will make it so
17 that people understand what other things are
18 out there that can be used.

19 But I do think that we have spent
20 quite a lot of time, effort and energy trying
21 to raise the level of activity in this ready
22 notified matter. We have worked with our
23 partners in Bucks, Montgomery, Delaware,
24 Chester County to make sure that we're sharing

1 this resource.

2 And it was something that we've spent
3 quite a lot of pride in making sure that not
4 only was it was available to our partners but
5 also to our and neighbors in the immediate
6 area.

7 REPRESENTATIVE MCGEEHAN: I appreciate
8 the outreach, but I don't consider myself
9 unawares person in talking with my
10 Philadelphia colleagues about this incident
11 they certainly weren't aware of this. I'm
12 talking about my colleagues in the
13 Pennsylvania House.

14 These numbers speak to, obviously,
15 this is not adequate in order to alert the
16 public to dangers. My point to Commissioner
17 Giorla and to you is that you have a greater
18 obligation, not only to the prison system, but
19 the City of Philadelphia.

20 These communities are housing and
21 being burdened by the onerous prison
22 population, all of them situated in a small
23 geographic area. You have a greater
24 obligation to them, Mr. Deputy Mayor and I

1 forget your title, Ms. Phillips, but you have
2 a greater obligation.

3 You must realize that you are not
4 doing -- these opt-in systems just don't
5 work. It's obvious they don't work. You need
6 to do more. The point of Representative Evans
7 and I think the other testimony today speaks
8 to it. This is woefully inadequate in order
9 to -- the imminent danger that the people in
10 my community were placed in when these three
11 prisoners escaped.

12 Unfortunately, it ended in a
13 compounded tragedy of having someone else
14 die. It could very well happen to anybody
15 that lives in that facility. It happened to
16 somebody that lived within five miles of that
17 facility. This is a your job Mr. Deputy
18 mayor.

19 You may do all of the outreach and you
20 may think you are doing well, but the message
21 isn't getting out there. You need to do
22 more. We need to talk about through this
23 Committee, Mr. Chairman and through the
24 excellent suggestions of the members on this

1 Committee.

2 We need to step into the 21st
3 century. We need to utilities the technology
4 that is out here. We need to think beyond
5 whatever this PA ready system is doing. You
6 have an obligation to the people in
7 Philadelphia.

8 DEPUTY MAYOR GILLISOF: I would
9 suggest that we are. I would suggest that we
10 welcome the additional opportunities to reach
11 even more. We're one of the first
12 municipalities in the country that have not
13 only embraced this technology, but are looking
14 for ways to embrace it even more we are -- OEM
15 is on Twitter, we do reach out on Twitter and
16 facebook.

17 We actually go to the various places.
18 We have, through the use of the cable system
19 that is here in Philadelphia. We actually do
20 put up our please join this particular
21 matter. It's run on the city cable channel,
22 channel 64. That's run 24 hours a day.

23 Just because, and I will only say, we
24 have tried to do whatever we can. We'll agree

1 and I'll agree with you that the numbers
2 themselves doesn't mean that the effort hasn't
3 been there to get people to try to make sure
4 that they join up.

5 But, again, in this particular matter,
6 we have embraced it. We are embracing all of
7 the technology that you are talking about.
8 Whenever we go out -- I know the Commissioner
9 has gone out on numerous occasions, not only
10 in the surrounding areas but all over the
11 city.

12 The city is 135 square miles. We have
13 gone everywhere to make sure that we send the
14 message that public safety is something that
15 we care deeply about. We advance everywhere
16 we go and we work tirelessly to make sure that
17 we provide the kind of services that need to
18 be provided.

19 Is there always room for improvement?
20 Absolutely. I've been in public safety for
21 over 30 years myself. I understand the
22 constant need to end up taking the charge to
23 the public because it's the public that make
24 us safe, not necessarily our systems.

1 And that's what we're trying to deal
2 with and that's what we emphasize over and
3 over again, but the mere fact that the numbers
4 are what they are is the fact that they
5 started with this effort just over a
6 year-and-a-half ago and we're trying to make
7 sure we actually grow it as much as we can.

8 I thank the Committee for its work in
9 order to publicize it because we need that
10 kind of support. I would also thank the
11 representative for bringing up any additional
12 help that can be sent the prison's way by way
13 of resources to do this, that can help as
14 well.

15 So I thank the representative for
16 that. These things are things that we can do
17 working together, but I don't believe that
18 it's just proper to say we haven't embraced
19 it. We embraced it and are moving forward.

20 REPRESENTATIVE MCGEEHAN: It's a dog
21 chasing its tail, at this point, Mr. Deputy
22 Mayor. The system isn't adequate to inform
23 the community and help the community protect
24 itself. It's is as simple as that. We need

1 to find a layered approach, not just a ready
2 system where people opt-in and then get a
3 notification on their wireless device,
4 that's simply not enough.

5 DEPUTY MAYOR GILLISOF: And we're --

6 REPRESENTATIVE McGEEHAN: Pardon me.

7 We're here to offer to work with you in order
8 to come up with solutions along with the
9 prison commissioner. But I want to tell you
10 the feelings of my community because I'm
11 charged with representing them.

12 I'm elected, I have to stand before
13 the voters and answer for the concerns that
14 they have. And I'm telling you today they
15 don't feel they are being adequately
16 protected. They feel they are being
17 disproportionately burdened by a criminal
18 population in Philadelphia.

19 And when something goes wrong they are
20 on the front line. They're most in danger of
21 any Philadelphians. And I'm telling you that
22 this system is not enough and that we're going
23 to explore ways and hopefully through
24 suggestions of Representative Evans and

1 through the Commissioner that those are
2 implemented in your system.

3 So I thank you for your testimony
4 today and we look forward to continue to work
5 with you. I will open it up to any more
6 questions. Yes, Representative Seip.

7 REPRESENTATIVE SEIP: I want to thank
8 you for your testimony Mr. Deputy Mayor and
9 Assistant Direct Phillips. I've worked
10 closely with the school systems in Schuylkill
11 County and I'm just curious if you have any
12 memorandums of understanding or anything like
13 that set up with the school districts?

14 DEPUTY MAYOR GILLISOF: Yes.

15 REPRESENTATIVE SEIP: If they're
16 notified to go into lock down or have a
17 routine?

18 DEPUTY MAYOR GILLISOF: Yes we have
19 that. We follow the same protocols that the
20 deputy managing director has indicated in
21 order to emphasize the emergency basis and we
22 can lock down schools at the appropriate time
23 and appropriate areas. So the answer is yes.

24 REPRESENTATIVE SEIP: After Columbine,

1 certainly there was a heightened sense of
2 awareness about snows kinds of circumstances.
3 One of the things that I would suggest is that
4 if you can maintain some kind of a practice
5 exercise on a fairly routine basis. Maybe you
6 are already doing that, I don't know.

7 DEPUTY MAYOR GILLISOF: We are. We
8 actually activated, about two years ago, with
9 your former OEM manager, Marianne Maricola
10 (ph). We have worked with the university at
11 the university level, but we are also working
12 with the school district in order to make sure
13 that all of our emergency procedures and the
14 planning that is needed is updated and updated
15 on a yearly basis.

16 I know that I was talking with
17 Superintendent Ackerman about our need for
18 training, but actually having training
19 activity. And it's kind of hard in our
20 situation to shut down a particular area of
21 the city, but we do believe that you have to
22 have real live training exercises to really
23 bring home what practice makes perfect and how
24 to respond in emergency situations.

1 We're planning to do that as we go
2 forward, but thank you very much for that.

3 REPRESENTATIVE SEIP: Thank you.

4 REPRESENTATIVE MCGEEHAN: Yes,
5 chairman Caltagirone.

6 CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE: We did do
7 legislation in this session to hopefully give
8 is a safety eval to many of the prisons
9 throughout the state with the non-violent
10 offenders, trying to direct them out of the
11 system at the front end, number one.

12 And, in addition to that, legislation
13 previously passed will have an effect on a lot
14 of the county prisons with anybody over a
15 two-year sentence, we're going to get them
16 because we have a full house and then some.
17 We're over 54,000 and growing.

18 It seems like it's just mind blowing
19 that we're incarcerating so many of our people
20 in this state. And I've always been the one
21 to be a little more proactive to try to help
22 those that have problems with alcohol and
23 drugs and whatever it may be with programs at
24 the front end and hoping we can change and

1 modify that behavior, so that we don't get
2 that back -- I've toured your prisons, by the
3 way.

4 We were just recently down there and
5 it's a sad cometary in our society today that
6 we're spending so much money in that area and
7 woefully lack in so many other areas of social
8 service that if we just changed the emphasis
9 and help to redirect.

10 I think some of the assets that we're
11 putting into the prison systems especially for
12 the non-violent criminals, DUIs, back child
13 support, I know it can get to the point of
14 frustration where you need to do something
15 with these people. I think we need other
16 alternative settings rather than putting them
17 in prison that's overpopulated.

18 I bet every one of your prisons are
19 overcrowded. I've seen them, I know the
20 answer to that is they are. And you can only
21 pack so many people in these places and there
22 is going to be problems. And I share the
23 concern of Chairman McGeehan and I agree with
24 him that more has to be done and better public

1 notice, so that those that are in those
2 communities will have a better idea, oops,
3 somebody is out.

4 I need to know that to protect my
5 children and my wife and myself. And I think
6 that coming together, I think we can work with
7 this. I think his point is well made when a
8 life is taken like that from somebody in the
9 community that is a prominent citizen and is
10 well-liked and you see a life that is lost, it
11 starts to eat away at you and you think you've
12 got to do more.

13 And that's why I came down here to
14 help Chairman McGeehan because he's very, very
15 intent to do something to produce a better
16 notification system for those in the
17 communities. And I know you have prisons
18 pretty well consolidated and it starts to get
19 a little overburdening at point to where you
20 know people are going to eventually get out.

21 We don't know that these people are
22 not dummies that are in prisons. They have a
23 lot of time and it's like the Devil's time to
24 work on, what can I do to get out not to come

1 back here even though I might learn more in
2 prison about things I really shouldn't be
3 learning about.

4 That always scares me by the way with
5 hardened criminals that they are being
6 throwing them in there with and they're
7 educating them and then going back out into
8 society. I don't know what the real answers
9 are, but we need changes. But, again, I want
10 to support Chairman McGeehan to try to get a
11 better notification system. Thank you.

12 REPRESENTATIVE MCGEEHAN: Thank you
13 Mr. Chairman, you always see a big picture
14 with the experience in the Judiciary
15 Committee. I want to thank you, Ms. Phillips,
16 Deputy Mayor. I hope you will continue to
17 work with the community doing outreach, both
18 you and your respective departments.

19 And we will continue to work with you
20 to come up with a better system. Thank you
21 very much. Mr. Chairman, we are also going to
22 submit, for the record, a report from the
23 Federal Bureau of Prisons on their
24 notification of what they're doing around the

1 country.

2 I wanted to end where I began by
3 thanking Chairman Caltagirone for really
4 reaching out to be here in Philadelphia you've
5 been a good friend and a great chairman and a
6 great leader to Pennsylvania. We thank you
7 for all of your efforts on behalf of the
8 people of the Commonwealth.

9 Thank you to my esteemed colleagues.
10 I'm grateful to you. It's a pleasure to work
11 with you on a daily basis. And I thank you
12 for your suggestions and willingness to help
13 my community. Having said that, I'll adjourn
14 this official hearing of the House Judiciary
15 Committee.

16 (Whereupon, the hearing was
17 adjourned at 4:50 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

I, JUSTIN DAVIS, certify that the foregoing is a true and accurate transcript of the testimony as taken stenographically by and before me at the time, place and on the date herein before set forth.

I DO FURTHER CERTIFY that I am neither a relative nor employee nor attorney nor counsel of any of the parties to this action, and that I am neither a relative nor employee of such attorney or counsel, and that I am not financially interested in the action.

Justin Davis

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