



Legislation Details

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Title:	<p>Thank you, Council President Clarke and members of City Council for inviting me to speak today. It's always great to be back in this chamber.</p> <p>It's hard to believe that this is already my fifth budget address as mayor. I often think of the popular saying about parenthood that many of you have probably heard....</p> <p>"The days are long, but the years are short."</p> <p>That pretty much sums up how it feels to be mayor. Days definitely feel long, but the years fly by.... and I know that this term will go as quickly as the first.</p> <p>I share this sentiment as a bit of advice for our new Councilmembers -- Kendra Brooks, Jamie Gauthier, Katherine Gilmore Richardson, and Isaiah Thomas.</p> <p>There is a finite period of time for each of us to make a positive impact on our city as elected officials. I look forward to working with all of you to do just that.</p> <p>The Fiscal Year 2021 Budget and the Five Year Plan builds on the agenda we discussed back in January just up North Broad Street at The Met.</p> <p>Fighting for a safer and more just city. Providing quality education for all. Delivering cleaner and safer streets. Building inclusive and resilient neighborhoods. Creating a more diverse, efficient, and effective government.</p> <p>These are the top priorities of our Administration.</p> <p>The key investments in this Plan and the Capital Program will advance these specific goals, and ultimately help lift at least 100,000 Philadelphians out of poverty. This is a priority I know we all share. Our Administration's anti-poverty strategy focuses on: providing support to those in need now; helping Philadelphians raise their incomes; and investing in policies and programs that will break the cycle of intergenerational poverty for good.</p> <p>These investments double down on programs we know are working well for our residents such as PHLpreK, Community Schools and Rebuild. They also fund the commitments we've made to prioritize key issues over the next four years.</p> <p>Let me begin with our top priority of creating a safer and more just city for us all.</p> <p>Before I do so, I'd like to acknowledge Police Commissioner Danielle Outlaw who is with us today. Less than a month on the job and she's already brought a fresh perspective to our city. I want to thank the public for welcoming her graciously. I ask that you continue praying for her success and supporting her, and our department, in the days and years ahead.</p> <p>Make no mistake - her success is our city's success. Commissioner Outlaw is leading our Administration's efforts to transform Police-community relations, make necessary internal reforms, and reduce senseless violence.</p> <p>But we know that she can't do that alone.</p> <p>We also know that to be successful, the department needs strategic investments required of modern policing.</p> <p>That's why this budget calls for \$5.7 million for the staff and technology needed to expand Operation Pinpoint.</p> <p>This initiative is starting to show positive results in the target areas, including a 17 percent year-to-date decrease in homicides and significant decreases in shooting victims in Pinpoint areas. Because of this progress, we expect to expand Pinpoint to three more police districts.</p> <p>We will also increase the use of body-worn cameras and improve training to eliminate racial bias. And, as Council President Clarke has called for, this budget allows us to hire public safety enforcement officers to help ensure more police officers are where we need them most - in neighborhoods preventing violent crime.</p> <p>To better address issues of gender discrimination and sexual harassment within the Police Department, we've earmarked \$360,000 to expand the capacity of the Employee Relations Unit of the</p>				

Mayor's Office of Labor.

This will allow them to assume the investigatory process for PPD, taking those investigations outside of the department.

We'll also continue to fight for improvements to the disciplinary process as part of upcoming collective bargaining agreement negotiations - a priority highlighted by our freshman Councilmembers.

We'll work hard with the FOP to protect the rights of our officers, while also strengthening Commissioner Outlaw's ability to hold bad cops accountable. We know this is a top concern for the department and residents.

To reduce and prevent the gun violence that has been tearing our communities apart, this plan adds \$8 million a year for the implementation of evidence-based and community-informed strategies in the Philadelphia Roadmap for Safer Communities.

We will expand the Community Crisis Intervention Program and fund a rapid response team that can respond to communities experiencing trauma.

We'll also continue making targeted community investment grants, expand youth employment programs, and reduce neighborhood blight.

A shared priority we have with Councilmembers Jones and Johnson is launching Group Violence Intervention, otherwise known as Focused Deterrence.

The strategy involves targeted outreach to the small and active number of people involved in street groups. It offers incentives such as training and employment for compliance-along with swift consequences for criminal activity.

This approach is supported by numerous successful cases of violence reduction in other cities across the country.

To support initiatives like Group Violence Intervention, our gun violence investments include \$2 million in a new transitional jobs program that has successfully reduced violence in other major cities.

Since most of our crimes stem from poverty and lack of opportunity, we will provide job training AND jobs to residents who are at the highest risk of being involved in violence.

All of these strategies - and more - aim to reduce homicides by 30 percent and shootings by 25 percent by the end of this term.

We're confident that with a unified effort, as well as continued lobbying for common-sense gun reform at the state and federal levels, we can achieve this goal.

Over the life of this Plan, we'll continue building on the success of our criminal and juvenile justice reform efforts.

As we know, long-term sustainability of criminal justice reform requires deep and meaningful collaboration with the communities most impacted by mass incarceration.

We remain committed to reinvesting savings from our reforms directly into impacted communities.

The Office of Reentry Partnerships will enhance and streamline connections to the resources that residents returning from incarceration need to thrive, such as high-quality workforce training, housing, and other supports.

We'll also launch our first Neighborhood Resource Center. This will be a network of community centers where people can report to their probation officer in their own neighborhood, and access services alongside family members and neighbors.

The vision for these centers is to remove barriers and transform supervision to ensure that people receive the support they need to move forward.

And we'll work with our partners to make Philadelphia's pretrial system more equitable. That means working to eliminate cash bail, a practice that causes people living in poverty to languish in our jails awaiting trial, simply because they cannot afford to pay for their freedom.

We are also increasing opportunities for diversion away from the criminal and juvenile justice system and into services at the point of law enforcement contact.

All of these efforts will help us promote safety and racial equity while reducing the jail population by 50 percent from where it was in 2015. We are continuing the work of collaborative and data-driven criminal justice reform through the MacArthur Foundation Safety and Justice Challenge.

But to truly prevent crime and reduce the need for incarceration in the first place, the most critical and impactful investment we can continue to make is in quality education.

That's why this Plan includes an unprecedented \$2 billion for education-from PHLpreK, to K to 12, to Community College.

By Fiscal Year 2023, we will be providing quality pre-K to 5,500 kids every single school year.

Four years ago, we were debating how to fund this transformative program, and now we are setting up our youngest learners and their families for success in elementary school and beyond.

And I want to thank you all for your help in making this initiative so successful.

For our public school students, we're investing \$267 million in Fiscal Year 21 for the School District of Philadelphia, a \$45 million increase over Fiscal Year 20.

As you know, I firmly believe the only way to create lasting equity in Philadelphia is to ensure all of our city's children - regardless of their zip code - have great schools in their neighborhood.

During our first term, we proudly put Philadelphia's future back in the hands of residents by returning the School District to local control and giving it financial stability for the first time in recent history.

Not only did we launch PHLpreK and Community Schools, but we also redesigned our entire \$23 million out of school time system. And we are working in close partnership with the District to redesign our \$100 million behavioral health system.

With the support and advocacy of Councilmember Gym, we appointed a diverse local School Board, and are investing more than \$1.4 billion in funding in the District.

I'm very proud of the District's momentum, having recently celebrated four straight years of steady progress of schools citywide.

Under the leadership of Superintendent Dr. William Hite and School Board President Joyce Wilkerson, more students are reading on grade level and graduating on time. And we have better supportive services to meet the extensive needs of our students and their families.

Please join me in giving Dr. Hite, President Wilkerson, and the entire Board of Education a round of applause to thank them for their service to our city.

All that said, Dr. Hite, President Wilkerson, and I are keenly aware that there's much more work to do until we can confidently say all of our schools - District-led and Charter - are where they need to be. But creating a system of great schools requires resources.

Governor Wolf's budget is promising, and our local delegation is doing everything it can to bring more funding into Philadelphia schools. But we will once again be called on to step-up for our kids.

The crisis with lead and asbestos removal in our schools is evidence enough that decades of cuts and disinvestment come at a price.

While the District remains stable this fiscal year, its future financial condition is tenuous.

I refuse to return to days of draconian cuts and wondering whether schools will open on time. It is our generation who must have the political courage to act and lead our city from a legacy of survival to a future of students thriving.

In addition to providing our K-12 system with increased funding, this next term brings another area of focus for our Administration.

When I think about how we can make a real impact on reducing poverty, improving educational attainment, and preparing a highly-skilled workforce, no institution provides a greater opportunity than the Community College of Philadelphia.

CCP is the predominant gateway to greater economic mobility for graduates of Philadelphia public schools.

It enrolls just over 1,600 recent high school graduates annually. And that number does not even include the thousands of adults advancing their education and career goals by attending community college.

CCP offers more than 100 associate degree and certificate programs. Proficiency certificates are available in a number of occupations, from accounting and advanced automotive repair to architectural visualization, biomedical equipment, and cybersecurity.

Associate degrees also are offered for in-demand careers such as engineering science, nursing, computer science, dental hygiene, and digital forensics.

And the evidence is clear - a postsecondary credential or college degree is essential to thrive in today's rapidly changing economy. Yet rising costs of higher education and the student debt crisis are harming students' ability to access - and complete - their education.

Raising the city's two- and four-year degree attainment rates is a major component of our inclusive growth strategy. And if we are serious about achieving that goal, we must address the dual challenges of tuition affordability and basic needs insecurity.

So with all this in mind, I propose in this Plan a major investment of \$63 million in new funding for Community College of Philadelphia to launch the Octavius Catto Scholarship.

The Catto Scholarship is a "last dollar" tuition model that effectively closes the gap between other financial aid and the student's remaining tuition balance. It will also provide basic needs and academic supports that foster degree completion.

We have a simple but vital goal - to significantly increase graduation rates for full-time CCP students.

We know that tuition is not the only significant barrier to graduation. In fact, more than half of the respondents to a recent Temple University study indicated they were housing and food insecure.

That is why we are combining last-dollar funding with additional support to remove the burdens that hit

many of our students-especially those living in poverty-particularly hard.

We'll give each first-time, full-time student in the program \$1,500 per semester to offset the cost of books, transportation, and food.

The City will also work with CCP to better connect more of their students to public benefits, childcare, and housing supports.

The Catto Scholarship will give these transformative opportunities to a projected 6,500 students over the next five years.

And we'll provide over \$700,000 in funding to expand opportunities for dual enrollment and summer bridge programs to ensure our Catto Scholars are ready for the rigor of college.

Mountains of data tell us that this investment will make a real difference in people's lives, while also promoting the economic prosperity of our city over the long term.

But it was cemented even more for me personally after talking to some of our students.

Take Lylia [Lil-ee-ah], a senior at George Washington High School-one of our Community Schools in the Northeast.

Lylia [Lil-ee-ah] and her parents are from Algeria and arrived in Philly six years ago. They came to Philadelphia determined to find more educational opportunities and a better life.

Despite the challenges that she faced in high school as an English learner and during her mother's battle with a serious illness, Lylia [Lil-ee-ah] is ambitious, resilient, and dedicated to her education.

She now speaks three languages, including English, and is the vice president of a mentorship program for immigrant girls at George Washington - a program the Community School Coordinator helped to establish. In fact, Lylia's [Lil-ee-ah's] leadership role took her to Harvard University to present at an alumni conference last spring.

Lylia [Lil-ee-ah] wants to follow in her parents' footsteps and study medicine, which they practiced in Africa. And she's on the right track.

Next week she will begin an internship in our Department of Public Health through the Community Schools' new City Interns program. And in the fall she will go to CCP.

With enough support to complete a degree at CCP, Lylia [Lil-ee-ah] can then transfer to study pre-med at Temple University. I know that our city can help fulfill her and her family's dream of a better life through education.

We can also help current full-time CCP students, like Brittany who lives in Southwest Philadelphia. Brittany is studying Business and Spanish at CCP, and also hopes to transfer to Temple after graduating with her Associate degree.

She's also a single mom and works two jobs to support herself and her daughter. This is not easy.

Given these challenges, I am glad that Brittany's daughter Elizabeth is one of our PHLpreK students.

She goes to school right across the street from CCP at Spring Garden Academy. This center has the state's highest quality rating, and because of PHLpreK, Elizabeth attends for free.

Brittany can focus on her studies, knowing that her daughter is in a safe and high-quality learning environment. And Elizabeth already knows some big words, like "impressive" - which is exactly how I'd describe her and her mother.

Lylia [Lil-ee-ah] and Brittany are here with us today and I'd like to ask them to stand.

From Southwest Philly to the Northeast and every neighborhood in between, these determined young adults represent our Catto Scholars-who we, as a City, will help achieve the American dream.

Please join me in congratulating them and wishing them great success on their pursuits!

I want to send a clear message to our high school students, especially those who may think college is out of reach or simply cannot afford it.

If you work hard and graduate high school, you can go to community college full time, tuition-free. And even get money for books, transportation, and food.

We're committed to this because I believe in you. Everyone in this Chamber believes in you. And the City of Philadelphia cares about you.

[Now that I've shared the largest new investment in our Plan, I want to shift the focus to the Capital Program, particularly related to our goal of creating cleaner and safer streets.

The single largest capital investment continues to be addressing the quality of our streets - to the tune of \$52.1 million this year, and \$335.6 million over six years.

Since 2016, thanks to the support of Councilmember O'Neill, we've more than doubled the number of miles paved.

And moving our roadways towards a state of good repair remains a top priority. We plan to invest \$240 million in street paving alone over six years.

We'll continue designing safer streets that promote zero fatalities and put people first, through a \$9 million investment in Vision Zero over six years. And we'll deliver on our goal of creating 40 miles of

protected bike lanes by 2025.

We'll provide funding for SEPTA of \$4.7 million to support capital improvements at stations and other facilities. This is in addition to the annual \$89 million local operating budget contribution the City provides to SEPTA, and we'll leverage grant funding through a \$1.4 million appropriation for repairing bridges.

Most notably, we'll expand street sweeping to all residential neighborhoods and commercial corridors citywide.

We learned a great deal from our street sweeping pilot in six neighborhoods last year, where we used capital funding to buy new mechanical brooms and hired new laborers.

Residents supported the program, and expressed that they noticed their blocks were cleaner because of this program. In fact, 96 percent of residents in the pilot areas supported expanding the program citywide.

As a result, of this pilot, and because of the support of Councilmembers Parker, Henon and Squilla, we propose \$10 million to expand street sweeping to more neighborhoods in Fiscal Year 21, and \$67 million over five years.

We will use the data and recommendations in the pilot's evaluation to improve the program moving forward.

As part of the 2020 program, mechanical cleaning will be expanded to new neighborhoods and in some areas, cars will be required to move during sweeping operations.

We're still finalizing the implementation plans, and full details of the 2020 program will be announced later this Spring.

Ensuring cleaner streets is a pivotal first step to creating more inclusive and resilient neighborhoods. Our city is experiencing a period of transformative economic growth, which has contributed to a reduction in our poverty and unemployment rates, as well as a rise in median incomes.

While we are progressing, we must move faster to close the inequality gap and foster more affordable, stronger, and healthier neighborhoods.

That is why our budget invests \$6.6 million in Fiscal Year 21 and nearly \$33 million from the General Fund over the Plan in PHLRentAssist.

This new program will stabilize households living in poverty, with a focus on youth aging out of foster care, low-income working families, and individuals with disabilities.

Its goal is to prevent eviction and the negative effects of displacement by filling the gap between what people can afford to pay and the cost of rent-a household's largest expense.

A safe, stable place to live is a necessary foundation for people to participate in the workforce, for children to go to school, and for youth to pursue a credential and get the education to help them move out of poverty.

Through this program we will test innovative and cost-effective practices to housing instability and poverty alleviation, including through a cash transfer pilot program.

To further drive economic mobility, raise incomes, grow businesses, and support neighborhoods hit the hardest by crime and opioids, we're going to continue the implementation of our inclusive growth strategy.

Our plan calls for growing quality jobs through entrepreneurship, increasing job training, and attracting and retaining businesses using new sector-based strategies.

As championed by Councilmember Bass, we'll increase funding for the Department of Human Services by \$600,000 to support wage increases for the youth summer jobs program. This will be in addition to the \$7.9 million we invest annually in WorkReady.

And, in partnership with Councilmember Sanchez, we'll continue making historic investments in housing affordability, homeless services, and homeownership. From FY19 through the end of this Plan, we will make \$115 million in contributions to the Housing Trust Fund.

We'll continue our citywide efforts to combat the opioid crisis, drawing on everything we've learned during the first term from the Philadelphia Resilience Project and the Mayor's Taskforce to Combat the Opioid Epidemic.

We recently established a new Opioid Response Unit in the Managing Director's Office. The unit will oversee targeted strategies to prevent addiction, connect more people to treatment, and save more lives from opioid overdose while also helping neighborhoods recover from the toll of the crisis.

On top of our new investment of \$1 million earmarked for the opioid work, I propose increasing funding for the Department of Public Health by \$2.3 million to expand prevention efforts and address key quality of life concerns in Kensington.

We make these investments because we are focused on ensuring fewer people suffer premature deaths because of this epidemic.

And, while I understand that some of you disagree with the policy, and have concerns with how and when community members are consulted...we will continue to work with advocates to support opening Overdose Prevention Sites to save lives and help connect people to treatment.

We will take a greater role going forward to ensure community conversations happen this year, as they did extensively in 2018.

I'm optimistic that we can find a path forward because I think we're more aligned on this issue than it may appear. For example, we all know someone who's struggled with addiction and many of us have lost someone we love to overdose.

I also think we can agree that as a society we failed an entire generation during the crack epidemic and failed War on Drugs because of bad policy. We cannot let history repeat itself simply because we're afraid to try new, albeit controversial, approaches.

And I know that we all agree the City must do more to save lives and help our fellow Philadelphians reach their God-given potential.

With all that said, I want to be very clear that I refuse to look another parent in the face and tell them I didn't do everything I could to try and keep their child alive long enough to survive their disease.

While we deal with these life-threatening crises, we must continue to address the climate crisis by working to build inclusive and resilient neighborhoods.

Since 2018, we've been committed to delivering on the Paris Climate Agreement to reduce carbon emissions 80 percent by the year 2050, and we've established our own ambitious climate goals.

I propose a \$750,000 increase for our Office of Sustainability to expand the Greenworks program with new staff and hire a Chief Resiliency Officer. This important role is to ensure climate adaptation is integrated into all City operations and work with external stakeholders to create citywide climate adaptation plans that direct private development toward climate resiliency.

It also includes \$250,000 in capital for LED lighting, system upgrades, and the Greenworks Fund; and \$181,000 in the Energy Office to meet climate and energy goals.

Additionally, a quarter-million dollars is provided to the Philadelphia Energy Authority to provide solar panel incentives.

Another major area of investment I'm thrilled about is Rebuild, our transformational infrastructure initiative made possible because of the Philadelphia Beverage Tax. We've committed hundreds of millions of dollars to rebuilding our aging parks, recreation centers, playgrounds, and libraries.

Work has now begun at more than 60 Rebuild sites across the city, representing over \$120 million of new investment, mostly in high-need neighborhoods.

I look forward to joining you at many groundbreakings and re-openings this spring. Next week I will join Councilmember Gauthier at Miles Mack Playground in Mantua to preview the renovations starting on the playground and recreation building this spring.

The improvements coming to Miles Mack are the result of many conversations with residents to make sure the City's investment reflects the community's needs, and will deliver for the young people who call Miles Mack home.

As critical and inspiring as we all agree Rebuild is, it is not enough that we just transform the buildings and fields. We must improve the quality of the programming that children, youth and families can access.

That is why we are investing \$1 million to enable Parks and Recreation to embark on an ambitious system-wide effort to provide higher quality programs and realign their staffing structure to better serve communities in need.

And we'll increase funding for the Free Library to hire more staff which will help reduce unexpected closures, and for the first time in recent history, maintain six-day service year-round.

The Six-Year Capital Program includes \$143.5 million for Parks and Recreation, including \$50 million to help support the transformation of FDR Park into a regional recreational and environmental amenity. It will also bring to fruition the long-overdue Bethel Burying Ground Memorial.

The Capital Program supports investments in our neighborhood commercial corridors, industrial areas, and economic and recreational improvements along both our riverfronts.

We will support improved pedestrian experiences around East Market and Chestnut Streets.

And we'll redesign Paine Plaza outside the Municipal Services Building to better meet the needs of residents and business owners coming to do business with the City. This project will also complement the transformation of Love Park and Dilworth Park to create high-quality public spaces for residents and visitors.

Investing in our public spaces is as important as investing in our education system. We can't underestimate the return on investment and enhanced quality of life it brings to people who live, work in, and visit our great city.

Having the necessary resources to invest in our public spaces goes hand in hand with our fifth major priority of this term - creating a more diverse, efficient, and effective government.

As Councilmember Green has called for, we're going to build on our financial stability to modernize services so we can deliver better customer services to residents AND businesses.

In fact, the Plan calls for over \$300 million in capital funding to modernize services. For example, we'll invest \$69 million in OPAL, which will standardize, streamline and integrate business processes across finance, procurement, and other departments.

\$22.5 million in the Office of Innovation and Technology will be used for network infrastructure improvements and other applications used by departments.

I'm proposing new investments that advance racial equity, reform burdensome fines and fees, diversify our workforce and contract recipients, and expand efforts to rid the workplace of sexual harassment.

During the first term, we changed how the City handles claims of sexual harassment, improving the ways complaints are filed and investigated. This term, we'll add new positions in the Office of Labor Relations to increase its capacity to administer sexual harassment prevention trainings for all frontline staff.

To advance racial equity, we will bolster the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion so it can examine and address institutional and structural disparities across the government.

One major area that we are examining is the practice of administering fines and fees across the government, which too often comes with unintended consequences.

Fines and fees are mostly issued to recoup costs of service and curb problematic behavior. However until now, they have mostly been enacted without regard for one's ability to pay.

It's time to reconsider practices where fines and fees fail to meet their intended goal or even worse - cause harm. This disproportionately impacts low-income communities and people of color.

Councilmember Parker and I recently called on the Board of the Trustees of the Free Library of Philadelphia to eliminate fines for overdue materials, and I'm pleased that this new policy went into effect last month.

We expect to see an increase in returned materials and more importantly, we hope that more Philadelphians will come back to access vital library services as a result of this policy change.

We will continue this momentum by closely examining the impact of other municipal fines and fees, finding ways to reduce the financial burden on those who lack the ability to pay.

When it comes to prioritizing better customer services for business and residents, the Office of the Managing Director will lead a citywide initiative to enhance the customer experience for both groups.

We're working internally to streamline various processes that customers engage in every day so we can improve efficiency and service delivery.

We'll start the planning process for improvements and redesign the MSB lobby and concourse using a human-centered design process.

We'll complete an audit of all City buildings and properties to ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

And we'll create a business acceleration team-at an investment of \$530,000-to make it easier for businesses to work with departments, solve their problems, and navigate processes.

These are just a few ways that we will work to make the government run with greater efficiency.

This agenda I just described is only possible because of the work we've done to improve the City's fiscal health. Without fiscal stability, the bold investments in education, community college, street sweeping, and modernizing our technology would not be feasible.

But last year we had the highest fund balance in the City's history. We continued to reduce the pension system's unfunded liability and should reach nearly 60 percent funded at the end of the Plan.

In fact, we're still on track for the pension system to be 80 percent funded by 2029 and 100 percent funded by the year 2033. These investments are vital for the financial health of our City.

And, as Councilmember Domb has called for, we're maximizing revenue collections and reducing delinquency, having achieved a real estate tax collection rate of 96 percent.

In order to promote growth throughout the City, the plan has over \$200 million in wage and business tax cuts including an extension and acceleration of reductions to the net income side of the BIRT.

We're requesting no tax rate increases and we're making a long-requested change from the business community to Market-Based Sourcing in the year 2023.

We're also being prudent and planning for a potential economic downturn.

We'll continue reserving at least \$56 million a year to hedge against a recession or potential federal funding cuts. And we're putting another \$195 million into the Rainy Day Fund throughout the Plan, bringing the total amount deposited to \$229 million.

Over the next few months, we will engage in a robust discussion of this budget and Five Year Plan, and it is possible that on some things, we may not agree.
That's fine. In this city-with limited resources and many, many important but often competing priorities-honorable people, working with the best of intentions, are bound to disagree.
Yet as we work through these priorities, I am confident that none of us will lose sight of the greater goal we all share-to make Philadelphia safer, cleaner, healthier, and to give our children a chance to achieve their dreams.
This is not a political speech, but I can't lose sight of the difficult drama that is playing out at the national level as we choose a president for the next four years.
This nation is fractured to a degree that I can't recall since the turbulence of the Sixties.
It's sad. It is really sad.
But I am proud of the fact that no matter what we see happening in Washington, those of us here in this chamber are determined to continue fighting for Philadelphia.
I have said this several times over the last four years and it remains just as true today: with the dysfunction of governance at the national level, it is clear that CITIES large and small must lead.
All of us here-elected officials, staff members, advocates, concerned residents-all of us are evidence of Philadelphia's ability to lead.
Have no doubt: in 2020, we will step up and do what is right... for our neighbors...for our region... and for our nation.
We will not be stopped by polemics or partisanship.
We will not be stopped by thinly disguised racist rhetoric.
We will not be stopped by fake news or the lies of those who claim to be leaders.
No matter where the United States is headed, we here in Philadelphia, will not... be... stopped.
Thank you, and now let's get to work

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