



Committee of Seventy

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May 22, 2013

The Honorable James Kenney
Philadelphia City Council
City Hall, Room 330
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Dear Councilman Kenney:

The Committee of Seventy is writing to support your efforts to identify revenue enhancement opportunities that will decrease the burden on individual and business taxpayers. We hope you will accept this letter and enter it into the public record of today's public hearing.

This hearing is a good first step in what must be an ongoing effort to confront Philadelphia's fiscal challenges by exploring options to increase revenues. However, while we recognize City Council's desire to assure taxpayers that the city will not instinctively turn to them year after year to provide increased dollars, we also caution against moving too quickly to put any one option in place. The implications of each revenue-generating option, and how it would be implemented, must be thoroughly understood. The prospects for realizing significant additional revenues must be realistic. And the menu of potential options must be prioritized.

We strongly recommend that City Council convene a working group to develop a set of recommendations that can be examined by the appropriate city officials, made public, debated and, if viable, acted upon. Seventy would be pleased to share information about similar efforts undertaken in several other cities, initiated both within and outside government, that have generated proposals that may be applicable to Philadelphia.

The Committee of Seventy appreciates the chance to express its thoughts today and hopes you will seriously consider its proposal. Seventy's President and CEO Zack Stalberg and I are available to discuss this further at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Ellen Mattleman Kaplan
Vice President and Policy Director