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COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON TAKES ON THE FOP, POVERTY, AND POLICE REFORM



I had the privilege to interview City Councilwoman Kathleen Gilmore Richardson (KGR) via Zoom and discuss her legislative agenda and her path to becoming a City Councilwoman. A native of Philadelphia Katherine Gilmore Richardson was adopted at birth by her parents, James and Pastor Lorraine Gilmore, and

raised in Wynnefield. She Masterman Middle School, Philadelphia Girls High School, and West Chester University. After college she worked as a long term substitute teacher at Overbrook High School. After leaving Overbrook she worked in healthcare at Pennsylvania Hospital. Katherine left Pennsylvania

Hospital to work for Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown where she served for over a decade before entering the race for City Council. She brings these very unique experiences into her first term in City Council.

So you were educated in the Philadelphia School district,

and then spent time working in the school district. What type of impact did that have on you and how does that translate into your legislative agenda?

I'm also now the parent of Philadelphia School District students, so I've really seen the system from all angles. I think that helps me understand the challenges faced

by students, educators, and parents, and it gives me a unique perspective on how to identify solutions and work across different groups of people with different needs. I've been particularly focused on workforce development issues because I truly believe that building a strong talent pipeline and improving the skills of our

INSIDE:

**COUNCILMAN ISAIAH THOMAS KEEP IT LOCAL BILL
RECEIVES STRONG SUPPORT IN CITY COUNCIL**

AWARD WINNING AUTHOR JIMMY DaSAINT



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workforce will help us decrease poverty and grow our economy. The School District is an important partner in that. We just had a hearing in the Committee on Education on how we are aligning our Career and Technical Education programs with labor market indicators, so we ensure we are training students in the skills they need to get jobs here in Philadelphia now and in the future. We also held a hearing on implementing a conflict resolution curriculum for all K-12 students in schools to help improve the social/emotional skill sets of our young people, so the School District has been a strong partner, and I look forward to our continued work together.

Let's stay in our school district, because when you worked in healthcare at Pennsylvania hospital. You created a transitional work program for patient care technicians and certified nursing assistants. So let me ask you what is your view on allied health programs being integrated into our high school curriculum? I'm still very focused on this career path. Healthcare is one of the biggest industries in our city and region, and there are good paying jobs for people with all different types of education and certification and skill sets. I believe there is a significant opportunity for building a strong talent pipeline in this field, and I've been meeting recently with folks in the field on this idea. How do we transition folks with lower levels of education or certification into higher paying careers? What training do they need? How do they get them? When are they offered? How are they

being paid for? What career opportunities are available once they are received and how do we ensure that folks have job placement support? These are all questions I've been thinking about and trying to answer, and I hope that we will soon be able to announce a new partnership in this area. With so much opportunity in this area, if we are able to get students at a young age into these training programs and get them on their way to certifications, associates degrees, or bachelor's degrees, I think that is a great idea.

Part of your platform was "Advocate for a fair funding formula and increase education funding for safer school buildings, after school programs in schools and additional support for teachers and school staff." How do you gain support for this with the Republican legislature in Harrisburg? In a time where it seems like no legislatures want to work across the aisle? I think it is going to continue to be a challenge, but I also hope that with the pandemic and its economic impact, people will see how important a quality education is and it will potentially inspire some change on this issue. I also hope that with a new Presidential Administration there could be renewed support for federal funding for public education which may help make changes at the state level.

You spent over a decade working for Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown. How has that prepared you for the job? Councilwoman Reynolds Brown taught me so many important things about this job, but there are many

things you can't learn until you are really in the seat, doing the work. One of the most important things she taught me is that it's important to always follow up and follow through. I need to be someone people can depend on whether that is my colleagues on a legislative issue or my constituents with a question or need, and it's something I work very hard to practice every day and stress to my team as well.

As a sitting Councilwoman can you name some key legislative accomplishments that you have made so far? And how are these accomplishments going to benefit the citizens of Philadelphia? My first bill passed Council in September! Bill 200364-A requires a public hearing before the Administration can propose a new contract to the police union. This bill adds transparency and accountability to a system that has taken place in the dark for too long. Over \$700,000,000 is spent every year on police personnel costs and most of those requirements are negotiated during the contract, so by creating space to hear the voice of everyday Philadelphians, the Administration can go into the negotiation more informed about what people want them to prioritize. The first hearing was held on Wednesday, November 18, and we had 98 Philadelphians sign up to offer public comment. The hearing lasted seven hours, and I was so glad we were able to make space to hear from constituents. There was clearly a desire for us to make that space, and I look forward to our continued work on police reform. I've also worked hard on bills to help our Career and Technical Education grads get on a pipeline into City jobs. This bill has had a lot of negotiation, but I'm committed to finding a solution that works for everyone. I've also held my first hearing in the Committee on the Environment, and we fo-

cused on issues relating to waste and litter in the wake of Covid-19 and how the City can think about waste management differently. Tackling waste is a big part of how we deal with climate change, and it is also an opportunity to create an economy based on reuse and recycling – also known as a circular or closed loop economy – so I'm excited to continue those conversations to see where we can find some next steps.

Why did you join the Police Reform Working Group? And do you feel that the group has made an impact so far? And why? I joined the Police Reform Working Group because I felt that it was important to stand with my colleagues, many of whom are young, Black legislators like me, and take a leadership role on this issue. For too long, Black voices have been pushed to the side, and now that there are more of us in elected positions and leadership positions, we need to ensure that our perspectives and the voices of our communities are truly heard, especially on issues that have to do with life and death. I think the group has had a lot of success so far. We've seen important changes at the state level, such as the creation of a deputy inspector general position, requiring evaluation of officers for PTSD, and creating a confidential statewide database to track officer disciplinary action. At the city level, we've passed the public comment bill, banned chokeholds, and created a new civilian police oversight commission. So there is still work to be done, but we are making progress, and I'm proud to stand with such an esteemed group of colleagues.

Much of the platform that you ran on seems heavily geared to helping people earn a living and improving their quality of life. Do you see that as a cure to many of Philly's problems? And if so why?

Absolutely. Poverty is the biggest issue facing our city. It underscores everything else. A study came out last year that found that there is, on average, a 20-year difference in life expectancy if you live in Center City versus North Philadelphia. That is unacceptable. Your zip code should not determine your life expectancy. So we need to address poverty and the systems that keep people, especially Black and brown people, locked into generational poverty. We will never be able to solve our problems without pulling people out of poverty and putting them on a path to real opportunity – and that includes making sure people have safe affordable housing, access to food and healthcare and green spaces, and a quality education in a safe school.

Can you briefly explain to me what the Public Comment Bill about that has caused so much backlash from the FOP? The public comment bill requires Council to hold a public hearing at least 30 days before the Administration submits their new contract proposal to the police union, and then it requires the Administration to send a letter to Council letting us know how they were influenced by public opinion. It simply allows people to have a voice in a process. I can't speak directly about the motivations behind the FOP's feelings about the bill, and they have sued the City over it, so I can't comment on that ongoing litigation, but the City's lawyers are confident that the bill is legal, and we held the first ever hearing as required by this bill on Wednesday, November 18 to give people the voice in the process that we promised them.

By Jimmy Will
Editor & Chief
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COUNCILMAN ISAIAH THOMAS KEEP IT LOCAL BILL RECIEVES STRONG SUPPORT IN CITY COUNCIL



City Councilman Isaiah Thomas “Keep It Local Bill” was voted out of the Committee of Commerce and Economic Development. The committee consists of Chair Councilmember Squilla, Vice Chair Councilmember Domb as well as Councilmembers Gilmore Richardson, Gauthier, Johnson, Jones, Brooks, Green and Oh.

The bill received testimony in support from the African American Chamber of Commerce. The bill will require the government to use local businesses when awarding contracts and increase reporting requirements for the procurement process. This bill is intended to encourage the city to engage more with local minority owned businesses. In a city where the

minority population is the majority, this bill should even the playing field. At this current point minority owned businesses receive only a small percentage of city contracts.

“In the midst of a pandemic, and as we prepare for a post-pandemic Philadelphia, we need to ensure that our local economy survives,” said Councilmember Isaiah Thomas. “My Keep It Local Bill would give local and diverse businesses a better opportunity for government contracts. We have talent in our backyard – it’s on us to harness and promote that talent.”

Not only will the bill allow local minority businesses to gain better access to govern-

ment contracts , but the bill will increase transparency and accountability.

In addition, an Annual Report will be created to show the types of contracts awarded, which businesses breach their contracts, procurement goals, and the means for achieving these goals. Our hope is that the Annual Report will be published and easily accessible on the City of Philadelphia website. The report will be a clear means to report the success of the bid and award process for city contracts.

“The local economy benefits when local businesses are preferred in the City’s contract award process,” said Harold T. Epps, Senior Advisor for Economic De-

velopment at Bellevue Strategies and former Director of Commerce under Mayor Kenney. “Councilmember Isaiah Thomas’ Keep it Local Bill exemplifies Philadelphia’s dedication to local business with a further emphasis on minority-owned businesses.

The Keep it Local Bill would help promote the economic recovery of the city’s minority-owned businesses through the contract award process.”

By Jimmy Will
Editor & Chief
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OP ED: MEET THE CRYPTO'S -THE FUTURE OF CURRENCY



By RS Broker

Greetings, from a place unknown, introducing the world of digital money. We are the cryptocurrency family. Starring Bitcoin, and some of its main players in the globe Ethereum, XRP, Litecoin, Chainlink, Cardano, Binance are some of the most popular coins in this digital atmosphere. And

they came to make fiat (paper cash) obsolete. It's CryptoCurrency and it's here to stay. We are going to focus on Bitcoin, as it's the most popular and first digital coin.

Bitcoin. We heard of this. It's the new money. Bitcoin is the US Dollar of all cryptocurrency. Basically, digital money can be sold or bought with bitcoin. It's money you could never hold in your hand. Its cash that is not issued by a government. It's money that you put in a digital wallet, not the wallet with the credit cards and the driver's license. What is cryptocurrency? It's electronic currency (money)

where transactions are validated, verified and maintained using different networks worldwide. It's almost impossible to duplicate or counterfeit these digital currencies because it's on decentralized networks. The Technology is called Blockchain, which is like a huge digital ledger and a bunch of computers. It's a peer to peer digital payment transfer system (it allows individuals to transact directly to each other without a bank).

Notice, how often do you go to the atm to get cash or use cash in your daily transactions? Not as much as you used to, especially if you're

over 30 years old. Cash is being used far less today than 10 years ago, and even debit/credit cards are showing signs of slowing down as Venmo, Cash App, PayPal, etc. are being used more and more. And then you add facts – JPM and Goldman Sachs – Wall Street firms started getting involved with the technology, then it's really something to consider as the future of money.


In summary, if you haven't yet, you need to start getting familiar with cryptocurrency. You can go to YouTube and review videos (for example see

TheGetMoneyShow on

YouTube, where StreetMoney and RS Broker discuss the future of cryptos). And if you want to invest, please use the link below. Whether your 20 or 60, a new transfer of wealth is upon the horizon. This isn't just the USA going through a change. The whole world is... It won't be easy, but you never know until you try. Oh, and don't forget to follow me on IG or YouTube at

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UPTOWN'S AWARD WINNING AUTHOR JIMMY DaSAINT



Famed singer Donnie McClurkin wrote “For a saint Is just a sinner who fell down, but we couldn't stay there, And got up.”

Many times its easy just pick out what a person has done negative in their past. But what if the fall actually creates a chance for growth?

What if the fall is what inspires us all?

Jimmy DaSaint who can be followed on Instagram Jimmydasaint1 where he following is over 10.6k strong. While his story is filled with rough times growing up in West Philadelphia he discovered a unique talent while in prison. “People would say to me you to nice to be a drug dealer.” DaSaint comes from Jimmy’s ability to not only hustle and make money in the game of drugs, but also somehow still inspire and encourage the community. “I have done and experienced a lot.” Jimmy admits, he witnessed some horrifying situations and even had to face his own trails being shot 10 times and serving time in prison.

“My books are true stories fictionalize.” Many of the books that Jimmy DaSaint writes come from deep darks parts of his past. While names and details are changed to fit the flow of the story if he writes about it he has the experience to make it feel real. “When I’m writing my books I try

information helps to build believable novels, and helps to make the story more realistic.”

Jimmy DaSaint is one of the first inmates to get a book contract while in prison. “Even in darkness the light shines on all that believe” these words along with the teaching from Psalms 34:19 are words that Jimmy lives by. “No matter how dark things get we have to be the change that we want to see in ourselves.” If this sounds like a movie that’s because it is.

On Amazon Jimmy DaSaint documentary “American Hustler” has reached over 2 million people worldwide and can be found on Amazon Prime. “The Saint” that was well known as both an angle to some an a foe to others is now growing and building a media empire and hints that he plans to build much like fame multimillionaire Tyler Perry did in Atlanta. “I want to give the talent in Philadelphia a place to shine.” With so many projects and movies to work on being around this man could definitely expose you to the world.

Already thinking ahead Jimmy DaSaint has a project called “You Only Live

Once” that is set to premier in 2021 and will feature all Philly artist. “We have all the talent we need right here in the city.” Books, movies, and music is something that much like baseball and basketball that Jimmy played in his youth at now closed down UCity High School, he still has time to grind.

For artist in the city of Philly if you haven’t heard the name “Jimmy DaSaint” it’s time to open your eyes. The author and producer is also the man in charge of the Philly Hip-Hop awards. “Help someone else because they will always remember it.” Life isn’t easy and Jimmy DaSaint will be the first person to

tell you that. In the darkest parts of his life he was able to take that pain and turmoil and turn into reality but through art.

It was famed Chicago artist Common said that said “There is a light that shines special for you and me.” Jimmy DaSaint is a light in the community and in the world ,all because he took the darkest time of his life to manifest a light that will shine forever.

By Andre Brown

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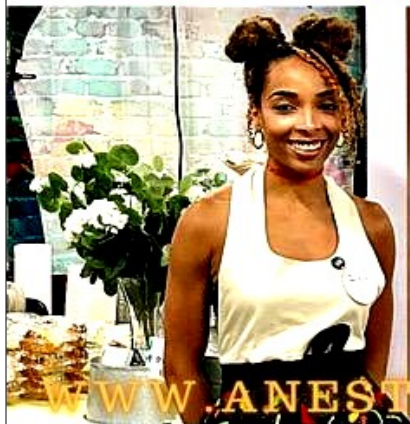
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CITY COUNCIL BANS POLICE USE OF RUBBER BULLETS AND TEAR GAS

On October 29, 2020, City Council passed a ban on police use of “less lethal” munitions. Becoming the largest city in the United States to pass such a ban.

The legislation was drafted to prevent situations like the one that occurred in West Philadelphia on May 31, and demonstrators that took place on I-676 on June 1. During both of these instances the PPD used tear gas, rubber bullets and pepper spray on both peaceful demonstrators and residents watching the protest.

During the hearing City Council received testimony from thirty-eight individuals who were involved in the protest that took part in West Philadelphia and on the Expressway. In their testimony they explained the horror of the incident and the trauma that have suffered from the PPD actions. Many residents of West Philadelphia still have vivid memories of the Move Bombing. And this is yet another situation that has caused the residents of West Philadelphia to lose trust in the PPD.

City Councilwoman Helen Gym had the following to say:

“We chose a public process of listening, of truth telling, of accountability, driven by the voices and experiences of the people we serve,” said Councilmember Gym. “In banning the police use of less lethal munitions in response to demonstrations, we are answering the calls of our constituents. This is a moment where repairing trust between our residents, public officials, and police is essential. Residential neighborhoods are not warzones. Demonstrators are not enemy combatants. This is a first step in working with our communities to build a new model for public safety that is driven by their needs and their vision for the future.”

City Councilwoman Jamie Gauthier, who is the elected Councilperson from West Philadelphia had the following remarks regarding the incident that took place in her district:

“Brutal, militarized policing tactics have reinforced trauma in our Black communities for decades,” said Councilmember Jamie Gauthier. “This legislation is an important step to repair the relationship between police and the communities they serve.”

City Council’s received testimony from West Philadelphia resident and victim of the PPD brutal response to the protests Bedjy Jeanty spoke on his experience of the events that took place in West Philadelphia by stating:

“If you are black in America, we are afraid of what police officers might do to us,” said Bedjy Jeanty, a resident of West Philadelphia who spoke with a police officer leading a line of officers confronting protesters. “I stood tall to him and put my right fist in the air and my head down and all of a sudden I got hit with a rubber bullet. I began walking towards the officer and got hit with his baton, and I didn’t notice that the armored truck had pulled up next to me while my head was down. I was pepper sprayed and everyone was running for our lives.” “I am still a Black in America, and I still fear for my children,” said Bedjy Jeanty, resident of West Philadelphia.

University of Pennsylvania physician and health policy researcher Joseph Nwadiuko spoke on the results of being shot with rubber bullets and tear gas has on the human body during his testimony. He satiated “Patients can sustain substantial skin burns and dangerous blood pressure elevations,” Nwadiuko said. “Tear gas can cause permanent eye damage leading to glaucoma and blindness.

Airways can swell shut causing patients to have life-threatening respiratory distress; other patients have been known to sustain liver damage, requiring acute medical attention. Swelling of the lungs themselves is a side effect, known to lead to intensive care admissions. Worse still are the effects if these chemicals reach peo-

ple that already have comorbidities. If patients already have asthma, as 19 percent of Philadelphians do, they can provoke a dangerous asthma attack.”

The testimony presented a description of the actions of the PPD that would trouble the conscience of anyone who was in attendance. Leaving the City Council

members on the committee with no choice but to move this legislation out of committee and to the floor for a full vote. .

By Jimmy Will
Editor & Chief

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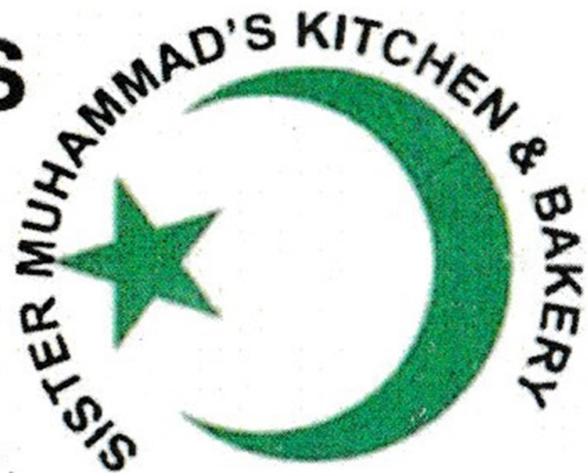
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