

Packer Park Civic Association

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www.packerparkcivic.org

"WORKING TOGETHER TO SERVE & UNITE OUR COMMUNITY"

3320 South 20th Street - Phila. Pa. 19145

Direct - (215) 551 5100

To: The Honorable Stewart Greenleaf
Chairman - Pennsylvania Senate Judiciary Committee

Re: SB 1095

Date: April 24, 2014

PRESIDENT

BARBARA A. CAPOZZI, ESQ.

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MARK RAGO

* CHAIRPERSON OF COMMITTEE

Thank you Senator Farnese for trying to protect us volunteers and Thank you Senator Greenleaf for understanding the very difficult situation good honest civics are in currently. The demise of Old City Civic is an ugly story that has chilled us all. Civics need strong protections against those harassing lawsuits. Thank you for taking the time to listen.

My name is Barbara Capozzi,

My volunteer activities include;

** Treasurer - Sports Complex Special Services District

** Secretary - Friends of FDR Park

** Interim Board Member of Phila Crosstown Coalition

** President - Justinian Foundation

** Board member - Building Industry Association

& most time consuming of all

** Immediate Past President - Greater Phila Assoc of Realtors

** President - Packer Park Civic Association - 30+ years -

All but two of these groups has expensive, extensive D & O insurance – with costs climbing every year - even though none of these groups has every even had a hint of a claim against the Board. At a cost of approx. \$2500 - \$3500. It is very difficult for some of these groups to cover that cost. Packer Park Civic pays approx.. \$2950. Per year – our dues are \$10. per year.

WE are all volunteers here - which means in the midst of the many full time challenging jobs we all juggle - we take time, make time to do volunteer tasks that serve to make our communities better or educate and promote our professions.

It is almost IMPOSSIBLE now to recruit volunteers - very difficult to get others to join our efforts, seems that a few people put forth the most effort - the fear of being sued personally for

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your volunteer efforts has now made recruiting volunteers even more difficult.

As President of PPCA, for many years I have negotiated with Comcast, Eagles, Phillies: Placement of new stadiums, scheduling rules - expansion of Comcast's arena, Xfinity Live, currently expansion of Eagles Practice Facility. Of course, we treat each other with the deepest respect, and with the common goal of making their businesses thrive while at the same time effectively co-existing with one of the most peaceful, green, communities in the City.

Maintaining this balance is not easy - the fact remains that if they so desired, Comcast, Eagles, Phillies could crush us like a bug - their lawyers are surely better than anyone I could retain. Indeed, I doubt I could retain competent counsel since the better firms in the City would be conflicted out.

A stronger SB 1095 would serve to send a message of protection to all the hard working volunteers who in good faith take actions to protect their communities and their Quality of Life. The changes suggested by Steve Huntington, Philadelphia Crosstown Coalition, are excellent and will serve as some measure of protection for civics from lawsuits meant to punish us for speaking out.

SB 1095 will cause plaintiffs to pause a bit before they file malicious and frivolous lawsuits against well meaning volunteers, while it still preserves their right to sue for good cause.

Many neighborhoods right now are fighting back against huge digital billboards proposed for their communities. Unfortunately, the billboard owners are very politically connected, having reaped huge profits from their outdoor signs, they are very, very generous. They are all represented by the best lawyers in the City and they are all determined to ruin the

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landscape and beauty of the City with these huge TV's on a pole. I predict the next battlefield where a lawsuit meant to annihilate a civic is filed will be over this digital billboard issue. It might be me.

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Thank You for listening, thank you for having the hearing is in Phila. Please consider the amendments suggested by Philadelphia Crosstown Coalition. Please pass this legislation quickly so that volunteers everywhere can continue their legitimate and responsible advocacy without fear and perhaps enable us more easily recruit new volunteers. .

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Capozzi

CC Honorable Larry Farnese
First Senatorial District

Civic Association