

Good morning. My name is David Fair and I am here today representing the Philly Homes 4 Youth Coalition.

A few years ago, researchers from the University of Chicago conducted the first – and to date only – in-depth needs assessment of youth and young adults who were street homeless in Philadelphia.

They found that on any given evening, while most of us are sitting down for dinner, over 600 Philadelphians aged 14-24 are ... not doing that. That's because they are living on the street, living doubled up in the home of a friend, in the home of a trick, or of some other person aiming to take advantage of them. The survey found that one in three of those youth on the street in any given night is LGBTQ.

I came to testify today as a longtime gay activist to call on the City government, and on the conscience of the LGBTQ community itself, to wake up and, urgently, step up to come to the rescue of our homeless young people.

It's widely known that young LGBTQ people make up a significant proportion of the sex worker industry in Philadelphia, meaning that our community is more open to taking advantage of our homeless young people than offering them help.

Philadelphia has largely failed to address the solvable problem of youth homelessness in the city. Among those young people abandoned by that failure is the one-in-three who are LGBTQ.

I'm sick and tired that the City government, and my own community, continues to ignore this crisis. Tonight, hundreds of our own teens and young adults will have no home to go to. Tonight! It's time we do something about it.

I commend Councilwoman Landau for speaking out for our community for more than just our legal rights. I pray that she will be able to mobilize City government, and our community, to once and for all, invest in solutions for our homeless youth as well.

Thank you.