

Testimony in support of Councilman Frank DiCico Bills
Presented by Richard A. Wolk, Member Board of Directors,
QVNA and Delaware River Neighbors Alliance

Madame President and council members I thank you for this opportunity to voice my support for Councilman DiCico's bills that are before you today. Today I represent the newer residents of Philadelphia and why we have moved into the city.

Almost four years ago my wife and I moved to Queen Village after spending months looking at properties throughout the city. We chose Queen Village because it is truly a village within a large city. An historic village comprised of row houses, many of which are the oldest structures in our city. Some inhabited by 5 and 6 generation families. The historic significance of Old Swedes Church as a testament to the Swedish immigrants who settled here before William Penn. The Shot Tower one of only two still standing in our nation and its significance to the War of 1812. The houses and factories along Front St. testament to the earliest merchants and workers who came off the ships and settled here. All of this history facing the Delaware River a stones throw from where a Casino might be built with its massive windowless boxes and garish neon signs.

What is it about Queen Village that my neighbors and I love? It's the diversity and community of the people. It's the pleasure of walking its historic streets. It's the accessibility by foot to wonderful dining, shopping, and culture and to the Delaware River itself. It's the green parks, community gardens and the playgrounds. We have a community that is involved and works tirelessly to preserve the heritage of our village. Even the quality of the neighborhood's public grade school has remained one of the best through active parent-teacher involvement.

Philadelphia is a city that thrives on tourism based on its historic place in the formation of our country. Families, far and wide, bring their children here to see where it all began. Visitors from foreign lands come to Philadelphia to experience the cradle of liberty. Families are the backbone of Philadelphia tourism. They stay at our hotels, eat at our restaurants and shop at our stores.

Las Vegas is the perfect example where gambling and family entertainment does not mix. It started out as sin city. Spent millions trying to turn it into a family resort –it didn't work! You have heard their slogan: “What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas.”

Queen Village is a quiet, wonderful neighborhood. At community meetings people who have been here for years talk about moving their families out if the casino comes. Please help us save this historic jewel for future generations who may not have the opportunity to see how people lived in the 18th and 19th century.