



# THE PHILADELPHIA TRIBUNE

## Changing Philadelphia's Home Rule Charter

Robert Woodard | Posted: Tuesday, June 16, 2015 5:00 am

A referendum to change the home rule charter will be the subject of conversation of Mayor Michael A. Nutter and Counsel President Darrell L. Clarke. This might sound confusing to some citizens in the city that attended the public school system, because most under-educated people who are graduates of Philadelphia public schools, are handicapped in reading writing and arithmetic. My question is how can you make a proper decision when asked to vote on complex questions once inside the voting booth?

Our elected officials are paid good salaries to make decisions on these complex issues. When and how can elected officials help the educationally handicapped graduates of the Philadelphia public schools understand how to make proper decisions in the voting booth? In 2012, West Philadelphia High School had 55 percent non-graduates and in 2014, Strawberry Mansion High School only had 36 percent on time graduates. This means the mothers and fathers of those children probably graduated from the Philadelphia public school system. How many children through the years have been pushed through school and graduated with diplomas, only to realize they were unprepared for the challenges in life that awaited them?

Cities all over this country have similar problems in inner city areas. Politics is a tricky business, so you must have a good education to understand how to make proper decisions when voting. Violence in the streets of Philadelphia is running ramped. We as citizens of all ethnicities, who are ready, willing and able, should find ways to help our fellow citizens who have graduated from the Philadelphia public schools and cannot read, write, spell or count well enough, to fill out an application in order to get or keep a job. By helping these educationally handicapped citizens get a proper education, we will be helping to stop the violence in the streets of Philadelphia and in other cities around this nation.

Just imagine going through life with a diploma that reads you have completed twelve years in the Philadelphia public school, yet you know you are educationally handicapped. Where do you go? What can you do now that you are an adult with your own children? Most adults with these problems are embarrassed to say the least. These parents, in many cases, don't want to let their children know they have been cheated out of a proper education and now have an educational handicap. In many cases, some are ashamed to attend home and school programs, because this could reveal their terrible dilemma. It is said that education starts at home. I would agree that it does, but only if the parents at the home have a proper education. It takes a village to raise a child, but it will take this entire Nation to help those who were pushed through inner city public school districts and graduated with a diploma, but without the proper education. Remember voting is your right, but knowing what you are voting for takes a proper education. Especially, when voters are asked to vote on complex issues, such as restructuring the city government and changing Philadelphia's Home Rule Charter.

Raising the real estate taxes to get more money for the school district should entail making sure every citizen receives a good and proper education. This way, the village of Philadelphia will improve and create equal opportunities to give quality education, not just for some, but for all.

Robert L. Woodard, "The Wynnefield Barber" is a Philadelphia barber and writer