

# City of Philadelphia



Council of the City of Philadelphia  
Office of the Chief Clerk  
Room 402, City Hall  
Philadelphia

(Resolution No. 240232)

## RESOLUTION

Honoring and recognizing the life, work, and accomplishments of Mercedes Reyes, whose inspiring energy and insistence on creating safety, dignity, justice, and support for domestic workers in Philadelphia has protected and enriched the lives of people across the country.

WHEREAS, Mercedes Reyes was born in El Salvador and began working as a domestic worker there when she was 11 years old, coming to Philadelphia during the El Salvador Civil War in 1988. She has since worked with children, cleaned homes, and lived-in with families doing domestic work, while caring for her large family; and

WHEREAS, While doing domestic work in Philadelphia, Mercedes has experienced significant abuse. She has been paid as little as \$2 per hour during her 14 years as a live-in domestic worker; and

WHEREAS, She has faced wage theft, discrimination, total lack of health insurance or other supports – including suffering a slip-and-fall that put her in the hospital for 11 days without employer support; and

WHEREAS, Mercedes has been a community leader advocating across a number of issues, with particular focus on uplifting domestic workers and her neighborhood. She is a leader of the National Domestic Workers Alliance - Pennsylvania Chapter; and

WHEREAS, Mercedes was instrumental in the passage of the Domestic Workers Bill of Rights in Philadelphia. She has spoken to dozens of elected officials, press, and provided testimony while organizing dozens of domestic workers into the movement; and

WHEREAS, The Domestic Workers Bill of Rights was an unprecedented accomplishment and set an example for cities across the country to follow in protecting low-wage workers. Mercedes has continued to work on improving protections to ensure the Domestic Workers Bill of Rights is realized; and

WHEREAS, Community members gather in Mercedes' home for everything from living room

# City of Philadelphia

*RESOLUTION NO. 240232 continued*

know-your-rights training sessions to PPE distribution to sharing a safe space. People come in and out of Mercedes' house – she is a bedrock of her community and one of the first places recent arrivals to her neighborhood go for support; and

WHEREAS, The Philadelphia Inquirer published an important opinion by Mercedes, who was struggling to get vaccinated despite her age and essential worker status. The piece shined a light on the difficulties faced by people in Philadelphia in desperate need of care, and the struggles their loved ones face every day to this day; and

WHEREAS, Mercedes is a leader in her church, caregiver for her great granddaughter, and is known for her constant smile and grace; and

WHEREAS, After more than 70 years doing domestic work, Mercedes recently retired at the age of 82. She leaves the domestic work industry with a remarkable legacy of her commitment to fight for better conditions and equitable treatment of domestic workers; and

WHEREAS, Mercedes has continued to fight for the next generation of domestic workers so that they do not have to experience the same abuses that she did; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA Honors and recognizes the life, work, and accomplishments of Mercedes Reyes, whose inspiring energy and insistence on creating safety, dignity, justice, and support for domestic workers in Philadelphia has protected and enriched the lives of people across the country.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to Mercedes Reyes, as an expression of the admiration and respect of this legislative body.

# City of Philadelphia

*RESOLUTION NO. 240232 continued*

# City of Philadelphia

*RESOLUTION NO. 240232 continued*

CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the twenty first day of March, 2024.

Kenyatta Johnson  
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Elizabeth McCollum  
INTERIM CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember Brooks

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Brooks, Council President Johnson, Councilmember Gauthier, Ahmad, O'Rourke, Phillips, Gilmore Richardson, Squilla, Harrity, Driscoll, Lozada, Thomas and Landau