

Legislation Text

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Honoring and recognizing Wilfredo P. Rojas for his towering achievements as a leading civil rights activist for the Latino community in Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, Wilfredo P. (Wil) Rojas co-founded the Philadelphia Chapter of the Young Lords Party, inspired by the 1970's political movement dedicated to mobilizing youth around the cause of social-economic justice for all people; and

WHEREAS, As President of the Philadelphia Chapter of the National Congress for Puerto Rican Rights as well as a local newspaper columnist, radio talk show host, co-founder of numerous activity and community development organizations and secondary school and drug & alcohol counselor, Rojas has established himself as a longstanding, multi-faceted advocate for the Latino community; and

WHEREAS, Alongside community leaders, Rojas helped established the Latino Coalition on Reapportionment which successfully advocated for the creation of the 180th legislative district and enabled the community to elect the first Latino State Representative; and

WHEREAS, His political activism led him to run for office twice in which voter turnout in the 180th legislative district was a historic 92%; and

WHEREAS, In efforts to improve public safety in the Latino community, Rojas assisted Jack Plaza in the creation of SALEA, the first Police Organization for Latinos in Philadelphia and established the first town watch in the Puerto Rican community to further positive police-community relations between Police Districts 24, 25, and 26; and

WHEREAS, Committed to criminal justice reform, Rojas served as the Director of the Philadelphia Prison System's Office of Community Justice and Outreach after serving seventeen years as a social worker and social work supervisor for the department; and

WHEREAS, Rojas worked at Community Legal Services as a distinguished advocate against injustices and discrimination; and

WHEREAS, Rojas co-founded numerous organizations which serve the diverse Latino community of Philadelphia including the Norris Square Civic Association, Inc. and the Puerto Rican Alliance; and

WHEREAS, His efforts within the public education system in New Jersey led to successfully encouraging former Governor Christie to increase school funding. Rojas also served as Vice President and Communications Director of the Gloucester County NAACP and was appointed as the first person of color to serve on the township's planning board; and

WHEREAS, Rojas was later presented with the PNC Bank Jefferson Award's Martin Luther King, Jr. Champion for Justice Award by then Governor Christie; and

WHEREAS, He remains a staunch advocate for inclusion and diversity dedicated to serving his community; now therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby honors and recognizes Wilfredo P. Rojas for his towering achievements as a leading civil rights activist for the Latino community in Philadelphia.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to the family of Wilfredo Rojas, further evidencing the sincere admiration and respect of this legislative body.