



Legislation Text

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Congratulating Honorable Nelson Diaz on the release of his new book, entitled, *Not from Here, Not from There/No Soy de Aquí ni de Allá: The Autobiography of Nelson Díaz*, and recognizing Nelson for his continued contributions to the Philadelphia Community;

WHEREAS, Nelson Diaz, was raised in a New York tenement until age ten, grew up to become the first Latino ever admitted to the Bar Association in Pennsylvania, the first Latino ever to serve as judge in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; the first Latino ever to partner in a Philadelphia “Big Law” firm; and the first non-white General Counsel for the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the first Philadelphia City Solicitor of Latino heritage; and

WHEREAS, Nelson is a proud Puerto Rican who has dedicated himself to breaking barriers for the Puerto Rican Community through his support of mentorship, entrepreneurship, and social justice. Nelson’s service in the Puerto Rican community has been exemplary and deserving of all the honors and praise bestowed on him; and

WHEREAS, Nelson Diaz has been a leading advocate for quality affordable housing since he moved out of his tenement to a newly constructed public housing development in West Harlem and saw the transformative impact that quality housing can have on a family. In Philadelphia, he founded HACE, a community development corporation that has provided safe and healthy homes for hundreds of families. In Washington, he focused HUD on increasing public and mixed-use housing; and

WHEREAS, Nelson Diaz, a proud graduate of the Temple University Beasley School of Law, has spent his career fighting for justice and representation among Latinos in the Philadelphia business and legal community. He developed the Bloque de Oro commercial corridor; he opened the City’s procurement processes to minority contractors; he is a member of the Board of Directors of PECO Energy; and he continues to fight for greater Latino representation on public and corporate boards; and

WHEREAS, Nelson Diaz helped found or chair several trailblazing organizations to connect and empower Latino leaders, including the Philadelphia Hispanic Bar Association, the White House’s Latino Office, the Democratic National Committee’s Hispanic Caucus, and the National Foundation for Credit Counseling; and

WHEREAS, Nelson Diaz’s vision of justice is embedded in our City, State, and Federal Government. In 1977, he served as Special Assistant to Vice President Walter Mondale on a White House fellowship. In 1981, he was elected to the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas. In 1993, he was appointed by President Bill Clinton as General Counsel of HUD. In 2001, he was appointed by Mayor John Street as City Solicitor and was the first Latino to hold this position; and

WHEREAS, Nelson Diaz’s autobiography traces the modest roots of a successful lawyer and activist, who dedicated his life to expanding the rights of *all* Philadelphians and *all* Americans. His never-ending endeavors demonstrate his dedication to service and his capacity as a leader for equality. On top of his many other titles, past and present, Nelson Diaz can now add “author” to his list of accomplishments; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby recognizes Nelson Diaz on his unprecedented contributions to the Philadelphia Community, and celebrates the release of his autobiography.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to Nelson Diaz as evidence of the sincere admiration and respect of this legislative body.