

Legislation Text

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Congratulating Esteban Vera Jr., on his appointment to SEPTA's board of directors, making him the first Latino person to serve on the transit agency's governing body.

WHEREAS, On March 4, 2021, Esteban Vera Jr., became the first Latino to serve on SEPTA's board of directors. He was appointed to the role by State House Minority Leader Joanna McClinton; and

WHEREAS, Vera is of Puerto Rican descent and was raised in the Fairhill section of North Philadelphia. After graduating high school, Vera joined the military and was deployed to Bosnia. After returning from Bosnia, Vera went into construction with his uncles; and

WHEREAS, For the last five years, Vera has been the business manager for Laborers Union Local 57. Vera started his work with the Laborers in 2005 as a volunteer while still working in construction. Two years later he was offered a role as Organizer. Through this role, he advocated and fought on behalf of exploited workers demanding better working conditions and fair pay; and

WHEREAS, Before he could rise to new leadership roles within the union, Vera attended National Labor College in Maryland. During this time, he studied invaluable strategies such as negotiating contracts; and

WHEREAS, Due to his successful negotiating skills, Vera was able to become a delegate to the Laborers Council of the Metropolitan Area of Philadelphia and Vicinity. In 2016, in his role as Business Manager, he became the first Latino person to be the leader of a major union in this region. Vera has used his position to help push for more inclusivity and diversity within unions stating, "If I see a lack of Latinos or African-Americans, I'll bring that up in a heartbeat"; and

WHEREAS, Laborers Local 57 is one of four local unions that make up The Laborers District Council of Philadelphia and Vicinity. For approximately 75 years, their members have worked on infrastructure in the City - mostly roads, bridges, and highways. Their work is primarily related to the Heavy and Highway Construction Division; and

WHEREAS, In an *Al Día* article, Vera talked about a lesson he learned from his dad: "Don't waste an opportunity...because you might have it to help somebody else." He hopes to take these wise words and apply it to his newest role; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby congratulates Esteban Vera Jr., on his appointment to SEPTA's board of directors, making him the first Latino person to serve on the transit agency's governing body.

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

