



Legislation Text

File #: 220668, Version: 0

Honoring and recognizing Juntos on their 20th Anniversary for their inspiring and transformative work serving, caring for, and organizing the Latinx immigrant community in South Philadelphia and beyond, and their leadership in fighting for the right to a quality education and the freedom to live with dignity, regardless of immigration status.

WHEREAS, Juntos is a community-led, Latinx immigrant organization in South Philadelphia, that advocates and empowers workers, parents, youth, and immigrants while honoring and caring for the community they serve; and

WHEREAS, Juntos has been a leader in efforts to make Philadelphia a true sanctuary city in both policy and practice. As a key member of the Philadelphia Family Unity Network, Juntos drove years of powerful organizing and coalition-building to end city collaboration with ICE that had caused devastating deportations and family separations. They won a groundbreaking executive order that upheld the rights of all Philadelphians regardless of immigration status, and went on to ensure its policies were reinstated when under threat and ultimately expanded through the long-awaited end of the city's data-sharing agreement with ICE; and

WHEREAS, When the Trump administration brutally targeted immigrant communities in our city, Juntos boldly re-envisioned sanctuary as centered in community organizing, creating a Community Resistance Zone in South Philadelphia, where community members are empowered to understand their rights and are prepared and committed to defending their rights and those of their neighbors. Juntos trained thousands of Philadelphians and built a network of hundreds of resistors-underscoring all that is possible when we work together to protect ourselves; and

WHEREAS, Juntos has also mobilized to end inhumane national immigration policies and detention practices that have devastated families and communities in Philadelphia and far beyond. With local and national partners, they have fought with fierce dedication and creativity in order to end family detention in Berks, to shut down and release those imprisoned in York, and to prevent family separation and the warehousing of refugee children, as well as to increase access to legal help and representation for those in detention. They have made clear the human cost of injustice, driving public attention and action to both protect individual community members-including by literally providing physical sanctuary if necessary-and to show the need for structural change; and

WHEREAS, Juntos has spearheaded transformational efforts to ensure that our schools are places of sanctuary and learning rather than spaces of criminalization and fear. After a mother was detained by ICE after she dropped her child off at a bus stop near an elementary school, Juntos organized, interviewed hundreds of school employees, developed detailed policies, and achieved the School District of Philadelphia's unanimous adoption of the "Welcoming Sanctuary Schools" resolution, a policy that acknowledges the harm of federal immigration enforcement on or around school property and implements clear protocols and training to protect against ICE incursion into district schools; and

WHEREAS, Juntos has constantly made space for, developed, and empowered youth in our city's Latinx

immigrant community. For the past decade Juntos has led a youth committee, Fuerza, as well as an arts-integrated social justice practice to offer after-school workshops, arts-builds, and community celebrations to build critical awareness, resiliency, and expression amongst youth and community members. Juntos youth leaders have been powerful voices in the movement to fully fund and resource our city's public schools and for education justice; and

WHEREAS, During the pandemic, Juntos has demonstrated the power and necessity of community work based in mutual aid. When Covid hit, Juntos launched a phone bank, quickly recruiting 100 volunteers to call 2,000 community members, assess their employment situation, food security, and medical issues, and how children in the home were coping with the pandemic. Juntos soon began delivering care packages, full of food, household items, and art supplies for children. Later, Juntos worked with partner organizations to connect community members with life-saving vaccinations, providing a familiar location and a trusted face. To this day, Juntos continues to provide weekly mutual aid events and ongoing casework, cementing them as an essential hub of support for Latinx immigrant community members facing hardship; and

WHEREAS, Over the course of two decades, Juntos has played an invaluable role in building power and community for the Latinx immigrant community in Philadelphia, and serving as an example to others through its principled and creative activism; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Honors and recognizes Juntos on their 20th Anniversary for their inspiring and transformative work serving, caring for, and organizing the Latinx immigrant community in South Philadelphia and beyond, and their leadership in fighting for the right to a quality education and the freedom to live with dignity, regardless of immigration status.

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