



District of Columbia Statehood Congressional Delegation

US Senator Paul Strauss
US Senator Michael D. Brown
US Representative Franklin Garcia

A RESOLUTION

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR THE LIFE AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF SONIA GUTIERREZ

WHEREAS, Sonia Gutierrez was born on July 8, 1939 in San Juan, Puerto Rico, is currently the President Emeritus & Founder of the Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School, and has spent over 43 years as a principal, counselor, advocate, and organizer to more than 70,000 adult immigrant students.

WHEREAS, Ms. Gutiérrez began her career in the District of Columbia Public Schools in 1972 as a counselor of the Program for English Instruction to Latin Americans (PEILA). There she began her mission: to provide holistic education to adult immigrants with little formal education in their native countries, enabling them to succeed by addressing their social and academic needs.

WHEREAS, In 1974, the Office of Right to Read of the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare designated PEILA as one of the best literacy programs in the nation. As PEILA outgrew its facility, Ms. Gutierrez commenced an effort to secure a school building for the program. In 1978 she was successful in relocating the program to the old Gordon Junior High School in Georgetown; PEILA then merged with the old Americanization School with an initial enrollment of 800.

WHEREAS, In 1992, Ms. Gutierrez requested that the city council rename the school after Carlos Rosario who founded PEILA. Subsequently, it grew to provide 4,500 students per year with crucial language, cultural, vocational and job skills with a waiting list of 2,000. The school became a national model. Delegations from other states and even other nations frequently visited the center to review its operations and curriculum, seeking to replicate the program.

WHEREAS, In 1996, the District of Columbia faced a financial crisis that brought about the elimination of all DC Public Schools adult education programs including the Carlos Rosario Adult Education Center. Ms. Gutierrez vowed to rebuild the school for the benefit of her students and her community. From August 1996 to March 1997, Ms. Gutierrez worked out

of the basement of her home and raised funds from local foundations to reopen the school as the non-profit Carlos Rosario International Career Center. The new school opened its doors in 1997 with Ms. Gutierrez as Executive Director & Founder. Recognizing the tremendous need for additional classes, Ms. Gutierrez actively sought for Public Charter School funding. She succeeded and in 1998 the school became the first Adult Public Charter School in the nation.

WHEREAS, After an extensive Capital Campaign Ms. Gutiérrez was able to secure and renovate a facility and brought the six different sites together in the state of the art building located at 1100 Harvard Street N.W. Today with an additional brand new campus in DC's Ward 5, the non-profit Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School provides more than 2500 students with English as a Second Language, GED in Spanish and English, courses in different areas of technology, citizenship classes, culinary arts, nurse aide, family literacy and Spanish classes. Ms. Gutierrez continues to train a new generation of Rosario faculty and staff to ensure that Carlos Rosario School provides its model of excellence for years to come. In 2005 the school received full accreditation from the Middle State School Association and in 2006 also received an award from the DC Mayor as one of the 10 best Charter Schools in the city. The school was re-accredited for another seven-year term in 2012 and the Charter was renewed for 15 additional years in the summer of 2013.

RESOLVED, BY THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA STATEHOOD CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION, that this resolution recognizes and honors Sonia Gutierrez for her historic and selfless commitment to public service, presented on, the 5th Day of June, 2015.

Senator Paul Strauss

Senator Michael D. Brown

Representative Franklin Garcia