



# MARIA

## QUIÑONES SÁNCHEZ

Councilmember - 7th District

Serving the residents of:

Castor Gardens, Fairhill,  
Feltonville, Frankford, Harrowgate,  
Hunting Park, Juniata, Kensington,  
Oxford Circle, Norris Square,  
and Wissanoming.



# Bold Leadership



## Maria Quiñones Sánchez

Councilmember Maria D. Quiñones Sánchez is a veteran activist with over 30 years of service to the City of Philadelphia, currently serving her fourth four-year term representing eastern North Philadelphia's 7th District. As a child Maria migrated to Hunting Park in North Philadelphia from Puerto Rico with her mother, a factory worker who helped raise her 18 brothers and sisters. Growing up in North Philly, Maria began her life's work of empowering her neighbors and fighting for grassroots social change.

In 2007 she made history as first Puerto Rican elected to City Council and defeated the local political bosses. She hasn't stopped since, fighting for restorative investments in underserved communities. Known for her hard work, tenacity and commitment to reform, she represents a cost-burdened district in the poorest big city in America. She ran to fight for economic justice and to keep families in their homes by making historic changes in city government.

Maria lives in Norris Square in North Philadelphia with her husband, Tomas. They have two sons, Edgar and Tomasito, and are grandparents to Jace Antonio and Romeo Esteban.

**“I've spent my entire career fighting to improve the lives, resources and well-being of the people of Philadelphia”**

### Leadership and Committee Assignments

**Chair:** Committees on Appropriations and Education

**Co-Chair:** Special Committee on Poverty Reduction & Prevention

**Member:** Committees on Ethics; Finance; Fiscal Stability & Intergovernmental Cooperation; Global Opportunities & the Creative/Innovative Economy; Housing, Neighborhood Development, & the Homeless; Labor & Civil Service; Law & Government; Parks, Recreation & Cultural Affairs; Rules

Maria is proud of her roots. From 1988 through 1996, Maria served in several city government positions including Deputy Commissioner of Elections and Legislative Assistant in City Council. She formerly served as regional director for the Puerto Rico Federal Affairs Administration (PRFAA), executive director of ASPIRA, a Latino educational institution, and founder of the first bilingual charter school in the state, the Eugenio Maria de Hostos Community Charter School. She is a founding member of the Pennsylvania Statewide Latino Coalition.

A detailed street map of Philadelphia's 7th Council District, outlined in red. The map shows a grid of streets including major thoroughfares like Market Street, Center City Expressway, and University City Expressway. Neighboring districts are outlined in yellow. The Schuylkill River is visible at the bottom. The number '7' is prominently displayed in the lower-left corner of the district boundary.

# The 7th District

The 7th Council District covers parts of Castor Gardens, Fairhill, Feltonville, Frankford, Harrowgate, Hunting Park, Juniata, Kensington, Oxford Circle, Norris Square, and Wissinoming.

“The budget is a moral document. Let’s go back to basics to ensure city departments equitably serve all Philadelphians. When we work together, we can help people increase their income and access opportunities that improve their quality of life.”

*-Maria Quiñones Sánchez*

# Our Current CRISIS

Maria is no stranger to crisis. After years of seeing an influential few call the shots in Philadelphia, she began her service on City Council during a catastrophic budget crisis, fighting to preserve school funding and minimize service cuts. Maria stands up for the most vulnerable, and her political vision is rooted in her fierce loyalty to defend and empower those most in need.

During the COVID-19 pandemic Maria brought resources for testing and relief dollars to Philadelphia's poorest neighborhoods, and successfully lobbied for a bilingual mass vaccination site in North Philadelphia.

As Appropriations Chair, she ensured accountability and transparency for \$85 million in emergency funding and worked to close a projected \$750 million budget gap in FY21. She cut the red tape and championed policy changes to safely reopen our economy and send direct assistance to families and small businesses.

An equitable pandemic recovery is Philadelphia's next great challenge, and Maria is on the front lines.



# Combating POVERTY



To change Philadelphia's status as America's poorest big city, we must invest in people and families so they can access supports, jobs, education, and housing. Co-Chairing Council's Special Committee on Poverty, Maria brought every partner to the table to find better ways to make meaningful investments that help working families thrive.

## ■ **Special Committee on Poverty Reduction & Prevention:**


Maria, with co-chairs Eva Gladstein, Sharmain Matlock-Turner, and Mel Wells, set an ambitious goal of moving 100,000 Philadelphians out of Poverty by 2024. Public hearings were held, which included over 100 subject matter experts.

## ■ **The Poverty Action Fund:**

In 2020, Maria led the City to commit an unprecedented \$10 million downpayment that leverages investments in benefits access, workforce development, educational supports, and affordable housing. A key recommendation from the Poverty Action Plan, the Poverty Action Fund is a public-private partnership managed by United Way, bringing leaders across sectors together to guide investments in people.

## ■ **Neighborhood Preservation Initiative:**

In 2020, Maria introduced Res. 200379 calling for a Black stimulus package for our neighborhoods: \$500 million invested in affordable housing and neighborhood commercial corridors. In 2021, City Council passed the Neighborhood Preservation Initiative, a \$400 million Neighborhood Stimulus for affordable housing, family-sustaining jobs, and anti-displacement initiatives. 100,000 out of poverty by 2024; \$100 million was allocated for 2021-2022.



# Focusing on **HOUSING**

## Protecting Housing

### ■ **City-Wide Anti-Displacement Initiatives:**

Maria has authored over 30 major bills to prevent displacement, keep families in their homes, and promote equitable development. These 'tools in the toolbox' include: income-based tax payment plans and tax relief for low-income homeowners (OOPA, LOOP, Senior Tax Freeze & the Homestead Exemption); utility supports including Philadelphia's internationally recognized water affordability program (TAP); and direct assistance for rent, down payments, home repairs, and eviction & foreclosure prevention.

### ■ **7th District Anti-Displacement Initiatives:**

The 7th District leads the city in remapping and zoning code reform to preserve neighborhood character & history, spur growth in neighborhood commercial corridors, promote mixed-income, mixed-use development, and make sure community voices are heard. Maria works closely with community organizations to ensure that development enhances quality of life for long-term residents without displacement. In 2020, with the American Street Overlay, Maria established the strongest affordable housing requirements in Philadelphia.

### ■ **COVID-19 Rental Assistance & Emergency Housing Protections Act**

Maria aggressively supported the Emergency Housing Protections Act, which provided emergency protections for landlords and tenants during the pandemic, including eviction moratorium, eviction diversion program, a repayment plan, and prohibitions against late fees and illegal lockouts.

As Appropriations Committee Chair, Maria also helped appropriate more than \$100 million in federal, state, and local emergency rental assistance to landlords and tenants, and helped simplify the design of phases 1-4 of PHLRentAssist to disburse funds immediately and directly to landlords and tenants in crisis before and after the onset of the pandemic.

Diverse, mixed-income neighborhoods don't happen by accident. Maria is a leading voice fighting for investments in affordable housing and creating tools to preserve affordability in every neighborhood.

■ **\$100 Million for Affordable Housing:**

In 2018, Maria won an unprecedented commitment of \$100 million for the Housing Trust Fund for affordable housing and homelessness prevention. This five year investment to support equitable development, assist first-time homeowners, and construct new affordable units, resulted from over a year of negotiation with housing advocates, industry stakeholders, and the Kenney administration.

■ **Expanding the Mixed Income Housing Bonus:**

In 2018, Maria also authored the expanded Mixed Income Housing Bonus to incentivize affordable housing development and generate revenue for the Housing Trust Fund. This win-win program immediately exceeded initial revenue estimates, generating nearly \$20 million in payments to the Housing Trust Fund.

■ **Fighting for Inclusionary Zoning:**

Inclusionary zoning is a critical tool for growing diverse, mixed-income neighborhoods. In 2021, Maria reintroduced legislation to expand affordability in new residential development in the 7th District. She is committed to ensuring that all Philadelphians can access safe, affordable housing with access to transit, great schools, and family-sustaining jobs.





“ The city has an opportunity for a smart restart and to reimagine our city and our neighborhoods. African American, Latino and other racial minority groups should not be further disenfranchised in our recovery. ”

*-Maria Quiñones Sánchez*

## Black Stimulus Package

In the summer of 2020, Maria led a successful campaign for a Black Stimulus Package, based upon “real, long-term investments in Black and Brown communities. I am encouraged that local companies are reckoning, publicly, with failures to confront inequality and to incorporate real diversity and inclusion in every workplace.”<sup>1</sup>

- In June of 2020, Maria led the call for a Black Stimulus through the passage of Resolution No. 200379, co-sponsored by Councilmembers Jones, Parker, Gym, Thomas, Gauthier, Johnson, and Green, which cited the City’s “responsibility to pass a moral budget that secures Philadelphians’ right to safely raise our children in affordable, accessible housing among diverse, mixed-income neighborhoods where everyone shares access to good schools and good jobs.
- The Black Stimulus includes a Poverty Action Fund (Bill No. 200369) with the City committing unprecedented \$10 million down-payment to a public-private partnership designed to lift 100,000 Philadelphians out of poverty by directly investing in people through benefits access, workforce and educational development, and housing stabilization initiatives.
- The Black Stimulus includes a Neighborhood Preservation Initiative (Bill No. 210203) that includes \$400 million in borrowing to grow affordable housing, commercial corridors, and critical infrastructure in our neighborhoods beyond just downtown Philadelphia, and to build upon multi-million investments by community-based organizations throughout the 7th District to provide housing and business assistance as well as corridor cleaning and management.

1. THE PHILADELPHIA CITIZEN op-ed 7/29/20 by Maria Quiñones Sánchez





# Issues: EDUCATION

As an educator and school founder, Maria has fought for decades for fair & equitable school funding. After drastic state cuts, federal disinvestment, and the pandemic, we now anticipate millions in new education funding. As Chair of Council's Education Committee, Maria believes we must seize the opportunity of local control to reimagine the school of the future.



- Maria has fought to expand transit access, meal service, internet access, bilingual programs, and safe routes to school so that kids arrive each day ready to learn.
- Throughout the pandemic, Maria led efforts bring resources, transparency, an equity lens, and intergovernmental cooperation to the heroic efforts of educators and school communities to keep students learning through difficult months.
- With local control and unprecedented funding, now is the time to clarify our commitment to Philadelphia's children & families:
  - Every child in Philadelphia should be able to walk to a neighborhood elementary school where they are safe and welcomed.
  - Diverse high school options should create pathways to college, career, trades, the arts, and entrepreneurship so every student graduates with a vision for their future.
- School buildings should be community anchors, where resources, diverse and culturally relevant programming, and learning opportunities for all ages are accessible to all. Opportunities should be taken to co-locate with parks & recreation, health centers & other community resources.
- We must remember that the people inside are more important than any school building. School communities must have the tools & resources to grow and thrive within their neighborhoods.
  - In 2018, Maria authored Res. 180531 to create a School Facilities Task Force to assess our challenges.
  - She fought to open two new public schools in the 7th District during a time of citywide closures and cutbacks. Willard School & Kensington CAPA both show us the possibilities of what the school of the future can be.



# KENSINGTON HIGH SCHOOL of the Creative & Performing Arts

When Kensington High School for Creative and Performing Arts was being built, the effort was threatened by ongoing site issues, and the entire project was nearly cancelled.

Maria brought all parties to the table and **worked out a compromise** agreement between the City, the School District, the builder, and Norris Square Civic Association. This agreement on the sale of the Front Berks site allowed construction to move ahead, and in 2010 opened as the first school in Philadelphia School District to achieve the **LEED Platinum environmental rating**. This helped 19125 become an environmental neighborhood leader.



## Frances E. Willard School

Willard School at Emerald and Elkhart Streets was built in the 1890's and had become one of the oldest and most dilapidated schools in the Philadelphia School District.

Overcrowded well beyond capacity, Willard School operated out of 3 additional annexes in the neighborhood, as well as multiple trailers in the school yard.

In 2010, **Maria was instrumental in securing a suitable site**, and pushed the City to finalize the transfer of the land before another school year was lost.

# Fighting for LABOR RIGHTS

Maria grew up in a large working-class family, so labor issues are personal to her. The labor movement is a foundational pillar in the movement for economic, racial, and social justice. Her parents worked the graveyard shift as janitors at Temple University. Their access to a union changed their lives.



## ■ Philadelphia 21st Century Minimum Wage Standard:

Increases the minimum wage to \$15 for all City of Philadelphia employees and authorized contractors. (Bill No. 180846, 190102).

## ■ The Municipal ID Program:

Photo ID is essential for modern life, so Maria fought to help all Philadelphians can access essential services with a secure and affordable photo ID. Launched in 2019, PHL City ID has provided over 20,000 Philadelphians with secure ID as well as access to cardholder benefits, discounts, and memberships. (Bill No. 160151)

■ **Sick Leave:** Maria helped lead the passage of Councilmember Greenlee's transformational paid sick leave legislation (Bill No. 141026), allowing families to care for their loved ones, avoid health care costs, and support a more productive economy.

## ■ Black Workers Matter Package:

Philadelphia's standard-bearing protections for historically diverse hospitality industry provides that employers must recall and retain existing workers before hiring new ones.

## ■ Essential Workers Protection

**Act:** Protects workers from retaliation for speaking out about work conditions that violate mandatory health orders during the pandemic.

## ■ Creating a Fair Workweek:

Provides retail, hotel, and other Philadelphia employees with flexible working schedules; ten days advance notice of scheduling, predictable pay, and preference for available shifts. (Bill No. 180649-A)



## Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights

Oct. 31, 2019 - Bill No 190607

In 2019, Maria led Philadelphia to establish a Domestic Workers Bill of Rights, the nation's first comprehensive municipal law that provides benefits and protections for nannies, caretakers, house cleaners, and other domestic workers, and that recognizes workers' inherent right to demand fair standards within historically unregulated and unprotected work environments. The Domestic Workers Standards and Implementation Task Force was established in 2019, and began convening in 2020, to:

- Our current labor laws often fail to protect domestic workers, many of whom work in situations that are either unregulated or lack basic standards like the minimum wage or benefits of any kind. They also often face discrimination or sexual harassment as well. Maria sponsored a resolution to create a special task force to make recommendations about how to improve legal protections, benefits, and working conditions for domestic workers. Maria believes that all workers deserve dignity and respect.

# Advocating for IMMIGRANTS



City leaders commemorate Philadelphia's annual Puerto Rican Flag Raising Ceremony

Prior to serving on City Council, Maria served as the Regional Director for the Puerto Rico Federal Affairs Administration (PRFAA), serving Pennsylvania and Delaware. From 2003-2005, Maria mounted a historic, voter registration and Get-Out-the-Vote (GOTV) campaign registering over 32,000 new voters and increased Latino turnout by 35% in the campaign's targeted areas.

Maria is a founding member of the Pennsylvania Statewide Latino Coalition and served as its first Co-Chair of the Board of Directors. Maria served as the first female and youngest Executive Director of ASPIRA, the largest Latino educational institution in Pennsylvania. Maria's accomplishments at ASPIRA included the creation of the first bilingual charter school in Pennsylvania (Eugenio Maria de Hostos Community Charter School).

## ■ **Protecting Immigrant Communities:**

After years of advocacy by Councilmember Sánchez along with community activists, Mayor Michael A. Nutter, in April 2014, signed Executive Order 1-14 which ended the City's collaboration with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and which was reaffirmed by Mayor Kenney's announcement of sanctuary city status on his first day of office in January of 2016 (see Resolutions No. 130880 and 160729).

## ■ **Held Council's First-Ever Hearing on Workforce**

**Diversity & Language Access:** City Council's Committee on Labor and Civil Service held a hearing on Resolution No. 130782, introduced by Councilmember María Quiñones Sánchez and co-sponsored by Councilmen Kenney, Goode, Oh, and Squilla. For the first time, City Council examined the City of Philadelphia's progress in achieving ethnic and linguistic diversity in the City's workforce and hiring practices, and in providing language access to Philadelphia's growing immigrant communities.

■ **Language Access:** In 2014, Maria led a voter-approved change to the Philadelphia Home Rule Charter, to require that all City agencies adopt language access plans to ensure all residents can engage with the city's programs, services, and front-line personnel. (Bill No. 140747 and Resolution 140764).



# Supporting SMALL BUSINESS

Small businesses are the backbone of communities. Maria has understood this since the beginning of her tenure in the 7th District. When you support local businesses, it keeps money locally and brings more jobs to residents.

- **COVID-19 Small Business Relief Working Group:** Led City Council in supporting the development of a Small Business Relief Program that ultimately leveraged more than \$100 million in federal, state, and local relief during the pandemic.
- **Small Business Tax Reform:** Maria led a \$100,000 exemption from Business Income and Receipts Tax liability that wipes out entire tax liability for more than 73,000 of the city's nearly 100,000 neighborhood-based businesses. This tax reform also waived licensing fees for small businesses and ensured companies headquartered outside the city pay their fair share of taxes.
- **Expanding the Sustainable Business Tax Credit (2016):** Doubles the amount of businesses eligible to apply a \$5,000 credit against their full liability for business income and receipts taxes (BIRT). It applies the total value of the credit against the recipient's full BIRT liability, so businesses fully utilize the tax relief. It modernizes eligibility requirements to reflect what it means to be a "Sustainable Business" in Philadelphia.
- **Creating a "Jump Start" Program for New BCorps (2016):** This bill encourages new businesses to become BCorps and take root in Philadelphia by extending BCorps a third year of eligibility for the city's new business BIRT exemption and fee waivers.
- **Single Sales Factor (Manufacturing Tax Reform):** As part of Bill No. 110554, the Councilmember reformed the business tax liability structure for manufacturing, representing almost 70% in tax savings for this sector, allowing them to compete in the global economy.
- **Use and Occupancy Tax Reform (2011):** Maria also shielded small businesses from a massive tax increase from the Actual Value Initiative by providing a \$2,000 tax exemption for 69% of business that include the city's small "Mom and Pop" businesses.

# Use & Occupancy Tax

Bill No. 130182-A June 25, 2013

This legislation provides Use and Occupancy tax (U&O) relief to thousands of small businesses, facing the stiffest tax increases under AVI. It fully exempts just under 10,000 small businesses, and protects “Mom and Pop” storefronts from what would have been a massive tax hike.

“ As AVI moves forward it is important that we, as Council, do everything possible to protect residents and small businesses. As we are debating ‘Homestead’ relief for the City’s homeowners, we should be pursuing similar measures to protect our neighborhood commercial corridors. I believe this bill provides that targeted relief, while simultaneously giving us the financial flexibility to protect residents and support our School District.

-*Maria Quiñones Sánchez*

## BIRT Tax Reform

Bill No. 130487, adopted Jun. 16, 2013

Councilmember Sánchez and Councilman Bill Green passed Bill No. 110554 to reform and restructure Philadelphia’s business tax system. Councilmember Sánchez’s bill also creates **significant benefit to small business by exempting the first \$100,000 of gross receipts** from taxation. Over 73,000 of the 90,000 businesses that file BPT returns will have **\$0 liability**.



## Small Business Relief

Bills 200620, 200621, & 200623

During the pandemic, Councilmember Sánchez worked hard to protect small businesses, through her efforts leading a small business working group and passing:

- \$20 million in small business relief
- Refuse tax deferral for hospitality industry
- Small business preference for \$10 mil+ in local aid



# MARIA

## QUIÑONES SÁNCHEZ

Councilmember - 7th District

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