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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Councilwoman Sánchez Introduces Charter Amendment to Ensure Language Access**

Today, Councilwoman María Quiñones-Sánchez (7<sup>th</sup> District) and Councilman Wilson Goode, Jr. (At Large) introduced legislation to amend the Philadelphia Home Rule Charter in order to ensure that every Philadelphia has access to city services, regardless of language spoken. “Every Philadelphian deserves equal access to their city government, and the City Charter should reflect our commitment to provide that,” said Councilwoman Sánchez.

Under the proposed Charter amendment, all City agencies, offices, departments, boards and commissions would be required to prepare plans to promote access to City services for people with limited English proficiency. It also mandates that such ‘language access’ plans be consistent with relevant directives or orders instituted by the mayor, and for all agencies to provide status reports.

The Charter amendment would also apply to so-called ‘row offices’ such as the District Attorney, City Commissioners, Sheriff, and Bureau of Revision of Taxes, as well as the Office of the Controller and the City Council. The Register of Wills is not subject to the Charter, as that office has not been incorporated into the city government.

Philadelphia is an increasingly diverse city, with significant Latino and Asian-American communities as well as a foreign-born population that has increased by more than 40,000 between the years 2000 and 2012 (now 12 percent of our city’s population). Mayor Michael Nutter’s administration has made significant strides towards making Philadelphia a truly welcoming city, issuing a series of historic Executive Orders and creating the new Mayor’s Office of Immigrant and Multicultural Affairs (MOIMA).

“Despite real progress, further steps are needed to ensure our local government truly represents and meets the needs of all its residents,” said Councilwoman Sánchez.

“There absolutely should not be any barriers to equitable access to City services for any citizen of Philadelphia,” said Councilman Goode. “Every demographic group, every neighborhood, and every language speaker deserves the same entitlements. I am proud to stand with Councilwoman Quiñones-Sánchez to protect those basic rights.”

If passed and signed into law, the proposed Charter amendment will be placed on the ballot for the approval of voters.

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