



For Immediate Release

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PRESS RELEASE

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Maryland PTA Honors Fighters for At-Risk Youth

HYATTSVILLE, MD. – Today, the Maryland Chapter of the Parent Teachers Association honored three influential women on the closing day of their 100th anniversary convention. Linda Diaz, whose teen daughter took her life, received the Parent Advocate of the Year. Delegate Joseline Peña-Melnyk and Senator Catherine Pugh each received Legislator of the Year honors for sponsoring [Lauryn's Law](#), a bill that will provide school counselors with specialized training in recognizing risk factors for suicide.

Ms. Diaz is a resident of Delegate Peña-Melnyk's legislative district. When she sought help from the Delegate to prevent other families from similar tragic losses, Peña-Melnyk rallied fellow legislators, and advocates including the MD PTA and the Association for Suicide Prevention to ensure passage of the legislation. The House bill had 50 co-sponsors, representatives from both sides of the aisle. Both chambers of the General Assembly voted unanimously to support Lauryn's Law, named in memory of Ms. Diaz' daughter.

"When the cause is right, and this one is right, we come together to get things done. This award touches my heart and I accept it on behalf of every legislator who worked hard to ensure its passage," said Peña-Melnyk.

Delegate Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk represents Maryland House District 21, which includes parts of Prince George's and Anne Arundel Counties. She is a member of the Health and Government Operations Committee and chairs the Public Health and Minority Health Disparities Subcommittee. Peña-Melnyk is a Democratic candidate for House Congressional District 4.

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