



PENNSYLVANIA SECRETARY OF STATE

HON. PEDRO A. CORTÉS

The Honorable Pedro A. Cortés was nominated by Governor Tom Wolf on January 20, 2015 and confirmed by the Senate on June 2, 2015. He previously served as Secretary of the Commonwealth from 2003 to 2010. At that time Cortés was the first confirmed Latino Cabinet member and the longest serving Secretary of State in Pennsylvania history.

As Secretary, Cortés leads the Pennsylvania Department of State. The mission of the Department is to promote the integrity of the electoral process, to support economic development through corporate filings and transactions, and to protect the health and safety of the public. The Department accomplishes its mission by furthering the highest standards of ethics and competence in the areas of elections, campaign finance, notarization, professional and occupational licensure, charitable solicitation, and professional boxing, wrestling and mixed martial arts.

Cortés is the Commonwealth's Chief Election Official. By statute, the Secretary is also the Chairperson of the Navigation Commission for the Delaware River and its Navigable Tributaries, and a member of the Board of Finance and Revenue, the Pennsylvania Municipal Retirement Board and the State Athletic Commission. The Secretary is the keeper of the Great Seal of the Commonwealth and has the duty of authenticating government documents through the seal's use.

During Cortés previous seven-year tenure, the Department successfully administered 15 primary and general elections, reduced the processing time of corporate filings from 36 business days to one day, spearheaded the nation's first statewide electronic notarization program, and decreased the time it took to review professional and occupational licensure complaints. He was also the first Pennsylvanian to serve as President of the National Association of Secretaries of State in the Association's 104 year history.

Cortés began his Commonwealth government career in 1993 as a caseworker with the Department of Public Welfare. Subsequently, he worked as a recruiter and attorney with the State Civil Service Commission, and was the Executive Director of the Governor's Advisory Commission on Latino Affairs for two Pennsylvania governors. Prior to his most recent appointment as Secretary of the Commonwealth, Cortés was a partner with the law firm of Haggerty, Goldberg, Schleifer and Kupersmith.

Cortés has been the recipient of numerous awards, including: Hispanic Business Magazine's 100 Most Influential Hispanics in the United States; the National Notary Association's 50 Most Influential People in Notarization in the Last 50 Years; Legal Intelligencer's Diverse Attorney of the Year; Multicultural Affairs Congress' Delaware Valley's Most Influential Latino; Central Penn Business Journal's Top Forty Under 40 Business Leaders in Central Pennsylvania; and The Pennsylvania State University Alumni Fellow, the most prestigious award given by the Penn State Alumni Association.

Cortés earned a Bachelor of Science in Hotel, Restaurant and Travel Administration from the University of Massachusetts, a Master of Public Administration from Penn State University, and a Juris Doctor Penn State Dickinson School of Law. He also holds Doctorate Degrees honoris causa from King's College, Harcum College, and Widener University School of Law.

A native of Puerto Rico, Cortés has lived in Pennsylvania since 1990. He is married to Lissette Lizardi-Cortés and they have a daughter, Gabriela.