New Jersey State Senator M. Teresa Ruiz

New Jersey State Senate Majority Leader M. Teresa Ruiz (D-29) (**May 25, 1974),** in Newark, New Jersey, has deep roots in the community she serves. She attended Drew University, where she laid the foundation for her career in public service is the highest-ranking Latina in the Legislature's history. In 2007, she became the first Puerto Rican to be elected to the State Senate.

As the first Latina to serve as Senate Majority Leader in New Jersey, she is a pivotal figure in shaping education policy, championing early childhood education and equity in schools. She has led efforts to expand the state's free meals program and early childhood education. She's backed legislation on student loan forgiveness and limits on gun ownership.

Ruiz will be a key partner to Gov. Mikie Sherrill on proposed tax reforms. In 2010, she was awarded the Aspen Institute Rodel Fellowship, where she was one of 24 individuals identified as emerging political leaders. Her leadership continues to be instrumental in driving legislative change across the state. She also serves as Deputy Chief of Staff to the Essex County Executive.