

STATEHOOD COMMISSION



# PUERTO RICO

SHADOW DELEGATION TO U.S. CONGRESS

PUERTO RICO STATEHOOD COMMISSION  
**2018 ANNUAL REPORT**

**JUNE 2018**

PUERTO RICO FEDERAL AFFAIRS ADMINISTRATION

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR OF PUERTO RICO,  
HON. RICARDO ROSSELLÓ

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I . L E T T E R   F R O M   T H E   C H A I R

June 29, 2018

**Dear Governor, House Speaker, Senate President, and People of Puerto Rico,**

For over one hundred and twenty years, the U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico have lived under the American flag, and now for more than 100 years we have shared the sacred bond of citizenship with our fellow Americans in the states. During that time, we have borne the burdens of freedom by answering the call of duty through military service. We have contributed to America's greatness with our ingenuity, our labor, our creativity, and our culture. We have found that there is no contradiction in being proud to be Puerto Ricans and simultaneously being proud to be Americans. Undeniably, the multitude of ties that have come to bind Puerto Rico and the United States are at this point simply irreversible.

However, the lack of full participation in the federal government that makes and executes the laws that we live under in Puerto Rico and the ability of the U.S. Congress to treat us unequally under those laws has proven a fundamental limitation on the fulfillment of the full potential of our people as well as the full potential of what we can contribute as part of the American family. The multiple overlapping crises that the people of Puerto Rico suffer today (economic, fiscal, demographic, political, health, safety, quality of life, etc.) are all interconnected to the root cause of our undemocratic and unequal territorial condition.

The combination of these situations, which were vastly exacerbated by last year's historic hurricanes, now represents an existential threat to our society and our people. They also represent a challenge to American society and the federal government. To definitively overcome this threat, Puerto Rico's outdated, dysfunctional and irreparable territory status must be brought to an end as soon as possible and this requires effort and action from both sides. The principle of government by the consent of the governed was enshrined by the Founding Fathers in the Declaration of Independence to expressly oppose colonial governance, and both in 2012 and 2017 voters in Puerto Rico invoked that principle to declare our lack of consent for continued territorial governance, and to express an overwhelming preference for statehood among the non-territorial options.



Yet, much like other territories before us whose pleas for action remained unattended by the U.S. Congress, we the People of Puerto Rico have taken matters into our own hands to demand from our federal government our equality and full rights and responsibilities as U.S. citizens which are only available under statehood. No one said this would be easy, quick or automatic, but the enactment and launch of the Puerto Rico Statehood Commission (PRSC) has been a bold step in the right direction toward the inevitable evolution of our society within the American family. It represents a fundamental shift in perspective from being principally the passive victims of our historic circumstances powerless to reverse the unraveling of our society, to being the active and empowered protagonists of our present and architects of our shared future. Indeed, whether people realize it or not we are at a transformational moment in the history of the relationship of Puerto Rico and the U.S. What has been up to now simply cannot be sustained, and the only path forward is to unite, overcome and build something new together.

The PRSC is honored to spearhead the effort to definitively end the territory and bring statehood to Puerto Rico, reclaiming our rightful destiny as an integral part of the American family. We truly believe that with the equal rights and equal responsibilities that only statehood can offer our island's citizens, we can not only transform Puerto Rico into a vibrant and prosperous jurisdiction, but also continue contributing to America's progress and prosperity both at the national level and as the leader of the free world. This is the unfinished business of American democracy, and through sustained effort we will make America a *more perfect Union*.

This report presents the work that we have done since last year, the overarching strategy that we are carrying out, and our vision for how to advance this cause into the future. We thank you for your support and look forward to continuing to fight for this righteous mission side-by-side with you, the People of Puerto Rico and all our fellow Americans.

Sincerely,



Chair  
Puerto Rico Statehood Commission



## II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## CREATION

In response to the plebiscites held in 2012 and 2017, where the U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico voted to end the current territory status and overwhelmingly favored statehood among the non-territorial options, the Puerto Rico Legislative Assembly approved and the Governor of Puerto Rico, Hon. Ricardo Rosselló, enacted Public Law 30-2017 creating the Puerto Rico Statehood Commission (PRSC).

## MANDATE & FUNCTION

The PRSC, which is housed inside of the Puerto Rico Federal Affairs Administration (PRFAA), has been charged with the mandate to execute the "Tennessee Plan" on behalf of the U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico. In this plan the seven members of the PRSC, which were specially selected for their professional stature and distinguished credentials, are deployed to serve as Puerto Rico's shadow delegation to the U.S. Congress (2 Senators and 5 Representatives). Their purpose is to highlight the deficit of representation, and to advocate for both the termination of Puerto Rico's territory status and the island's admission as a state of the Union. The PRSC works to demand that the U.S. Congress act on the electoral mandates resulting from the political status plebiscites held in 2012 and 2017.

## ACTION

Over the past year the PRSC has worked through PRFAA to establish a permanent presence in Washington, D.C. With the help of PRFAA the PRSC has developed and approved its internal regulation and code of conduct, established an operational structure, set up office space, developed a strategic plan, and begun utilizing these assets to carry out its mission. After an unexpected delay due to the devastation of Hurricane Maria, on January 7, 2018 the Commission officially launched its operations in Washington, D.C. presenting their credentials before the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. Since then they have met with over 90 Members of Congress and Congressional staff in both chambers and from both parties. They have obtained public and private pledges of support for statehood, and have actively worked to dispel myths as well as provide objective facts to help grow Congressional support for the statehood cause.

## GRASSROOTS & MEDIA

Recognizing the need to increase support for statehood among the American public the PRSC has begun developing and implementing a strategy to broaden the statehood movement by creating strategic alliances with outside groups and organizations. The PRSC has also focused efforts on developing events and activities that serve as both platforms for discussion on statehood and related issues, as well as platforms to publicly highlight the movement and our growing base of outside support. Additionally, the PRSC has worked to develop a media



strategy to keep the statehood issue in the news, and, through both opinion editorials and appearances on TV and radio, have worked to amplify the message of the need to end the territory status and the benefits of statehood both for Puerto Rico and the U.S. so that it reaches a broader audience.

## VISION

Now the PRSC is working on its strategy and vision to continue advancing the cause in the remainder of the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress and to make this an issue of national importance in the 2018 and 2020 elections. Ultimately, the PRSC defines its success more broadly than merely passing a bill during any given session of Congress; true success is in building a broad-based movement in support of Puerto Rico, in transforming Puerto Rico in a way that improves quality of life and unleashes its full potential, and in doing so allowing the U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico to fully contribute to America and to making it *a more perfect Union*.

### III. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

## AMERICA'S COLONIAL LEGACY IN PUERTO RICO

For over 400 years, Puerto Rico was a colony of the Spanish Empire, and when the United States of America occupied Puerto Rico in 1898 and eventually acquired it through the Treaty of Paris<sup>1</sup> at the end of the Spanish American War, there was great hope that the condition of colonial subordination would soon come to an end. Unfortunately, 120 years later Puerto Rico remains under the territorial clause of the U.S. Constitution<sup>2</sup>.

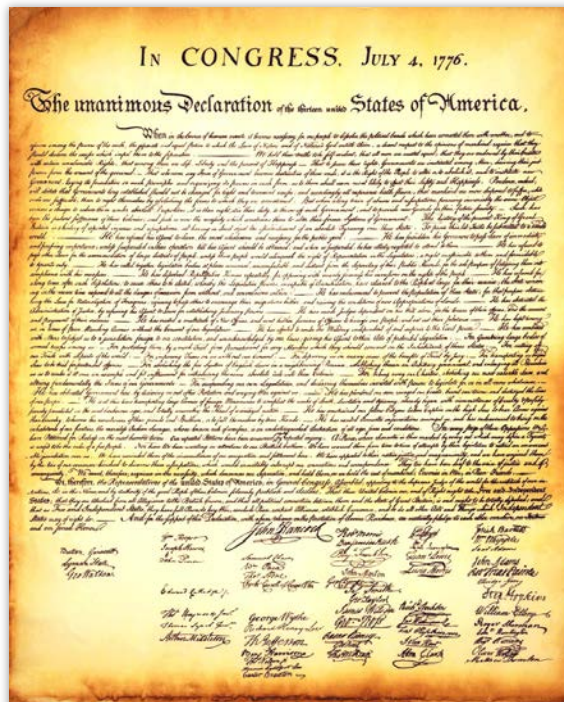


Figure 1 – Declaration of Independence. Source: U.S. National Archives

Being a country that had to fight a war of independence from England to end its colonial subordination, America had clearly enshrined principles of government by the consent of the governed, equality under the law, and representative democracy in its founding documents. Therefore, the undue perpetuation of Puerto Rico's territorial status is not only a detriment to the residents of the territory that limits their potential, but also a blight on the very founding principles upon which America was built. This means that the need for a prompt and final resolution to this issue is not only of fundamental importance to the People of Puerto Rico, but is also the unfinished business of American democracy.

## CITIZENSHIP & SACRIFICE

On March 2, 1917, on the eve of America's entry into World War I, the U.S. Congress granted American citizenship to the people of Puerto Rico through the Jones-Shafroth Act<sup>3</sup>. Since then, Puerto Ricans have proven their loyalty and contributed

<sup>1</sup> History, Art & Archives, U.S. House of Representatives; 30 Stat. 1754-1762, Office of the Historian, *Hispanic Americans in Congress, 1821–2012*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2013. "Constitutional Amendments, Treaties, and Major Acts of Congress Referenced in *Hispanic Americans in Congress*," <http://history.house.gov/Exhibitions-and-Publications/HAIC/Historical-Data/Constitutional-Amendments,-Treaties,-and-Major-Acts/> (June 22, 2018)

<sup>2</sup> The Constitution of the United States: A Transcription, Article 4, Section 3, "The Congress shall have Power to dispose of and make all needful Rules and Regulations respecting the Territory or other Property belonging to the United States" National Archives. October 23, 2017. <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/constitution-transcript>

<sup>3</sup> History, Art & Archives, U.S. House of Representatives; P.L. 64-368; 39 Stat. 951-968, Office of the Historian, *Hispanic Americans in Congress, 1821–2012*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2013. "Constitutional

to the United States in countless ways. U.S. citizens from Puerto Rico have proudly served in the Armed Forces in every conflict since World War I. Along the way, Puerto Ricans have earned honors including one Congressional Gold Medal for the 65th Infantry Regiment "Borinqueneers"<sup>4</sup>, nine Medals of Honor, and thousands of Purple Hearts, all of which are a testament to the ultimate sacrifice Puerto Ricans have made to promote and protect American interests and values, at home and abroad.



**Figure 2 – Borinqueneers Congressional Gold Medal.**  
Image Courtesy of the U.S. Mint

Notwithstanding this the U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico live at a perpetual disadvantage compared to our fellow citizens in the states. Puerto Ricans are subject to federal laws but do not have voting representation in the U.S. House of Representatives or any representation in the U.S. Senate. Our sons and daughters in uniform can be sent to war by the President of the United States, but even when they serve honorably, they cannot vote for the Commander-in-Chief.

Congress can and does treat Puerto Rico unequally under federal laws, leading to incoherent and arbitrary policies that limit the Island's opportunities to maximize its economic potential. We are treated domestic for some purposes, yet foreign for others. And although we deeply cherish our American citizenship, our rights as citizens are not guaranteed by the 14th Amendment. Instead, we rely on a now 101-year-old statute Congress could repeal if it desired.

## GOVERNMENT WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF THE GOVERNED

In 2012, voters in Puerto Rico soundly rejected the current undemocratic and unequal territorial status, and a majority favored statehood over all other non-territorial status options. In 2017, 97 percent of voters in Puerto Rico overwhelmingly re-confirmed that statehood is our preferred status option to end the inherently limiting territorial status. These votes demonstrate indisputably that



**Figure 3 – Detail of the U.S. Capitol**

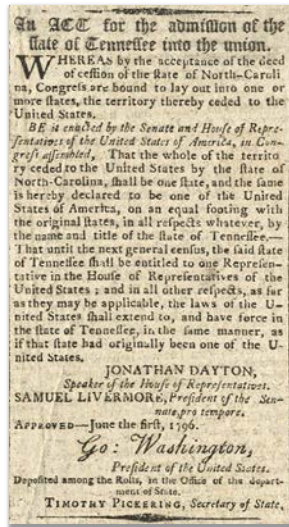
Amendments, Treaties, and Major Acts of Congress Referenced in *Hispanic Americans in Congress*," <http://history.house.gov/Exhibitions-and-Publications/HAIC/Historical-Data/Constitutional-Amendments,-Treaties,-and-Major-Acts/> (June 22, 2018)

<sup>4</sup> Congressional Record, P.L. 113-120 "To award a Congressional Gold Medal to the 65<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, Known as Borinqueneers". June 10, 2014



Washington governs Puerto Rico without the consent of the governed. Moreover, the passage of the 2016 Puerto Rico Oversight, Management, and Economic Stability Act or PROMESA<sup>5</sup> effectively increased the democratic deficit that we are subjected to as a territory by superseding the local self-government that Congress had granted Puerto Rico in the 1950's.<sup>6</sup> It is now evident to both the U.S. citizens in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Congress that the current territorial status is obsolete and unable to meet the challenges of our time, especially during this critical recovery and reconstruction process post-Hurricane Maria.

While efforts to re-establish fiscal sustainability, restructure debts and rebuild after the hurricanes are all necessary, these measures are simply insufficient to overcome Puerto Rico's challenges. The reality is that Puerto Rico's territorial status is an inherent structural limitation on the Island's true and full potential. America's best interests are simply not served by continuing a century old failed territorial regime that can never be fixed. Ultimately, for the various federal and territorial efforts



**Figure 4 – Tennessee Admission Act.** Source: U.S. Library of Congress

underway as a result of PROMESA and the post-disaster reconstruction process, to ever unleash the full potential of Puerto Rico and the U.S. citizens that live on the island, there needs to be a concurrent effort to end the unequal and undemocratic territorial status. Among non-territorial options only Puerto Rico's admission as a state, with equal rights and responsibilities, would bring significant economic progress to the island, decrease dependence and increase interstate commerce for the mutual benefit of Puerto Rico and the rest of the Nation.

## PUERTO RICO ADOPTS THE TENNESSEE PLAN

While the case of Puerto Rico may be the longest the U.S. has continuously held a territory, even after the U.S. citizens of that territory expressed their desire for statehood, it is not the only case where citizens of a territory have called on the U.S. Congress for change, and none has been forthcoming. Following the tradition established by Tennessee in 1796,

Puerto Rico has embarked in a bold effort to send a shadow delegation to the U.S. Congress to demand the territory's admission as a state of the Union. Besides Tennessee, this strategy has been utilized successfully by six other territories who

<sup>5</sup> Congressional Record, P.L. 114-187 "To reauthorize and amend the National Sea Grant College Program Act, and for other purposes". June 30, 2016

<sup>6</sup> Congressional Record, P.L. 81-600 "To provide for the organization of a constitutional government by the people of Puerto Rico". July 3, 1952; Congressional Record, P.L. 82-447 "Approving the constitution of the commonwealth of Puerto Rico which was adopted by the people of Puerto Rico on March 3, 1952." July 3, 1952.



utilized a version of the Tennessee Plan and forced their admission into statehood. These were Michigan (1837), Iowa (1846), California (1850), Oregon (1859), Kansas (1861), and Alaska (1959).<sup>7</sup> New Mexico attempted the Tennessee Plan in 1850, but it failed. New Mexico was finally admitted in 1912 after a waiting through the Congressional process for territorial status resolution for 62 more years.



Figure 5 – Image Courtesy of the Puerto Rico Senate

In response to the plebiscites held in 2012 and 2017, where the U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico voted to end the current territory status and overwhelmingly favored statehood among the non-territorial options, the Puerto Rico Legislative Assembly approved and the Governor of Puerto Rico, Hon. Ricardo Rosselló, enacted Public Law 30-2017, creating the Puerto Rico Statehood Commission (PRSC).<sup>8</sup> The PRSC has been charged with the mandate to execute the Tennessee Plan on behalf of the U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico.

In this plan the seven members of the PRSC, which were specially selected for their professional stature and distinguished credentials, are deployed to serve as Puerto Rico's shadow delegation to the U.S. Congress (2 Senators and 5 Representatives). Their purpose is to highlight the deficit of representation, and to advocate for both

<sup>7</sup> Sheridan, Peter B., 1926-1992. *Admission Of States into the Union after the Original Thirteen: a Brief History and Analysis of the Statehood Process*. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, 1985.

<sup>8</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Regular Session of the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly of Puerto Rico, P.L. 30-2017 (H.B. 876), "To establish an Act for Equality and Congressional Representation of the United States Citizens of Puerto Rico." June 13, 2017. See the text of P.L. 30-2017 in English here: <http://www.oslpr.org/download/en/2017/A-030-2017.pdf>. Note that P.L. 30-2017 was subsequently amended by P.L. 105-2017 (H.B. 1162), August 23, 2017, however, the official English language translation of the amendment was not available at the time of the publication of this report.

the termination of Puerto Rico's territory status and the island's admission as a state of the Union. The PRSC works to demand that the U.S. Congress act on the electoral mandates resulting from the political status plebiscites held in 2012 and 2017.

## IV. COMPOSITION, STRUCTURE AND OPERATIONS OF THE COMMISSION

## COMPOSITION OF THE PRSC

The PRSC is comprised of seven members because as a state Puerto Rico would have two U.S. Senators and a delegation of approximately five U.S. Representatives. Three of the members are Republicans, three are Democrats and one member is independent. The Republican members of the commission are former Gov. Luis Fortuño, Republican National Committeewoman Zoraida Fonalledas, and Mr. Alfonso Aguilar.<sup>9</sup> The Democrat members of the commission are former Puerto Rico Gov. Pedro Rosselló González and former Gov. Carlos Romero Barceló, and former Puerto Rico Senate President Charles Rodríguez. The independent member of the commission is Major League Baseball Hall of Famer Ivan Rodríguez. Each of them were selected based on their firm commitment to statehood, as well as their outstanding public and professional profiles.



Figure 6 - First meeting of the PRSC. Image courtesy of La Fortaleza

On August 15, 2017 the PRSC held its first meeting in San Juan, Puerto Rico. That meeting, hosted by Gov. Ricardo Rosselló in La Fortaleza, served as the official swearing in ceremony for the PRSC members.

### **HON. ZORAIDA FONALLEDAS (R-PR)**

*Shadow Senator, U.S. Senate*

*Co-Chair, Puerto Rico Statehood Commission*



*Hon. Zoraida Fonalledas was elected national committeewoman for the Republican Party of Puerto Rico in 1995 and was re-elected to a four-year term in 2016. Throughout her professional career, she has consistently advocated for Puerto Rican statehood. She gave testimony before the United States Senate in 1998 on*

<sup>9</sup> Note that Major General (Ret.) Félix Santoni served as a member of the PRSC from August 15, 2017 to January 6, 2018. Upon his retirement due to health conditions he was replaced by Alfonso Aguilar.

behalf of self-determination for Puerto Rico. During Mitt Romney's 2012 Presidential campaign, she served as his campaign chair in Puerto Rico, and later, became chair of the Committee on Permanent Organization for the 2012 Republican National Convention. She has also served as a co-chair of the RNC Growth & Opportunity Project Commission.

Hon. Zoraida Fonalledas currently serves on the board of International Institute for People with Disabilities of Puerto Rico and has also served on the President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities. Fonalledas is married to Jaime Fonalledas, president of the Puerto Rico development group, Empresas Fonalledas. Empresas Fonalledas developed and currently maintains Plaza Las Americas, the largest shopping mall in the Caribbean.

#### **HON. CARLOS ROMERO (D-PR)**

*Shadow Senator, U.S. Senate*



Hon. Carlos Romero was one of the founding members of the pro-statehood New Progressive Party in 1967. He served as the fifth elected Governor of Puerto Rico from 1977-1985. Later, he served as Resident Commissioner of Puerto Rico from 1993 to 2001. As Resident Commissioner, he advocated for Puerto Rican statehood, successfully proposed the derogation of section 936 of the federal tax code, and was a key advocate for passage of the Young Bill in the U.S. House of Representatives, which authorized a referendum to definitively resolve Puerto Rico's political status.

From 1969-1976 Romero also served as Mayor of San Juan, the capitol of Puerto Rico. During that time he served as President of the National League of Cities, implemented former President Lyndon Johnson's Model Cities Program by beginning the construction of the Roberto Clemente Coliseum and officiated the first municipal educational institution of Puerto Rico, the Colegio Universitario de San Juan.



### **HON. PEDRO ROSSELLÓ (D-PR)**

*Shadow Representative, U.S. House of Representatives  
Chair, Puerto Rico Statehood Commission*



Hon. Pedro Rosselló is a physician and politician who served as the seventh elected Governor of Puerto Rico from 1993 to 2001. As Governor, Rosselló included an anti-crime campaign where the Puerto Rico National Guard assisted the Puerto Rico state police in deterring criminal acts. Later, he worked to eradicate illegal drugs in Puerto Rico public schools. His administration invested in large-scale infrastructure projects such as the urban train and the construction of the Coliseum of Puerto Rico, the Museum of Art of Puerto Rico, Highway 66, and the Super Aqueduct. Under his administration a major health reform was approved, which provided all citizens with health insurance and vaccinated all infants by the age of 2.

He was President of the New Progressive Party from 1991 to 1999, and later, from 2003 to 2008. He served as Senator for the District of Arecibo from 2005 to 2008. He has also served as President of the Council of State Governments as well as Chairman of the Southern Governors' Association, and Democratic Governors Association. Rosselló has been a life-long supporter and advocate for Puerto Rican statehood.

### **HON. LUIS FORTUÑO (R-PR)**

*Shadow Representative, U.S. House of Representatives*



Figure 7 – Image Courtesy of  
Steptoe & Johnson LLP

Hon. Luis Fortuño served as the tenth elected Governor of Puerto Rico from 2009-2013, and as President of the New Progressive Party of Puerto Rico (PNP). Additionally, he served as President of the Council of State Governments in 2012, and as President of the Southern Governors Association from 2011 to 2012. Fortuño served as Resident Commissioner for Puerto Rico from 2005 to 2009 in the United States House of Representatives. During this time, he was Chair of the



Congressional Hispanic Conference, a Member of the newly created House Committee on Natural Resources Subcommittee on Insular Affairs, and Co-Chair, with former Representative Xavier Becerra (D-CA), of the Friends of Spain Caucus.

In the 1990s, Fortuño served as the first Secretary of Economic Development and Commerce (1994–1997), the Executive Director of the Puerto Rico Tourism Company (1993–1994), and as the President of the Puerto Rico Hotel Development Corporation during the administration of Hon. Pedro Rosselló. Currently, he is a partner at the law firm of Steptoe & Johnson LLP in Washington, D.C.

#### **HON. CHARLES RODRIGUEZ (D-PR)**

*Shadow Representative, U.S. House of Representatives*



Hon. Charles Rodríguez is the Chair of the Puerto Rico Democratic Party. He is the former President of the Puerto Rico Senate from 1997 to 2001, and served as a Representative in the Puerto Rico House of Representatives from 1980 to 1988. He served as Chairman of the New Progressive Party 2004 Platform Committee. During the annual Convention of the New Progressive Party, he introduced the Tennessee Plan Resolution setting the strategy for Puerto Rico's admission as the 51st State of the Union. Prior to this, in the early 1990s, he was elected as a state senator for two terms. During this time, he advanced initiatives protect the environment, spur economic development, reduce crime and improve social welfare.

On several occasions, Rodríguez has legally represented former Governor Rosselló, former Governor Romero Barceló, and the NPP in several court proceedings. He also worked as legal counsel to the former President of the Senate Hon. Thomas Rivera Schatz. Currently, he engages in active public discussions regarding government matters and political issues particularly concerning Statehood for Puerto Rico.

### **HON. ALFONSO AGUILAR (R-PR)**

*Shadow Representative, U.S. House of Representatives*



Figure 8 – Image Courtesy of EWTN

Hon. Alfonso Aguilar is currently the Executive Director of the Latino Partnership for Conservative Principles. He is a member of the Puerto Rico Bar and the League of United Latin American Citizens. Aguilar is also a member of the Board of Advisors of the North American Center for Trans-Border Studies at Arizona State University and is the U.S. representative of the

Citizenship and Values Foundation based in Madrid, Spain. He writes a bi-monthly Op-Ed column for the daily *La Opinion* of Los Angeles, California and frequently appears as a guest policy analyst in many radio and TV shows across the country.

Aguilar served as Chief of the U.S. Office of Citizenship appointed by former President George W. Bush. Later, he led the effort to develop the new naturalization test of the United States, which took effect in October 2008. He also served as Chair of the Task Force on New Americans' Technical Committee, an inter-agency federal task force created by President Bush, to enhance and coordinate government-wide immigrant integration initiatives. Before joining the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in 2003, Mr. Aguilar served in numerous high-level government positions in the Bush Administration and the government of Puerto Rico, including Deputy Director of Public Affairs at U.S. Department of Energy, Executive Director of the Puerto Rico Federal Affairs Administration, and Press Secretary to former Governor Pedro Rosselló.

### **HON. IVAN RODRIGUEZ (I-PR)**

*Shadow Representative, U.S. House of Representatives*



Figure 9 – Image Courtesy of the Sun Sentinel

Hon. Iván Rodríguez, is a former Major League Baseball catcher. In his career, he played for the Texas Rangers, Florida Marlins, Detroit Tigers, New York Yankees, Houston Astros and Washington





*Nationals. He was awarded the AL MVP award in 1999 and is widely regarded as one of the best defensive catchers of all time.*

*Hon. Rodríguez won the World Series with the Marlins in 2003, and also played in the 2006 World Series while with the Tigers. During his career, he had the best caught stealing percentage of any major league catcher, at 45.68%. On January 18, 2017, he was elected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum in Cooperstown in his first year of eligibility, receiving 76% of the votes cast, and was officially inducted on July 30, 2017. In September 2017, Rodríguez set up a drive during the recovery of Hurricane Maria and was involved in United for Puerto Rico, a charity drive set up to collect money donations for Puerto Rico.*

## STRUCTURE OF THE PRSC

The structure of the PRSC is established by the organic act that created the Commission<sup>10</sup> as well as by Regulation 8983, which was approved by the Commission and certified by the Puerto Rico Department of State on September 1, 2018. Beyond the PRSC's regulation, they have also adopted an internal code of conduct to ensure that members are held to high ethical standards.

The PRSC is led by a Chair person, currently Hon. Pedro Rosselló. Through an internal resolution, the PRSC also created a Co-Chair position and appointed Hon. Zoraida Fonalledas to serve in that role. The Commission has the capacity to create working groups, and so far has created one on civil society and grassroots engagement, which is led by Hon. Alfonso Aguilar.

The PRSC is structured to advocate for statehood both collectively as a group as well as individually. This means that they can hold meetings, write letters, release statements and execute a multitude of other actions as a group (i.e. the Commission). Commission members can also act in support of statehood individually when that is appropriate and/or beneficial to the objective. This gives the PRSC significant flexibility to ensure that while all



Figure 10 – PRSC meeting at PRFAA.

<sup>10</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Regular Session of the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly of Puerto Rico, P.L. 30-2017 (H.B. 876), "To establish an Act for Equality and Congressional Representation of the United States Citizens of Puerto Rico." June 13, 2017. See the text of P.L. 30-2017 in English here: <http://www.oslpr.org/download/en/2017/A-030-2017.pdf>

members advocate in support of statehood, on other issues members can take public positions individually. This is analogous to the nature of a state's delegation to Congress in which all members support the wellbeing and prosperity of the state that they collectively represent, but each member can hold different views and policy positions consistent with their own beliefs, perspectives or national political affiliation.

## OPERATIONS OF THE PRSC

The organic act that created the Commission housed it within the Puerto Rico Federal Affairs Administration (PRFAA), which serves as the Washington, D.C. office of the Governor of Puerto Rico as well as the principal liaison between the Government of Puerto Rico, the executive and legislative branches of the federal government, as well as the stateside community. Therefore, since the law was enacted, the PRSC has relied on PRFAA to assist it in all its operations. To this end, shortly after the Commission members were sworn in, PRFAA reorganized its main facility in Washington, D.C. to provide each commissioner with a designated office space from which they could operate when they are in D.C.

The PRSC has relied on PRFAA to facilitate its monthly meetings, which are required by statute and have taken place both in Washington, D.C. and in San Juan, PR. When traveling to D.C. the PRSC has utilized PRFAA's services to secure meetings with Members of Congress and Congressional staff, develop outreach materials,



coordinate events and logistics, secure press opportunities and other functions as needed.

The PRSC has also worked hand-in-hand with the office of Puerto Rico's Resident Commissioner, Hon. Jenniffer González Colón (R-PR). The Commission has met with the Resident Commissioner and her staff on a regular basis to coordinate efforts and maximize impact.

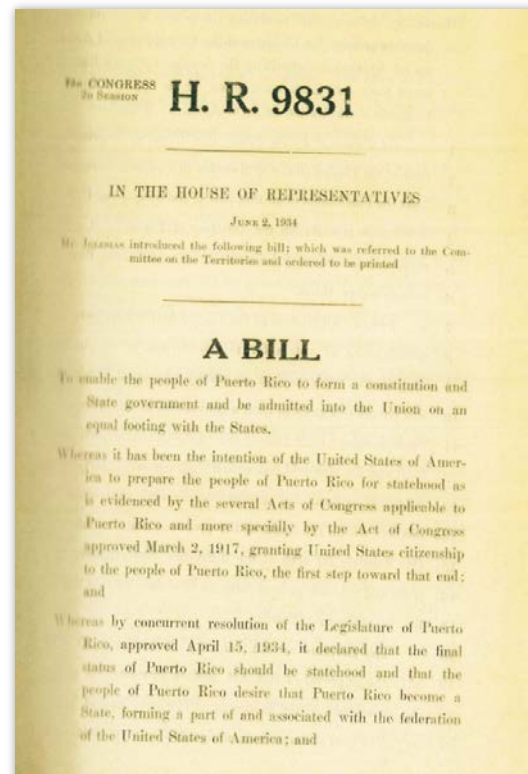
**Figure 11 – PRSC meeting with Resident Commissioner Jenniffer Gonzalez-Colón and Gov. Ricardo Rosselló. Source: Twitter**

## V . C O N G R E S S I O N A L   E F F O R T S

## CHALLENGE OF OBTAINING CONGRESSIONAL ATTENTION & ACTION

To achieve statehood for Puerto Rico, the U.S. Congress must approve an enabling act in both the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate to admit Puerto Rico as a state of the Union on equal footing with the other states, and then the President of the United States must sign it into law. Passage in the House requires a simple majority of 218 votes of the total 435 voting Representatives, and in the Senate, 60 out of 100 Senators must vote to invoke cloture on the debate and then 51 must vote for final approval. While procedurally and mathematically this is not very complex, given the multitude of complex and controversial issues facing Congress daily, obtaining the attention of Congress and then the support to get the issue of Puerto Rico's political status on the Congressional agenda is not an easy or simple task.

Indeed, efforts to get the U.S. Congress to approve legislation to grant statehood for Puerto Rico date back to 1934 when then Resident Commissioner Santiago Iglesias Pantín (D-PR) presented the first Puerto Rico admission bill in response to a resolution approved by the territorial legislature of the time.<sup>11</sup> Since then there have been over thirty bills dealing with Puerto Rico statehood that have been introduced in both the House and Senate by members of both the Republican and Democratic parties. While two bills have been approved in the U.S. House of Representatives in the last twenty years, neither of them was considered on the floor of the U.S. Senate.<sup>12</sup> Now in the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress, the challenge of getting attention and action in Congress is



**Figure 12 – First Puerto Rico statehood admission bill. Source: U.S. Library of Congress**

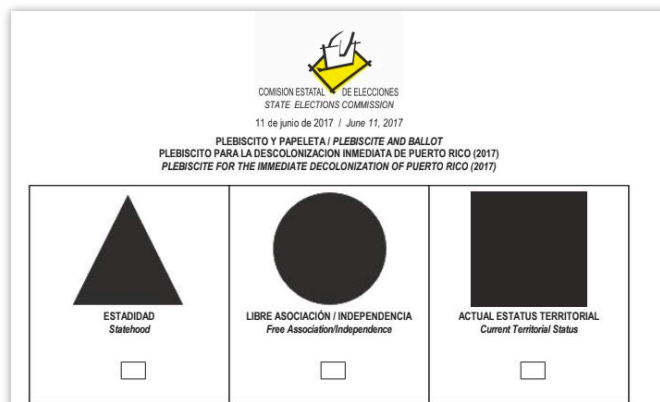
<sup>11</sup> *Congressional Record*, House, 73rd Cong., 1st sess. "To enable the people of Puerto Rico, to form a constitution and State government and be admitted into the Union on an equal footing with the States" (29 March 1933): 1003; History, Art & Archives, U.S. House of Representatives, "IGLESIAS, Santiago," <http://history.house.gov/People/Detail/15620> (June 22, 2018)

<sup>12</sup> *The United States House of Representatives*, H.R. 856, "The United-States-Puerto Rico Political Status Act, 105 Congress; February 27, 1997; *The United States House of Representatives*, H.R. 2499, *The Puerto Rico Democracy Act*, 111<sup>th</sup> Congress; May 19, 2009

still there, but there have been significant changes in the national political landscape as well as in the conditions of the territory that present a unique window of opportunity to definitively end Puerto Rico's territorial status and put the island on a definitive path to statehood. The goal of the PRSC is to learn from these past experiences and to work hand in hand with the Resident Commissioner, the Governor and PRFAA to maximize our chances of success in this century long cause.

## FROM BENIGN NEGLECT TO IMPOSSIBLE TO IGNORE

The fiscal and debt crisis that led to the enactment of PROMESA in 2016, as well as the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in the case of *Puerto Rico v. Sanchez Valle* that same year, both had very significant impacts on Puerto Rico's standing among federal priority issues.<sup>13</sup> That year alone more hearings were held in the U.S. Congress and articles were published in national media on Puerto Rico's political, economic and fiscal situation than in many decades before. The decay of Puerto Rico's territorial government and economy became too big for Washington and the American national media to ignore any longer. While the passage of PROMESA was rightly focused on providing tools for Puerto Rico's debt and fiscal restructuring, the bill did acknowledge and protect the right to determine the island's future political status even if it failed to take any action to actively correct the democratic deficit and unequal treatment under territorial status that undergirds the majority of Puerto Rico's problems as their root cause.<sup>14</sup>



**Figure 13 – Detail of ballot for 2017 political status plebiscite.**  
Source: Puerto Rico State Elections Commission

Last year, the attention to Puerto Rico in the U.S. Congress grew even more when the results of the political status plebiscite held on June 11, 2017 revealed that 97% of voters that participated favored statehood over either independence or continued territory status.<sup>15</sup> The vote was significant because it was held in accordance with a provision of P.L. 113-76, which required that the ballot and associated materials be

<sup>13</sup> *Puerto Rico v. Sanchez Valle*, 579 U.S. \_\_\_\_ (2016)

<sup>14</sup> *Congressional Record*, P.L. 114-187, Sec. 402, Title IV "To reauthorize and amend the National Sea Grant College Program Act, and for other purposes". June 30, 2016

<sup>15</sup> Puerto Rico State Elections Commission, Plebiscite for the Immediate Decolonization of Puerto Rico:

[http://resultados2017.ceepur.org/Escrutinio\\_General\\_79/index.html#en/default/CONSULTA\\_DE\\_ESTATUS\\_Resumen.xml](http://resultados2017.ceepur.org/Escrutinio_General_79/index.html#en/default/CONSULTA_DE_ESTATUS_Resumen.xml) July 25, 2017



submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) for an initial review of the proposed process of self-determination to ensure that its content was fair and consistent with the U.S. Constitution, as well as federal laws and policies. The feedback provided by the DOJ on the original ballot was fully incorporated through P.L. 23-2017.<sup>16</sup> The plebiscite was also overseen by a distinguished and bipartisan group of national and international electoral observers, that included two current and one former member of Congress, who unanimously concluded that it was a free, fair and transparent process where all eligible voters had the opportunity to participate.<sup>17</sup>



**Figure 14 – Rep. Don Young, Rep. Darren Soto, Jason Emert with Gov. Rossello and Sec. Rivera at National Press Club discussing findings of the Electoral Observer Mission. Source: Twitter**

Although a lot of attention has been given to the 23% voter participation rate for this event, this number is artificially low because in 2016 a federal court decision inflated voter registration in Puerto Rico by over 630,000 even though virtually all of those voters have permanently left Puerto Rico.<sup>18</sup> So when one calculates participation rate for the June 11<sup>th</sup> plebiscite without these court imposed registrations the participation percentage rises from 23% to 31%. No matter which number is used voter participation on June 11<sup>th</sup> was consistent with the last two electoral events held in Puerto Rico outside of the general election cycle which took place in 2005 and 2012, and had participation rates of 22% and 35% respectively.<sup>19</sup> In the states, ballot initiatives that are not paired with elections for candidates also

<sup>16</sup> Legislative Assembly of Puerto Rico, P.L. 23-2017 (S.B. 427), "Puerto Rico Immediate Decolonization Act." April 19, 2017. See the text of P.L. 23-2017 in English here: <http://www.oslpr.org/download/en/2017/A-023-2017.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> Young, Donald, Rep. Young to Serve as Election Observer in Upcoming Puerto Rico Political-Status Referendum, <https://donyoung.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=398954> June 9, 2017

<sup>18</sup> Colón-Marrero v. García-Vélez, <http://media.ca1.uscourts.gov/pdf/opinions/15-1356P-01A.pdf>; February 1, 2016; Note that in a similar case recently decided by the Supreme Court, Husted v. A. Philip Randolph Institute, the Court upheld the process that Ohio uses to remove voters on change-of-residence grounds finding that it does not violate the National Voter Registration Act.; Husted, Ohio Secretary of State v. A. Philip Randolph Institute et al. 584 U.S. \_\_\_ (2018). See here: [https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/17pdf/16-980\\_f2q3.pdf](https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/17pdf/16-980_f2q3.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> Puerto Rico State Elections Commission Results <http://64.185.222.182/Referendum2005/index.aspx> (2005); Puerto Rico State Elections Commission, State and Legislative Reform, <http://64.185.222.182/REFERENDUM REFORMA LEGISLATIVA Y ENMIENDA SOBRE LA FIANZA 46/NOCHE DEL EVENTO 68/default.html>. (2012)

tend to have lower participation rates. For example, in 2017, Texas approved seven amendments to its state constitution with a voter participation rate of 11%.<sup>20</sup> The legitimacy of those elections been upheld and the amendments as approved have taken the full effect of law. Any supposition about the possible intention of non-participants in the electoral event must be discarded since valuing those suppositions over the actions of lawful voters would undermine electoral institutions in a fundamental way and render any democratic society ungovernable. In Puerto Rico, like in any democracy in the world, only the expression of those voters that participate in a free and fair electoral event represents the sovereign will of the people. And as the results of the 2012 and 2017 plebiscites clearly showed, the sovereign will of the U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico is that the U.S. Congress should end the territory status and make Puerto Rico a state of the Union.

## FEDERAL IMPACT OF PLEBISCITE & SELECT STATEMENTS OF SUPPORT



**Figure 15 – Statement by former White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer on June 12, 2017 about the victory of statehood in the political status plebiscite. Source: White House Press Corps**

The impact of that electoral event in the U.S. Congress was significant with executive branch officials and members from both parties and both the House and Senate making numerous expressions of support for Puerto Rico's process of self-determination as well as specifically for statehood. This was an ideal context in

<sup>20</sup> Reagan Mark, Voter Turnout Is Low As Texas Approves 7 Constitutional Amendments, San Antonio Current, <https://www.sacurrent.com/the-daily/archives/2015/11/04/voter-turnout-is-low-as-texans-approve-7-constitutional-amendments>, November 4, 2015

which to launch the PRSC in the U.S. Congress, which was originally scheduled to take place on September 13, 2017.



**HON. STENY HOYER (D-MD)**

*U.S. House of Representatives, House Minority Whip*

*"The voters who participated in Puerto Rico's status referendum expressed an unambiguous desire to continue seeking a future in common with the United States as an equal member of our union. I hope Congress and the administration will listen to those voices and enable Puerto Rico to become the 51st state. Its people — already American citizens — deserve full and equal representation in the Congress and equal treatment by federal agencies."*



**HON. DON YOUNG (R-AK)**

*U.S. House of Representatives, Former Chairman House Natural Resources*

*"It is time for us to stop colonizing Puerto Rico. It's time for us to recognize 3.5 million US citizens. It's time for Congress to step forward and do its job, to make it the state, as they have claimed."*



**HON. RON WYDEN (D-OR)**

*U.S. Senate, Former Chairman Senate Energy and Natural Resources, Ranking Member of Senate Finance Committee*

*The day after the 2017 plebiscite, Wyden affirmed that it was "a clear message" that Puerto Rico wants to transition "from territory to statehood," but considers that "those who benefit economically from the 'status quo' will seek to delegitimize the results."*



**HON. MARCO RUBIO (R-FL)**

*U.S. Senate*

*"On statehood [for Puerto Rico] that is what I committed to do when I entered the Senate, and that is what I intend to continue to do in the months ahead. I know that the people of Puerto Rico have been 'Citizens Without a State' for far too long. And while the challenges before us may make it hard for some to see, I believe we have never been closer to giving the people of the island the opportunity to vote for admission to the union."*







**HON. TOM PEREZ (D)**

*Chairman, Democratic National Committee, Former Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor*

*After the plebiscite Perez endorsed Puerto Rico statehood saying in a statement provided to Politico that "he believes Puerto Ricans should have the same rights as those on the mainland and that his personal view is that statehood is the best method to provide full representation in government and equal rights."*



**HON. ROB BISHOP (R-UT)**

*U.S. House of Representatives, Chairman, House Natural Resources Committee*

*"I am supportive of statehood [for Puerto Rico]. I think it is a solution that is long overdue."*



**HON. JOAQUIN CASTRO (D-TX)**

*U.S. House of Representatives, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair Congressional Hispanic Caucus*

*"Puerto Rico should be admitted as a state to the United States."*



**HON. SEAN DUFFY (R-WI)**

*U.S. House of Representatives*

*"Under Ricardo Rossello's leadership, Puerto Rico is making major reforms and more than a half million made their voices heard for statehood."*





**HON. BILL NELSON (D-FL)**  
U.S. Senate

*"I have always supported self-determination and equal treatment for all U.S. citizens. It seems to me that statehood is the answer."*



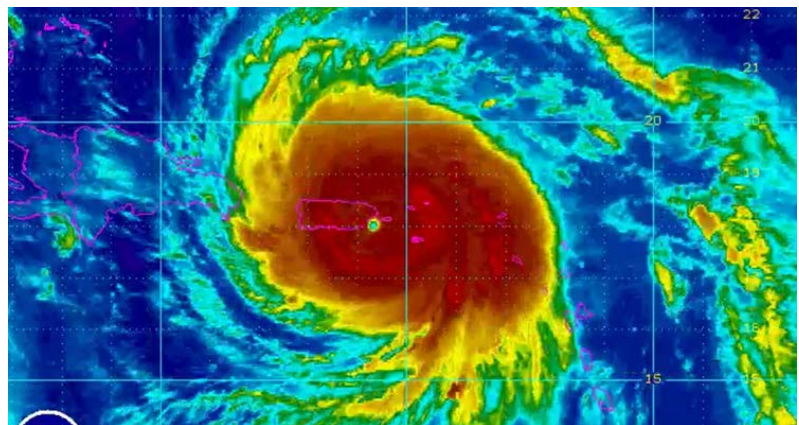
**HON. RICK SCOTT (R)**  
Governor of Florida, Candidate for U.S. Senate

*When speaking about the 2017 vote for statehood he said that the U.S. should "respect the will of the people of Puerto Rico."*

## AN UNEXPECTED CATASTROPHE & LAUNCHING THE COMMISSION

Then on September 6, 2017, Puerto Rico was hit by Hurricane Irma, which made considerable damage most notably to the island's energy infrastructure. Two weeks later, on September 20th, the island was struck again, this time by Hurricane Maria, which had a catastrophic impact on the island.

These back-to-back hurricanes dealt a massive blow to the U.S. territory's citizens of Puerto Rico further complicating the pre-existing fiscal, economic and demographic challenges. What ensued was the largest federal disaster response in American



**Figure 16 – Radar image of Hurricane Maria over Puerto Rico.**  
Image courtesy of Miami New Times.



history, and concurrent with it the most intense period of Congressional attention and visits to the island ever. This inevitably delayed the launch of the PRSC for months, who used the time to continue strengthening its internal plans and operational capacities. PRSC members also actively advocated in the U.S. Congress for federal disaster assistance and post-disaster reconstruction funding for Puerto Rico meeting with numerous Senators and Representatives.

The unprecedented devastation has taken months to address, and in some aspects is still being worked on to this day. While Congressional attention was understandably focused on the alleviation of human suffering caused by the storm, numerous members of Congress became keenly aware of the disparity in federal response efforts in Puerto Rico compared to the other states who had been impacted by natural disasters that year. As a result, multiple members of Congress issued letters and delivered floor statements recognizing the detrimental impact of Puerto Rico's territorial status on the island's post-disaster recovery. A notable

example was that of Sen. Chris Murphy (D-CT).<sup>21</sup> Ultimately, because of active advocacy efforts by Gov. Rosselló, Resident Commissioner González-Colón, and countless others, including PRSC members, the U.S. Congress was compelled to enact a series of laws to support the island's recovery and



Figure 17 – Presentation of PRSC credentials to the Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives.

<sup>21</sup> Senator Chris Murphy, "Senator Murphy Speaks on the Senate Floor About Puerto Rico", October 25, 2017. Produced by C-SPAN2, MP3 audio, 12:53:00, accessed June 22, 2018 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y3a5\\_GzKCEU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y3a5_GzKCEU)

reconstruction.<sup>22</sup> When taken together these laws amount to the largest federal assistance package for Puerto Rico in history.

Finally, on January 9, 2018, the PRSC was officially launched in Washington, D.C. The following day, Resident Commissioner Jenniffer González-Colón delivered a statement on the House floor introducing the PRSC delegation to fellow Members of Congress and to the American people. Immediately afterwards, the members of the PRSC, accompanied by Puerto Rico's political leadership, presented their credentials to the Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives and the Secretary of the U.S. Senate in a symbolic gesture to demand the seats in the U.S. Congress that Puerto Rico would have as a state of the Union. That week, the PRSC went on to meet with dozens of Members of Congress.

### Ongoing Activity, Building Momentum



**Figure 18 – PRSC members outside the U.S. Capitol between meetings**

Since then, the PRSC Members have traveled to Washington D.C. on a regular basis to meet with Congress and Administration officials to continue to advocate on behalf of statehood for Puerto Rico. As of June 22, 2018 the PRSC has met with 90 Members of Congress and Congressional Offices in both the U.S. House and Senate. Commission members have also met with high-level Trump Administration officials including one Cabinet member, U.S. Secretary of Transportation Elaine Chao.

The table below shows the exact number of Congressional meetings held by the PRSC by chamber and national party. It also indicates the percentage of each chamber that has been impacted so far.

<sup>22</sup> *Congressional Record*, P.L. 115-63 “The Disaster Tax Relief and Airport and Airway Extension Act of 2017”. September 25, 2017; *Congressional Record*, P.L. 115-64 “The Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria Education Relief Act of 2017”. September 29, 2017; *Congressional Record*, P.L. 115-72 “The Additional Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Requirements Act”. October 26, 2017; *Congressional Record*, P.L. 115-123 “The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018”. February 09, 2018



	U.S. House of Representatives	U.S. Senate
<b>Meetings with Democrats</b>	37	14
<b>Meetings with Republicans</b>	22	15
<b>Total Meetings Held</b>	59	29
<b>Percentage of Chamber Impacted</b>	13.5%	29%

The Commission has also sent “Dear Colleague” letters to all 100 Senators and 441 Members of the House of Representatives outlining Puerto Rico’s century long undemocratic and unequal territorial status; the Commission’s purpose as shadow Senators and Members of Congress; and a personal request for the Shadow Delegation to meet with each Senator and Member individually to discuss the long overdue need for statehood for Puerto Rico.<sup>23</sup>

The Commission has also participated and held other activities in Washington, D.C. relevant to Puerto Rico. On April 14, 2018, three PRSC members participated in the opening ceremony for the Senate of Puerto Rico Office in Washington, D.C. Then on May 24, 2018, the PRSC participated in an event to honor the fallen servicemen and women from Puerto Rico at a commemoration ceremony and wreath laying at the National World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C. There, they were joined by leaders of multiple national organizations, Legislators from the Puerto Rico House and Senate, and U.S. Congressman Darren Soto (D-FL). Speeches by the PRSC, outside organizations and Mr. Soto emphasized the ultimate sacrifice made by the U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico throughout the past century as they served to



**Figure 19 – PRSC members attended and spoke at the opening of the Puerto Rico Senate’s DC Office**

<sup>23</sup> See Appendix F. Letter from Puerto Rico Statehood Commission to Members of the U.S. Congress on the end of the 100 Year Anniversary of the Granting of U.S. Citizenship to the People of Puerto Rico, March 6, 2017.

protect America, and the need to honor them by extending full equality and participation in the federal government through statehood.

The PRSC has continued to come to the U.S. Congress to advocate for statehood and to support Resident Commissioner González-Colón ahead of her planned introduction of a Puerto Rico statehood admission bill. The Resident Commissioner introduced the bill on June 27, 2018 with the participation and full endorsement of the PRSC.<sup>24</sup> The PRSC is committed to supporting every effort to get statehood legislation enacted during the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress, but are also ready to continue to fight in any future Congress. The PRSC's goal is to build momentum in Congress that can be capitalized on whenever an appropriate legislative window of opportunity comes up, and if none comes up then to find ways to force the Congress to address the issue.



**Figure 20 – PRSC members at the National WWII Memorial delivered remarks and laid a wreath in honor of Puerto Rico's fallen servicemen and women.**

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<sup>24</sup> See Appendix H. Bill Text H.R. 6246, The Puerto Rico Admission Act of 2018, June 27, 2017.

## VI. BROADENING PUERTO RICO'S STATEHOOD MOVEMENT

## BEYOND CONGRESSIONAL ADVOCACY

The Puerto Rico statehood movement has traditionally relied on a single-issue approach focused mostly on Congressional advocacy. For the most part, the movement has not actively pursued partnering with national organizations or effectively harnessed or built national grassroots support. This has severely limited the capacity of the statehood movement to broaden the base of support for our cause, and to a large extent has isolated our issue from the broader national political dialogue. The PRSC is seeking to change that by broadening the Puerto Rico statehood movement. To lead this effort, the PRSC has created a Civil Society & Grassroots Engagement working group led by Shadow Rep. Alfonso Aguilar.

Throughout modern American history, progress has seldom been achieved exclusively from inside the walls of Congress, but rather is born and gains support from the broader civil society. Activism has helped shape the national political narrative and gained the support of Congressional majorities by raising issues and putting local and national pressure on Washington. In many cases, Congress' approval of legislation is an acknowledgement of a change in Americans' political mind, rather than the other way around. Almost all national movements have gone through a similar process by which they evolve from the fringes of society to mainstream politics by associating with other groups, gathering support across party lines and gaining support from diverse political ideologies. Unfortunately, the recognition of rights is a slow process that depends not only Congress or the Supreme Court, but on the delicate sway of public opinion.

Recognizing this, the PRSC is working to expand the advocacy efforts of the statehood movement beyond Congress, beyond Washington, and even beyond the United States. Drawing a fine balance between the recognition of the limited time and resources with which the PRSC must operate, and the need to extend advocacy beyond Capitol Hill, the Commission is actively developing several strategies detailed below.



Figure 22 – PRSC members meeting with Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America



## BUILDING EXTERNAL ALLIANCES

The PRSC is working to reach out to and engage outside organizations in strategic alliances to broaden the support for Puerto Rico statehood by leveraging the attention and growing national political importance of Puerto Rico in support of other causes and issues compatible with our own. Among them are:

- D.C. Statehood Commission
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People<sup>25</sup>
- Congress of Racial Equality
- League of United Latin American Citizens<sup>26</sup>
- Latino Legislative Roundtable
- National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference
- National Puerto Rican Chamber of Commerce
- American Jewish Committee
- Borinqueneers Congressional Gold Medal National Committee
- Iraq And Afghanistan Veterans of America
- Veterans of Foreign Wars



Figure 23 – PRSC members meeting with American Jewish Committee

Our partnerships and collaboration with these groups will serve to amplify our message to a wider, national audience and garnish long-sought support for equality through statehood. Supportive actions include approval of resolutions, grassroots mobilization, support in lobbying efforts among others.

<sup>25</sup> Appendix G. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), *Resolution in support of statehood for Puerto Rico*. October 21, 2017

<sup>26</sup> Appendix G. League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), *RESOLUTION TO CALL UPON THE 115TH CONGRESS TO RESPOND TO THE DEMOCRATIC WILL OF THE PEOPLE OF PUERTO RICO BY APPROVING LEGISLATION ON THE ADMISSION OF PUERTO RICO AS THE 51ST STATE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA*. July 8, 2017

## DEVELOPING GRASSROOTS LEADERSHIP

The PRSC is working to identify committed grassroots leaders which can be empowered and trained to advocate for statehood both from their respective localities as well as in Washington, D.C. Toward this end, the Puerto Rico Statehood Coalition has been formed and has begun holding meetings with grassroots leaders. To formalize its efforts and give it permanence, it was recently created as an independent 501(c)4 organization.

## TECHNOLOGY FOR DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT & ADVOCACY

The PRSC is working with outside groups to develop better technology platforms to provide engagement opportunities for activists and allies to stay up to date on the developments of our cause and take meaningful actions remotely or in person when it matters the most. These include the “Say Yes to Puerto Rico” campaign being carried out by the Puerto Rico Statehood Coalition.<sup>27</sup>



Figure 24 – Homepage of Yes2PuertoRico.org. Courtesy of the Puerto Rico Statehood Coalition

<sup>27</sup> Say Yes to Puerto Rico, 2018, <http://yes2pr.org/>

## LEGAL CHALLENGES AT HOME AND ABROAD

The PRSC is collaborating with outside organizations in the development of legal challenges to the case law that undergirds territorial discrimination, most notably the Insular Cases.<sup>28</sup> Additionally, the PRSC is supporting the resolution of a complaint before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in the Organization of American States.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Rosselló v. United States- Voting Rights in U.S. Territories, Equal Rights Now, <http://www.equalrightsnow.org/rossello>, April 2018

<sup>29</sup> Pedro Rosselló ET AL v. United States, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Petition P-1105-06, Report No. 17/17, <http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/decisions/2017/USAD1105-06EN.pdf>. January 27, 2017

## VII. ENGAGING PRESS & MEDIA

## NECESSITY AND CHALLENGES OF PRESS & MEDIA COVERAGE

To build awareness and political pressure in support of statehood for Puerto Rico, it is essential to obtain press and media coverage. However, as a disenfranchised territory, Puerto Rico is seldom a national news story. Through our interaction with national outlets, we are aware that there is still a lot of confusion regarding Puerto Rico, and due to its complexity and lack of interest from a mainland audience, it is rarely covered.



**Figure 25 – First PRSC Press Conference held at La Fortaleza, August 2017.**

Over the past two years, Puerto Rico has been in the headlines due to the territory's debt crisis. Nevertheless, while these stories might at first seem to be exclusively about Puerto Rico, they respond to mainland concerns. The debt crisis earned media attention due to the involvement of U.S. investment funds and their connection to the 2008 financial crisis. Money was owed to mainland individuals and corporations, and Puerto Rico was being declared incapable of meeting its financial commitments

as a result. Rarely, if ever, was the unequal treatment that comes with Puerto Rico's current territorial status mentioned as a root cause of the island's financial woes.

Hurricane María devastated the island last September generating national and international coverage, yet even then the coverage was much less than the attention gained by Florida after Hurricane Irma and Houston after Hurricane Harvey. Then a slower than desired federal response resulted in the tragedy being used for political gain by certain groups in the United States. Phrases such as "Trump's Katrina" began to appear on national shows, and, unfortunately, almost no attention was given to the territory's lack of political muscle, which would have allowed us to better help ourselves.

Irrespective of the results of the 2012 and 2017 political status plebiscites, for some reason the prevailing media narrative around Puerto Rico's self-determination did not change. According to most journalists, Puerto Ricans have not decided what



their preferred political status option is. While wholly inaccurate, it is nonetheless a persisting notion that most reporters we have interacted with still hold. While most national media jumps at any minor effort to infringe on the voting rights of U.S. citizens stateside, the results of the 2017 political status plebiscite are often summarily dismissed due to “low voter turnout”. This results in a failure to cover Puerto Rico’s lack of civil rights precisely because in most cases Puerto Ricans are not perceived to lack any rights.

## CREATING AWARENESS & CHANGING THE NARRATIVE

To create awareness of the lack of civil and political rights of the U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico and to inform the wider public of Puerto Rico’s historic decision to become a state, the PRSC has is targeting media at four levels: 1) National media outlets that work to inform the American public as a whole and shape national public opinion; 2) Washington focused media that caters to policymakers inside DC and the inside the beltway crowd; 3) Stateside local and specialized media outlets across the United States which can be used both to generate interest from the base up as well as to target members of Congress through the states or districts that they represent; and, 4) Puerto Rico media which are necessary to inform the residents of the Island about the work and progress of the PRSC and of the statehood movement more broadly.<sup>30</sup>

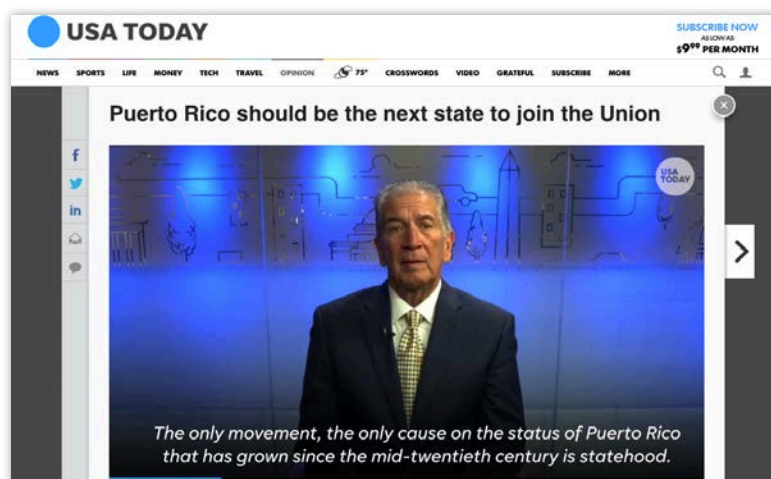


Figure 26 – Video interview with PRSC Chair on USA Today website reached hundreds of thousands of viewers from across the states. Image courtesy of USA Today.

The table below is quantifies media impact by the level at which media coverage was attained. These numbers should be seen as estimates that encompass both the direct and indirect impact of the PRSC as well as the impact of the statehood movement more broadly.

<sup>30</sup> See Appendix C, D & E.

<b>LEVEL OF MEDIA COVERAGE</b>	<b>MEDIA HITS SINCE JUNE 2017</b>
National	37
DC Focused	21
Stateside Local and Regional	23
Puerto Rico Focused	6

The other goal is to generate various types of media coverage including articles, interviews, media mentions, blog posts, and opinion editorials by and about the PRSC, but also about the topic of Puerto Rico statehood in general. The table below quantifies impact by type of media coverage.

<b>TYPE OF MEDIA COVERAGE</b>	<b>MEDIA HITS SINCE JUNE 2017</b>
Articles, Interviews and Media Mentions about the Statehood Commission	34
Opinion Editorials by or About the Statehood Commission	8
Articles, Interviews and Media Mentions about Statehood in General	29
Opinion Editorials about Statehood in General	18
Total Media Coverage	89

## LOOKING AHEAD

Throughout the next year, the Commission will continue its communications approach with a special emphasis on Hispanic media. As discussed throughout this report, it is vital to gain the support of minorities if statehood is to become a national issue. Given Puerto Ricans' shared language and culture with most of Latin America, and the importance this group has garnered in the United States, it is essential to get their attention and support. Hispanic television has a very high penetration rate across the nation, sometimes beating prime time English programming. It is our intent to gain access to prime-time Spanish language news and entertainment shows to discuss how a Hispanic delegation in Congress would be in the best interest of all Hispanics and all Americans at large.

## VIII. VISION AND PATH FORWARD

## ASSUMPTIONS

Achieving statehood for Puerto Rico will not be easy, but it is a real possibility that we can make into a reality through sustained effort, determination, perseverance and faith. It requires a bipartisan effort with the support of Democrats, Republicans and Independents. Equality is not a partisan issue. Additionally, we must be ready to wage a multifaceted and multi-year campaign that targets Congress, media, external organizations, that generates stateside constituent pressure on Congress, and that makes statehood a national political issue in the 2018 mid-term elections and 2020 general elections.

## PRINCIPLES

- **Equal Representation:** U.S. citizens in Puerto Rico must have equal voting representation in the federal government that enacts and executes the laws that we live under, so that we can contribute our perspectives to national political and policy decisions, and advocate for the needs challenges and aspirations of our island.
- **Equal Rights & Responsibilities:** We must ensure all U.S. citizens in Puerto Rico enjoy the same rights and responsibilities as their fellow citizens in the states to obtain better and more abundant opportunities for island residents to flourish and thrive, and contribute equally to the Nation as a whole.
- **Connected Families and Communities & Increased Commerce and Trade:** Continue providing for and increase the free flow of capital, ideas, culture and people between Puerto Rico and the states to strengthen families and communities on both sides. Increase the capacity for Puerto Rico to be able to compete economically at the national and global level in a way that benefits both the states and the island through increased interstate commerce and international trade.
- **21st Century Infrastructure for Sustainable Economic Growth:** A smart, sustainable and resilient infrastructure that meets the demands of a 21st century economy. Develop a vibrant diversified economy that incorporates technology and innovation, can create jobs and sustain growth.
- **Fiscal Responsibility & Government Efficiency:** A fiscally sound and transparent government that is efficient and responsive to the needs of the population and can facilitate private sector growth.
- **Partnership with State and Federal Governments:** A strong partnership with federal and state stakeholders to ensure the effective and efficient use of federal and state resources, programs through coordination, cooperation and accountability.



## CONCLUSION

The PRSC envisions the creation of a broad-based movement in support of Puerto Rico statehood, not just the passage of a specific law or bill. The movement must capture the imagination of the American people with the goal of a revitalized and thriving Puerto Rico that can develop to its full potential to the benefit of not only island residents but to the benefit of America as a whole. Indeed, if America's most challenged jurisdiction, Puerto Rico, can turn itself around and be transformed into a place of thriving prosperity, it can serve as a beacon of hope for all America and a sign that the best is yet to come. Statehood is not only about changing Puerto Rico, but about changing America to create a *more perfect Union*.



## IX . APPENDICES

**APPENDIX A - PUBLIC LAW 30-2017**

(H. B. 876)

**(No. 30-2017)**

(Approved June 5, 2017)

**AN ACT**

To establish an “Act for Equality and Congressional Representation of the United States Citizens of Puerto Rico”; create, as a transitory measure, the Puerto Rico Equality Commission attached to the Puerto Rico Federal Affairs Administration, to be constituted by the first delegation of two U.S. Senators and five U.S. Representatives who shall promote, in the Congress and the Federal Government, the electoral mandate ensuing from the November 6th, 2012 plebiscite and any equivalent, future electoral mandate rejecting the current territorial, colonial status and seeking admission as a state into the Union on an equal footing with the citizens of all other states; and for other purposes.

**STATEMENT OF MOTIVES**

With a population of 3.5 million people, the island of Puerto Rico is the oldest and most populated colony among the nations of the civilized world. It is a colony inhabited by citizens of the United States of America who are deprived of the full democratic rights enjoyed by the U.S. citizens residing in the fifty states.

Since 1898, by a provision of the Treaty of Paris, which ended the Spanish-American War, the island of Puerto Rico has been a possession of the United States of America and its inhabitants have been subject to the laws and decrees of the Congress and the President of the United States.

In 1917, the Congress granted the U.S. citizenship to the inhabitants of Puerto Rico by means of a statute. Puerto Ricans, however, cannot vote for the President or elect a voting delegate to the Congress that rule them. The People of Puerto Rico have shed their blood in every war and armed conflict where the United States has been involved by determination of a President (Commander in Chief) they did not elect; and except for the federal tax on the income earned in the territory, the people of Puerto Rico comply with and pay all the taxes, excise taxes, and financial obligations imposed thereon by a Congress in which they have no fair representation.

In fact, Puerto Rico has been abiding, for the past 119 years, by the laws and decrees of an Executive and a Legislative Branch that were constituted without the democratic support of the inhabitants of the island.

**Origins**

On July 25, 1898, the United States invaded Puerto Rico. The victim of said military occupation was not an uninhabited rock or an indigenous society. The United States occupied an island with over one million inhabitants who were civilized people, who had an organized government structure and the participation of democratic political parties pursuant to an Autonomous Charter granted by Spain.

During the deliberations regarding the Treaty of Paris, neither the United States nor Spanish diplomats took into consideration the opinion or preference of the people of Puerto Rico, who were reduced to tenants of a farm or property that one party ceded to the other.

Overcoming these challenges, Puerto Rico's political leadership at the time responded swiftly and favorably to the reality of the new Metropolis. By 1899, two main political parties had been already organized —the Republican and Federal Parties— seeking to achieve the assimilation requested by the U.S. Capital. The Congress' inaction, reluctance, and improvisation triggered other claims, including the independence movement.

Cuba, the other Spanish colony in the Caribbean taken by force of arms in 1898, was granted its independence by the Congress in 1902, just four years after the end of the Spanish-American War. Puerto Rico was treated differently. Rather than granting the Island its independence, the Congress granted U.S. citizenship to Puerto Ricans. The message was clear: We will stay in Puerto Rico.

Throughout the 20th century and the early 21st century, however, the decision regarding what to do with the “colony,” the “territory,” the “possession” of Puerto Rico has been the great dilemma that demoralizes, humiliates, and undermines the democratic prestige of the United States before the world's eyes.

### **Without Consent**

In 1952, San Juan and Washington D.C. created a bill to cover up this colonial subjugation. The “People of Puerto Rico” were authorized to call a Constitutional Convention to draft a Constitution that would be submitted for the Congress's approval and for ratification in a referendum. The Puerto Rican political leadership in power at the time attempted to exalt the process under the pretenses of having created a new autonomous status called the “Commonwealth.”

In 1953, they presented said misrepresented reality to the United Nations Organization to relieve Washington from the humiliating obligation of filing annual reports on Puerto Rico with the Committee on Decolonization. The inexorable course of history shattered the illusion by revealing the Congress' absolute power under the Territory Clause; the outcome of the plebiscites; the ongoing claims over the political status; the opinions of the U.S. Department of Justice and the Congress; the rulings of the U.S. Supreme Court which, as recently as 2016, clearly confirmed the Island's colonial status through their opinions and rulings; and the progressive revalidation of the statehood movement founded in the early 20th century.



On November 6, 2012, the people of Puerto Rico went to the polls to express their will: 53.97% of voters expressed their disapproval and rejection to the current colonial status; and 61.16% voted in favor of Statehood.

Since then, the so-called consent of the “people of Puerto Rico” to the relationship established during the constitutional process in 1952, was withdrawn. For all political purposes, the United States of America has been exercising colonial dominion over Puerto Rico since 2012, without the consent of Puerto Ricans and in violation of international law.

### **An Unfinished Debate**

The paradox facing the United States of America when it acquired the Spanish colonies in 1898 was noticed from the very beginning during the debate over the ratification of the Treaty of Paris. It was staunchly opposed by prominent politicians, such as the 22nd President of the United States, Grover Cleveland; the 23rd President of the United States, Benjamin Harrison; the Secretary of State of Wilson’s administration, William Jennings Bryan; as well as writers and intellectuals, including Mark Twain, William James, E. L. Godkin, and Andrew Carnegie. The arguments presented against the ratification of the Treaty were morally devastating.

They described the United States’ intent to become an empire possessing the former European colonies to be an irrational, unnatural, and absurd act, because said Nation had emerged from an act of war to free itself from European imperialism 122 years earlier. It was then stated that, seizing the Spanish colonies to gain possession and to rule over them, implied disregarding the basic principles that gave life to the United States of America.

Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2 (Territory Clause of the Constitution of the United States of America) is, at present, an archaic and morally and politically rebuttable provision. Said Clause was drafted initially to address the nation’s potential growth represented by the contiguous continental territories at the dawn of the 20th century, and employed in the acquisition, possession and administration of colonies.

Such a great debate has remained unfinished because, after granting the U.S. citizenship to the inhabitants of Puerto Rico in 1917, the Congress still bears the ignominious responsibility of subjecting them to an inferior, subjugated, and unequal colonial status.

### **Financial Consequences**

It is evident that, even though it was not a state, the impoverished Puerto Rico of 1898 experienced an economic transformation under the United States rule. The resulting socioeconomic assimilation brought about a healthy and progressive island for a while. This was achieved by adapting the U.S. capitalist model, but keeping the roots and the values of its Hispanic culture.

Said transformation was beneficial for both the ruler and the ruled. It proved greatly beneficial in geopolitical and military terms during wartime. The Island’s sugar monoculture served as a business basis for the agricultural industry and market in the continental U.S. The industrial transformation and economic development undergone by Puerto Rico strengthened the U.S.



influence in Latin America, counterbalancing the communist infiltration in this hemisphere promoted by Cuba during the Cold War years. As a result, the Island's purchasing power made it the most lucrative consumer market in this hemisphere for the Continental U.S.

The financial and social failure of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico as a colony of the United States has become more evident in recent years. Puerto Rico has suffered a 14.6% economic contraction and the loss of 300,000 inhabitants in the past 10 years. Puerto Rico has a deficit that exceeds \$7.0 billion as a result of the inequality and the limitations of being a colony.

The economic, financial, and budget crisis that the Government of Puerto Rico is currently facing also has two root causes. The ruling class and the public administrators that took turns in power during past years made mistakes and accumulated a monumental debt as a result of the limitations of being a colony.

Moreover, for 119 years, Puerto Rico has carried the burden of living in a state of uncertainty without the economic tools that are available to the states of the Union and to sovereign and independent countries.

When Alaska and Hawaii were admitted as states into the Nation, their per-capita income increased by 69% and 52%, respectively. Said rise was reflected just 10 years after their admission. The exports in Alaska tripled; tourism in Hawaii increased by 20% and the number of hotel accommodations also tripled. As for Hawaii, foreign investment increased from \$168 million to \$625 million after its admission. The average annual income in Alaska and Hawaii is \$65,000 whereas in Puerto Rico it is less than \$19,000. Today, Puerto Rico is an example of the United States' unsuccessful colonial model to which its opponents resort to discredit it.

Federalism is the solution. The failed colonial model prevents Puerto Rico from realizing its full financial and social potential. If Puerto Rico is prepared for Statehood, as was the case of Alaska and Hawaii, the State of Puerto Rico could contribute proportionately to the economic power of the Union just as those two former territories do at present.

### **Solutions**

The final and definite solution for Puerto Rico's colonial status is federated statehood, which already obtained a broad and unequivocal mandate in the 2012 plebiscite.

Every time the issue of Puerto Rico's colonial status arises in national and international scenarios, Washington's ruling class expresses its respect toward the "self-determination" of the People of Puerto Rico. During her intervention this summer, United States Ambassador to the United Nations, Samantha Power, replied to the report of the Committee on Decolonization, by stating that: "The People of Puerto Rico have the right to self-determination by choosing between three decolonizing formulas recognized by international law: statehood, independence, and free association." The people of Puerto Rico exercised their right to self-determination by choosing statehood as the "decolonizing formula," as expressed in the 2012 plebiscite on status.





It is time to recognize the irrefutable facts and absolute truths. The United States Congress has dismantled the constitutional framework of 1952. The Puerto Rico Oversight, Management, and Economic Stability Act, better known as PROMESA, passed by the Congress in 2016, conferred to the designated members of its board powers that subvert the powers that the Constitution of Puerto Rico confers upon the highest-ranking officials elected by the People of Puerto Rico, namely, the Governor, the members of the Legislative Assembly, and the Mayors. For all practical purposes, the Congress reverted us to the time when the Governor, the Treasurer, and the members of the Judicial Branch were designated by the people in Washington, and when the President had the authority to veto the budget approved by the Legislative Assembly.

Said retrogression to early colonialism compels us to act on the clamor of the United States Citizens of Puerto Rico for the implementation of a decolonizing agenda. History has taught us that in the U.S. democracy, one neither requests nor prays for rights, but rather demands and claims them.

Therefore, through this Act, this Legislative Assembly decided to adopt an Equality Plan—to which other territories have resorted in seeking to become states—in order to establish the Organic Act of the First Puerto Rican Delegation to the United States Congress demanding that the will of our qualified voters, freely and democratically expressed on the November 6, 2012 plebiscite, on which an overwhelming majority rejected the colonial status and stated their preference for the Puerto Rico's admission as a State into the Union, be recognized, accepted, and protected, and that this delegation be recognized as the first representatives and senators of the new State.

The Organic Act of the First Puerto Rican Delegation to the United States Congress is a normal, natural, legitimate, and logical action of a people that claim and demand their most fundamental democratic rights as citizens of the United States of America.

The fight and clamor for Puerto Rico's admission as a State into the Union is both a duty of democratic legitimization for all of the U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico, and a democratic reaffirmation of the principles upon which the Union was founded for the U.S. Citizens of the fifty states of the Union.

To be validated before the whole world as a democratic model that deserves to be followed, the United States of America must honor in Puerto Rico the principles upon which they proclaimed themselves as a Union independent from the European imperialism in 1776. The United States must honor the lives sacrificed and the blood shed by thousands of fellow Puerto Ricans in the battlefields, and they must show that America continues to be true to the model of multinational and multicultural coexistence that opened the doors to migrants worldwide, all of which contributed to the constitution of the most sovereign, free, independent, and powerful nation on the face of the Earth.

The time has come for Puerto Rico to demand and claim what it is rightfully ours. As for Washington, the time has come to listen to the moral voice of its ancestors and honor the



ideals consecrated in the history of the United States of America. This measure is a key to cause the Federal Government to address the colonial status issue, which impairs the social and economic growth of Puerto Rico.

Therefore, in accordance with Public Law 113-76 (2014), this Legislative Assembly approved Act No. 7-2017, known as the “Puerto Rico Immediate Decolonization Act.” This piece allows the people of Puerto Rico to use federal legislation to further the decolonization agenda supported by the voters in the 2012 plebiscite. Moreover, this measure enables the use of yet another mechanism to achieve the same purpose, as proposed by this Administration to the People under the Plan for Puerto Rico.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF PUERTO RICO:**

**Article 1.- Title**

This Act shall be known as an “Act for Equality and Congressional Representation of the U.S. Citizens of Puerto Rico.”

**Article 2.- Definitions**

For purposes of this Act, the term:

- (a) “Legislative Assembly” – means the House of Representatives and the Senate of Puerto Rico, as a whole.
- (b) “Commission” – means the “Puerto Rico Equality Commission,” which is, as provided in this Act, a legal entity of the Government of Puerto Rico to constitute the “congressional delegation” thereof, and to carry out the electoral mandate of the U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico ensuing from the November 6, 2012 plebiscite, and the public policy set forth in this Act.
- (c) “Congressperson” – means, regardless, any natural person who has been designated or elected to represent Puerto Rico as a “Representative” or as a “Senator” in the United States House of Representatives or the United States Senate, respectively.
- (d) “Congress” – means the House of Representatives and the Senate of the United States of America, as a whole.
- (e) “Congressional Delegation” – means, collectively, the two (2) “Senators” and the appropriate number of “Representatives,” according to the population, who shall represent the U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico in the United States Congress through the Equality Commission created hereunder; and until they or their successors are elected in a congressional election.
- (f) “Governor” – means the Governor of Puerto Rico.
- (g) “President” – means the President of the United States of America.



- (h) "Representative" – means any natural person who holds a position in the Equality Commission or who has been elected and certified in a congressional election as a Representative of a Congressional District of Puerto Rico to the United States House of Representatives for a two (2)-year term.
- (i) "Senator" – means any natural person who holds a position in the Puerto Rico Equality Commission or who has been elected and certified in a congressional election as a "Class I," "Class II," or "Class III" Senator of the State of Puerto Rico to the United States Senate.
- (j) "Class I Senator" – means the term used in the federal rules to classify a member of the United States Senate elected by a direct vote cast at a congressional election for a period equivalent to the remaining term of Class I Senators and, upon the expiration of said term, elected on subsequent congressional elections for each six (6)-year term as a Class III Senator.
- (k) "Class II Senator" – means the term used in the federal rules to classify a member of the United States Senate elected by a direct vote cast at a congressional election for a period equivalent to the remaining term of the Class II Senators and, upon the expiration of said term, elected on subsequent congressional elections for each six (6)-year term as a Class III Senator.

### **Article 3.- Declaration of Public Policy**

After one hundred eighteen (118) [sic] years of territorial and colonial status, and taking into account the results of the November 6, 2012 plebiscite, a majority of voters, all of which are U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico, rejected the current political status as a territory of the United States of America, and claimed equal rights and duties as U.S. citizens through the admission of Puerto Rico as a State into the Union. It is hereby declared as the mandate of the people and as the public policy of the Government of Puerto Rico that:

- a) The aforementioned plebiscite represents the most recent and clear will of a majority of the U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico, by virtue of their right to petition the Federal Government to redress any grievances under the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America.
- b) Having certified the results of said plebiscite, 53.97% of voters categorically rejected the colonial and territorial status instituted in 1898 under the Treaty of Paris; 61.16% of voters who expressed their preference, specifically supported equal rights and duties inherent to Statehood as the final and permanent mechanism for decolonization; 33.34% of voters supported a Treaty of Free Association; and 5.49% of voters supported full Independence.
- c) A transition process shall begin immediately in order to cease the imposition on Puerto Rico of any other form of territorial and colonial status under any method or modality of judicial interpretation of Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2 of the Constitution of the United



States of America; and to set Puerto Rico on a path toward statehood, as soon as practicable, on equal footing with the states of the Union under the Constitution of the United States of America.

- d) The U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico are internally organized as a Republican form of government, and are governed by a Constitution that was approved by the Congress and the President, and that is compatible with all of the requirements imposed on the states of the Union by the Constitution of the United States of America.
- e) Currently, as a state of the Union, Puerto Rico has the right to a congressional delegation composed of two (2) Senators and, according to its current population, five (5) Representatives, as provided in Sections 2 and 3 of Article I of the Constitution of the United States of America.
- f) This is not an isolated decolonization attempt; the local Government approved Act No. 7-2017, known as the “Puerto Rico Immediate Decolonization Act,” in order to use the mechanism provided under Public Law 113-76 (2014) to decolonize Puerto Rico.

**Article 4.- Transitory Measures to Constitute the Congressional Representation of the United States Citizens of Puerto Rico**

**Section 1.- Creation of the Puerto Rico Equality Commission**

- (a) It is hereby created as a legal entity of the Government of Puerto Rico.
- (b) The Commission shall have an official seal bearing the words “Puerto Rico Equality Commission” and the design provided by said entity.
- (c) The Commission shall have a website available in both English and Spanish containing information on the purposes and actions thereof.
- (d) The Commission shall be attached to the Puerto Rico Federal Affairs Administration (hereinafter, the PRFAA).

**Section 2.- Duties and Powers of the Commission**

The Commission shall have the following duties and powers:

- (a) To rigorously and promptly carry out the electoral mandate and the public policy set forth in Article 3 of this Act, including the promotion and defense of any 13
- (a) other future electoral mandate of Puerto Rico's voters, which may be equivalent thereto, including the results of the plebiscite to be held in accordance with Act No. 7-2017, known as the “Puerto Rico Immediate Decolonization Act.”



- (b) To exercise all of the powers and duties inherent to the congressional delegation of the State of Puerto Rico, which was declared vacant in accordance with Article 3(f) of this Act.
- (c) To educate on, advocate, and promote the admission of Puerto Rico as a state of the United States and the achievement of equal rights and duties for all of the U.S. citizens residing in Puerto Rico.
- (d) To request, take action, and demand participation and recognition as Congresspersons of the U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico in the United States Senate and the United States House of Representatives.
- (e) To advise the Governor of Puerto Rico, the agencies, public instrumentalities, and political subdivisions of the Government of Puerto Rico as well as to the general public on the legal and political aspects involved in the promotion of the admission of Puerto Rico as a state of the United States of America.
- (f) To appear before the Congress, The White House, the federal agencies, and courts in order to express itself regarding any matter within its jurisdiction.
- (g) To sue, and be sued in its own name, in the Court of First Instance of Puerto Rico in relation to complaints or causes of action brought against any natural or juridical person who fails to comply or interferes with the fulfillment of the requirements, purposes, and objectives of this Act.
- (h) To evaluate, further, and facilitate the development of initiatives to promote the admission of Puerto Rico as a state of the United States of America and to achieve equal rights and duties for all of the U.S. citizens residing in Puerto Rico.
- (i) To draft and submit to the Governor of Puerto Rico, as well as to the Legislative Assembly, through the Office of the Secretary of the Senate and the Office of the Clerk of the House of Representatives, an annual report stating in detail all of the efforts made, the actions and initiatives taken, as well as the projects carried out by the Commission while discharging its powers and duties. This report shall be submitted not later than on June 30 of the year following the reported calendar year beginning with calendar year 2017.
- (j) To take any legal or civil action as necessary to promote the admission of Puerto Rico as a state of the United States, including the participation of the members of the Commission in state, national, and international forums and the press.
- (k) To adopt bylaws for its internal operations.





**Section 3.- Composition of the Commission**

- (a) The Commission shall be composed of seven (7) members, to wit, two (2) Senators, and five (5) Representatives.
- (b) The Representatives and Senators members of the Commission shall be representatives-at-large of the People of Puerto Rico to the United States Congress until otherwise provided by Law.

**Section 4.- Appointments**

- (a) The Governor, not later than thirty (30) days as of the approval of this Act, shall appoint all of the members of the Commission and shall designate one of them as the Chair thereof. The members of the Commission shall be deemed to hold trust positions at the discretion of the Governor.
- (b) The advice and consent of a majority of the members of each House of the Legislative Assembly shall be required before the appointed members of the Commission are sworn in.
- (c) Upon confirmation by the Legislative Assembly, but prior to holding office at the Commission, all the members of the Commission shall take a loyalty oath before the Secretary of State of Puerto Rico. No appointed member of the Commission shall hold office as a Representative or Senator prior to taking the loyalty oath. The loyalty oath shall be the following: "I, (name of the Commission member), a citizen of the United States of America, am (age number) years-old, (marital status), resident and voter of the municipality of (name of the municipality), Puerto Rico, solemnly swear to have been appointed and confirmed by the Legislative Assembly of Puerto Rico as a (Senator or Representative) to the Puerto Rico Equality Commission, created by virtue of Act No. [sic] -2017, and that I fully satisfy all of the legal requirements established for this office. Furthermore, I do solemnly swear that I bear true faith and allegiance to the public policy and all of the provisions of the aforementioned Act in order to carry out the mandate of a majority in the November 6, 2012 plebiscite, and any future electoral mandate whereby a majority of voters, all of which are United States citizens of Puerto Rico, reassert their rejection to the current political status as a territory of the United States of America; and their demands for equal rights and duties as United States citizens through the admission of Puerto Rico as a State into the Union. I do solemnly swear that I will defend the Constitution of the United States of America and the Constitution and the Laws of Puerto Rico against all enemies, foreign or domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance thereto, including the right of the United States citizens of Puerto Rico to petition the Congress to redress the territorial and colonial grievances under the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America with respect to the final solution to the colonial issue of Puerto Rico. That I take all of these obligations freely without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion, and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties upon which I am about to enter."



- (d) The aforementioned oath shall be administered by the Secretary of State not later than five (5) calendar days following the confirmation of each of the members of the Commission by the Legislative Assembly.
- (e) The two (2) Senators must be at least thirty (30) years of age at the time of their appointment, be United States citizens during the nine (9) years prior to their appointment, be able to speak and write English and Spanish fluently, and be voters and residents of Puerto Rico.
- (f) The five (5) Representatives must be at least twenty-five (25) years of age at the time of their appointment, be United States citizens during the seven (7) years prior to their appointment, be able to speak and write English and Spanish fluently, and be voters and residents of Puerto Rico.
- (g) The members of the Commission shall hold office until their successors are appointed, in the case of a vacancy, by the Governor, confirmed by a majority of the members of each of House of the Legislative Assembly, and take office; or until their successors are elected by the direct vote cast at a congressional election and take office, according to the permanent rules provided in Article V of this Act.
- (h) The members of the Commission shall be entitled to per diems in connection with the discharge of the duties imposed thereon under this Act. The members of the Commission shall be entitled to reimbursement of any necessary expenses they incur in the discharge of their duties, responsibilities, and official business inside or outside of the jurisdiction of Puerto Rico, subject to the regulations adopted by the Commission to such effects.
- (i) The members of the Commission shall be deemed to be public officials as to any actions taken in the discharge of their duties, obligations, and prerogatives under this Act. Said members shall have legislative immunity within their individual capacity while discharging their duties. The members of the Commission shall also have immunity equal to that granted to Executive Cabinet members. The members of the Commission shall be entitled to request and receive legal representation and protection under Act No. 104 of June 29, 1955, as amended, within the scope of their duties.
- (j) There shall be no conflict of interest between the members of the Commission and the Government of Puerto Rico. Moreover, Act No. 1-2012, known as the "Puerto Rico Government Ethics Act of 2011," shall apply to the members of the Commission.

#### **Section 5.- Vacancies in the Commission**

- (a) At the request of a majority of the members of the Commission or on his own motion, the Governor may declare vacant the office of any member of the Commission for breach of trust or noncompliance with his duties under this Act or the bylaws adopted by the Commission.



- (b) Whenever a vacancy arises in the office of a Representative or a Senator of the Commission, the Governor shall appoint a successor within a term thirty (30) days after the vacancy becomes official; provided that the substitute meets all of the constitutional and legal requirements to hold said office. The substitute shall meet all of the requirements and comply with all of the procedures provided for in this Article.

### **Section 6.- Bylaws**

The Commission shall draft and approve bylaws which shall govern the internal operations thereof on or before thirty (30) calendar days after all of the members of the Commission are sworn in. A copy of said bylaws approved by the Commission shall be filed with the Secretary of State of Puerto Rico not later than five (5) business days after the approval thereof. The bylaws of the Commission shall not be subject to the provisions of Act No. 170 of August 12, 1988, as amended, known as the "Uniform Administrative Procedures Act."

### **Section 7.- Internal Operations**

- (a) The Commission shall meet at least once every month.
- (b) A total of four (4) members, at least one of whom (1) shall be a Senator, shall constitute a quorum once all of the appointed members take office.
- (c) All the agreements of the Commission, convened on a monthly meeting, shall be reached by a unanimous vote of all the members present and upon establishing a quorum. If a unanimous vote was not reached, the matter shall be brought to the consideration of the Governor not later than five (5) business days after said unanimous vote could not be reached. The Governor shall inform his decision not later than three (3) calendar days after receipt of notice that a unanimous vote could not be achieved. The decision of the Governor, upon notice thereof to the Commission, shall become final, binding, and enforceable on all members of the Commission. If the Governor decides not to intervene, the decision of a majority of the members of the Commission shall prevail and be enforceable on all members of the Commission. For purposes of this subsection, it shall be necessary that at least one of the Senators of the Commission concurs for a decision of a majority to prevail.
- (d) On special circumstances arising on days other than on the monthly meetings of the Commission, the Chair of the Commission may discuss and vote on matters that cannot be delayed with all of the members of the Commission through written or telephone communication. If a unanimous vote was not reached, the provisions of the preceding subsection shall apply.

### **Section 8.- Budget of the Commission**

The PRFAA shall request and justify before the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the Legislative Assembly the allocation of funds for the operations of the Commission as part of the budget thereof.



**Article 5.- General Provisions****Section 1.- Laws in Conflict**

Should the provisions of this Act be in conflict or inconsistent with the provisions of any other law, the provisions of this Act shall prevail.

**Section 2.- Severability Clause**

If any clause, paragraph, subparagraph, sentence, word, letter, article, provision, section, subsection, title, chapter, subchapter, heading, or part of this Act were held to be null or unconstitutional, the ruling, holding, or judgment to such effect shall not affect, impair, or invalidate the remainder of this Act. The effect of said holding shall be limited to the clause, paragraph, subparagraph, sentence, word, letter, article, provision, section, subsection, title, chapter, subchapter, heading, or part of this Act thus held to be null or unconstitutional. If the application to a person or a circumstance of any clause, paragraph, subparagraph, sentence, word, letter, article, provision, section, subsection, title, chapter, subchapter, heading, or part of this Act were held to be null or unconstitutional, the ruling, holding, or judgment to such effect shall not affect or invalidate the application of the remainder of this Act to such persons or circumstances where it may be validly applied. It is the express and unequivocal will of this Legislative Assembly that the courts enforce the provisions and application thereof to the greatest extent possible, even if it renders ineffective, nullifies, invalidates, impairs, or holds to be unconstitutional any part thereof, or even if it renders ineffective, invalidates, or holds to be unconstitutional the application thereof to any person or circumstance. This Legislative Assembly would have approved this Act regardless of any determination of severability that the Court may make.

**Section 3.- Anti-Injunction Clause**

No Injunction whatsoever shall be issued to prevent the application of this Act or any provisions thereof.

**Article 6.- Effectiveness**

This Act shall take effect immediately after its approval.

**CERTIFICATION**

I hereby certify to the Secretary of State that the following **Act No. 30-2017 (H. B. 876)** of the **1st Regular Session** of the **18th Legislative Assembly of Puerto Rico**:

**AN ACT** to establish an "Act for Equality and Congressional Representation of the United States Citizens of Puerto Rico"; create, as a transitory measure, the Puerto Rico Equality Commission attached to the Puerto Rico Federal Affairs Administration, to be constituted by the first delegation of two U.S. Senators and five U.S. Representatives who shall promote, in the Congress and the Federal Government, the electoral mandate ensuing from the November 6th, 2012 plebiscite and any equivalent, future electoral mandate rejecting the current territorial, colonial status and seeking admission as a state into the Union on an equal footing with the citizens of all other states; and for other purposes.

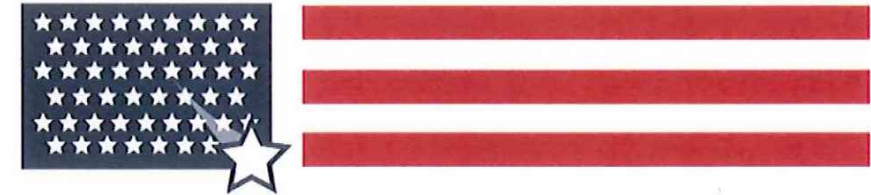


has been translated from Spanish to English and that the English version is correct.

***In San Juan, Puerto Rico, on this 13th day of June, 2017.***

***Orlando Pagán-Ramírez  
Acting Director***



**APPENDIX B - COMMISSION BYLAWS**

# PUERTO RICO

## STATEHOOD COMMISSION

Number: 8983  
Date: 1<sup>st</sup> Sept. 2017  
Approved: [Signature]  
Secretary of State  
By: [Signature]  
Assistant Secretary for Government Affairs

**Regulation of the Puerto Rico Statehood Commission**

*Pedro Rosselló*

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## Regulation of the Puerto Rico Statehood Commission

### Article 1 - General Dispositions

- 1.01- **Title** – The commission will be known as the Puerto Rico Statehood Commission (the “Commission”).
- 1.02- **Legal Authority** – The Commission is constituted under the authority of Act No. 30-2017, as may be amended from time to time (the “Enabling Act”).
- 1.03- **Purpose** – The purpose of the Commission is to constitute a shadow “Congressional delegation” to represent the U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico in the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate, to demand that the U.S. Congress and the Executive Branch act on the electoral mandates resulting from the political status plebiscites held in 2012 and 2017, and to implement the public policy of the Government of Puerto Rico as established in the Enabling Act.
- 1.04- **Languages** – English and Spanish will be the official languages of the Commission.
- 1.05- **Interpretation** – The Commission may through means of Resolutions, clarify and interpret the dispositions of this document if necessary.
- 1.06- **Definitions** – The terminology used in this Regulation, not otherwise defined herein, shall have the meaning ascribed to such terms in the Enabling Act.

### Article 2 - Members and Powers; Expenses

- 2.01- **Composition** – The activities of the Commission shall be carried out by the seven (7) members appointed by the Governor of Puerto Rico (the “Governor”), and confirmed by the majority of each of the Senate and the House of Representatives of Puerto Rico, in accordance with Article 4 of the Enabling Act. The time commitment of Members shall not equal or exceed that of full-time employment and shall not be considered an employment position. Service in the Commission shall not prohibit paid employment and contractual work outside of the Commission as long as it does not conflict with the duties entrusted to the members under the Enabling Act.
- 2.02- **Chair** – In accordance with the Enabling Act, the Governor shall designate one of the members of the Commission as the Chair. The members of the Commission shall have the opportunity to nominate and vote on the designated Chair to ratify the Chair’s appointment. The Chair will preside over the meetings of the Commission and shall preside the meetings of the Commission as typically done by the chair of a collective body.
- 2.03- **Powers** – The members shall have the powers and duties provided in Article 4 Section 2 of the Enabling Act. Members of the Commission may designate individuals to assist them in the performance of their duties in the Commission. The role of the assistant(s) shall be to support the commissioners. They may not replace the Commissioner in any meeting or act on the Commissioner’s behalf in a public capacity. Commissioners may not delegate a vote by proxy to an assistant. Designation of an assistant shall be given in a written notification to



the Chair and the Executive Director of the Puerto Rico Federal Affairs Administration (PRFAA). The designated assistant shall sign a confidentiality agreement before receiving any internal information from the Commission.

- 2.04- **Code of Conduct** – Within 120 days of its first official meeting, the Commission shall adopt a Code of Conduct consistent with the Enabling Act to govern the operations of the Commission and its members.
- 2.05- **Prohibition on Use of Public Funds** – Pursuant to the provisions of the Enabling Act, the members of the Commission shall serve without pay, and the reimbursement of its expenses shall not be covered from public funds. The Commission shall evaluate and establish mechanisms to channel and separately account for, in accordance with the requirements of the Enabling Act, all private funding and donations that may be received to assist the Commission in its mission and cover expenses of its members.

#### **Article 3 - Support from Puerto Rico Federal Affairs Administration (PRFAA) and Other Government Entities**

- 3.01- **Support** – PRFAA shall provide support to the Commission, to the extent permitted by law and within the existing PRFAA budget. Support may include, but is not limited to access to office equipment for the members of the Commission including printers, computers and access to the agency's broadband and information technology support services, preparation and distribution of briefing materials, handouts and other Commission documents as well as support in the planning and execution of Commission meetings, events and activities. The Executive Director of PRFAA may, at his/her own discretion and as the existing budget may allow, designate PRFAA staff members to support the Commission either on specific tasks or on an ongoing basis.
- 3.02- **Use of Facilities** – The members of the Commission shall have access to and shall enjoy the usage of specially designated office space within PRFAA. The members of the Commission shall have physical access to the common areas of the office, but will not interfere with or direct the work of PRFAA employees in any way regarding its internal functions and or any other functions, except as may have been previously agreed with PRFAA's Executive Director with respect to the provision of support to the Commission.

#### **Article 4 - Meetings & Hearings**

- 4.01- **Meetings** – The Commission will meet in person at least once per month. If members are unable to attend in person, they may join through teleconference, or video conference, if needed, as long as all members participating can hear each other.
- 4.02- **Quorum** – Once all members Senators and Representatives have been designated and take possession, a majority of them, that is four (4) members, shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of conducting the business of the Commission, provided however that at least one shall be a Senator, as such term is defined in the Enabling Act, for quorum to be duly constituted.

- 4.03- **Agreements and Resolutions** – All formal decisions and agreements by the Commission shall be documented in the form of a written resolution. The rules and procedures for approving any such agreement or decision shall correspond to Article 4 Section 7 of the Commission’s enabling statute.
- 4.04- **Public Hearings** – The Commission may hold public hearings, take testimony, and receive evidence, as the Commission considers appropriate, to assist it in carrying out the Enabling Act.

#### Article 5 - Committees

- 5.01- **Committees** – The Chair of the Commission with the consent of a majority of its members may designate one or more standing or special committees for specific purposes, each committee to consist of one (1) or more members of the Commission and any other external advisors. The Chair may designate and appoint Commission members (including him or herself) to one or more such committees. The special or standing committees shall report to the Commission.
- 5.02- **Committee Leadership** – The Chair may also designate a chair for each such committee, which shall preside at all meetings of the committee.
- 5.03- **Authorization** – No committee is authorized to take any official action on behalf of the Senators and Representatives or the Commission, unless expressly so and unanimously authorized by all members of the Commission.

#### Article 6 - Records & Reports

- 6.01- **Record Keeping** – All activities and work performed by the Commission as a collective body in meetings, to pursue the public policy of the Enabling Act, shall be memorialized as part of the Commission Book of Minutes. A record of the work of the Commission and its committees shall be kept, including minutes of all meetings of any type. After approval by the Commission, the records of meetings shall be entered in the Commission’s Book of Minutes and can be placed on the Commission’s website, as a public record if the Commission so decides. When a scheduled meeting is held and a quorum is not present, the discussions shall form a report only. The votes of the members shall be recorded by name.
- 6.02- **Record Keeping of Individual Members Activities** – The members shall report to the Chair and provide a summary of each meeting, activity, event or any other task performed individually outside of meetings. Such summaries shall also be included in the Commission Book of Minutes, identified separately from the record of meetings. The extent of the information to be included with respect to individual activities outside of meetings shall vary according to the nature of the activity, but shall be sufficient to create institutional knowledge of the efforts of the Commission. The Chair shall determine if any portion of such minutes shall be afforded confidential treatment from disclosure to third parties outside the members to protect third parties’ trade secrets, privileged or confidential information protected from disclosure under applicable law.



- 6.03- Annual Reports** – The Commission shall issue an annual report each year and submit it to the Governor and to the Legislative Assembly of Puerto Rico no later than June 30 subsequent to the calendar year of the report. The first calendar year to be reported shall be 2017-2018 and shall be filed by June 30, 2018. The Commission may issue additional reports, as it may deem necessary, to advance the public policy defined by the Enabling Act.

#### **Article 7 - Public Communications**

- 7.01- Verbal or Written Statements** – The designated Senators and Representatives have been entrusted with the responsibility of advancing the public policy defined by the Enabling Act. To that effect, they all individually and as a collective body have a duty to communicate periodically with its stakeholders, the residents of Puerto Rico, and with its target audiences in Washington D.C. and nationwide. These communications should be accurate, timely and should also show a unified purpose.

#### **Article 8 - Amendments**

- 8.01- Amendments** – This Charter may be added to, amended, or revised at any meeting of the Commission by a majority of a quorum of the Commission, provided that notice of any proposed amendment is given to each member in writing at least two weeks prior to an official meeting.

#### **Article 9 - Parliamentary Process**

- 9.01- Rules of Order** – In all matters of parliamentary procedure not specifically governed by this Regulation or otherwise required by law, the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order (Newly Revised)* shall apply.

#### **Article 10 - Effectiveness**

- 10.01- Effective Date** – This regulation shall become effective upon its approval and shall be filed before the Puerto Rico State Department within five (5) for its approval, in accordance with Section 6 of the Enabling Act.



**APPENDIX C - PRESS RELEASES**

URL	Title & Date
<a href="http://www.fortaleza.pr.gov/content/gobernador-rossell-nevares-designa-nuevo-miembro-en-la-comisi-n-para-la-igualdad">http://www.fortaleza.pr.gov/content/gobernador-rossell-nevares-designa-nuevo-miembro-en-la-comisi-n-para-la-igualdad</a>	Gobernador Rosselló Nevares Designa Nuevo Miembro en la Comisión para la Igualdad (2018, January 6 <sup>th</sup> )
<a href="http://www.fortaleza.pr.gov/content/puerto-rico-shadow-congressional-delegation-honors-fallen-servicemen-and-women-puerto-rico">http://www.fortaleza.pr.gov/content/puerto-rico-shadow-congressional-delegation-honors-fallen-servicemen-and-women-puerto-rico</a>	Puerto Rico Shadow Congressional Delegation Honors Fallen Servicemen and Women from Puerto Rico (2018, May 24)
<a href="http://www.fortaleza.pr.gov/content/governor-rossell-continues-efforts-equal-treatment-puerto-rico-washington-dc">http://www.fortaleza.pr.gov/content/governor-rossell-continues-efforts-equal-treatment-puerto-rico-washington-dc</a>	Governor Rosselló Continues Efforts for Equal Treatment for Puerto Rico in Washington, D.C. (2018, January 9 <sup>th</sup> )
<a href="http://www.fortaleza.pr.gov/content/puerto-rico-statehood-commission-defines-its-objectives-new-year">http://www.fortaleza.pr.gov/content/puerto-rico-statehood-commission-defines-its-objectives-new-year</a>	Puerto Rico Statehood Commission Defines its Objectives for the New Year (2017, December 27 <sup>th</sup> )
<a href="http://statehood4puertorico.com/puerto-rico-shadow-congressional-members-meet-with-naacp-in-washington">http://statehood4puertorico.com/puerto-rico-shadow-congressional-members-meet-with-naacp-in-washington</a>	Puerto Rico Shadow Congressional Members Meet with NAACP in Washington, D.C. (2018, March 13)
<a href="http://www.fortaleza.pr.gov/content/governor-puerto-rico-reiterates-call-congressional-leadership-fulfill-their-promise-economic">http://www.fortaleza.pr.gov/content/governor-puerto-rico-reiterates-call-congressional-leadership-fulfill-their-promise-economic</a>	Governor of Puerto Rico reiterates call to Congressional Leadership to fulfill their promise of economic development for the island. (2017, December 19 <sup>th</sup> )
<a href="http://dcireporter.com/members-of-puerto-rico-shadow-congressional-delegation-meet-with-washington-dcs-delegation/">http://dcireporter.com/members-of-puerto-rico-shadow-congressional-delegation-meet-with-washington-dcs-delegation/</a>	Members of Puerto Rico Shadow Congressional Delegation Meet with Washington, DC's Delegation. (2018, January 12 <sup>th</sup> )
<a href="http://statehood4puertorico.com/puerto-rico-congressional-delegation-demands-recognition-in/">http://statehood4puertorico.com/puerto-rico-congressional-delegation-demands-recognition-in/</a>	Puerto Rico Congressional Delegation Demands Recognition in Washington, DC (2018, January 10 <sup>th</sup> )
<a href="http://statehood4puertorico.com/puerto-rico-shadow-congressional-delegation-urges-congress-to-admit-puerto-rico-as-a-state/">http://statehood4puertorico.com/puerto-rico-shadow-congressional-delegation-urges-congress-to-admit-puerto-rico-as-a-state/</a>	Dear Colleague: Puerto Rico Shadow Congressional Delegation Urges Congress To Admit Puerto Rico as a State. (2018, March 6 <sup>th</sup> )



**APPENDIX D - PRESS ARTICLES****ARTICLES, INTERVIEWS AND MEDIA MENTIONS ABOUT THE STATEHOOD COMMISSION**

URL	TITLE & DATE	MEDIA LEVEL IMPACTED
<a href="http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2017/07/04/clash-looms-as-puerto-rico-prepares-to-send-reps-to-washington-after-statehood-vote.html">http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2017/07/04/clash-looms-as-puerto-rico-prepares-to-send-reps-to-washington-after-statehood-vote.html</a>	Clash Looms as Puerto Rico Prepares to Send Reps to Washington After Statehood Vote (2017, July 4 <sup>th</sup> )	National
<a href="https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/puerto-rico-officials-will-lobby-congress-for-statehood">https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/puerto-rico-officials-will-lobby-congress-for-statehood</a>	Puerto Rico Officials Will Lobby Congress for Statehood (2017, July 10 <sup>th</sup> )	DC Focus
<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/09/us/politics/advocates-of-puerto-rico-statehood-plan-to-demand-representation.html?mtrref=undefined">https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/09/us/politics/advocates-of-puerto-rico-statehood-plan-to-demand-representation.html?mtrref=undefined</a>	Advocates of Puerto Rico Statehood Plan to Demand Representation (2018, January 9 <sup>th</sup> )	National
<a href="http://thehill.com/latino/346633-puerto-rico-swears-in-congressional-delegation">http://thehill.com/latino/346633-puerto-rico-swears-in-congressional-delegation</a>	Puerto Rico Swears in Congressional Delegation (2017, August 15 <sup>th</sup> )	DC Focus
<a href="http://thehill.com/latino/341298-puerto-rico-names-congressional-delegation">http://thehill.com/latino/341298-puerto-rico-names-congressional-delegation</a>	Puerto Rico Names Congressional Delegation (2017, July 10 <sup>th</sup> )	DC Focus
<a href="https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/puerto-rico-demands-statehood-introduces-shadow-lawmakers-to-congress/article/2645533">https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/puerto-rico-demands-statehood-introduces-shadow-lawmakers-to-congress/article/2645533</a>	Puerto Rico Demands Statehood Introduces Shadow Lawmakers (2018, January 10 <sup>th</sup> )	DC Focus
<a href="https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2018/jan/10/puerto-rico-launches-vocal-bid-statehood/">https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2018/jan/10/puerto-rico-launches-vocal-bid-statehood/</a>	Puerto Rico Launches Vocal Bid Statehood (2018, January 10 <sup>th</sup> )	DC Focus
<a href="http://www.espn.com/mlb/story/_/id/19808418/puerto-rico-governor-recruits-ivan-rodriguez-push-statehood-us-territory">http://www.espn.com/mlb/story/_/id/19808418/puerto-rico-governor-recruits-ivan-rodriguez-push-statehood-us-territory</a>	Puerto Rico Recruits Ivan Rodriguez to ask for Puerto Rico Statehood (2017, July 4 <sup>th</sup> )	National
<a href="https://www.efe.com/efe/english/portada/puerto-rico-gov-t-launches-statehood-campaign-in-congress/50000260-3488668">https://www.efe.com/efe/english/portada/puerto-rico-gov-t-launches-statehood-campaign-in-congress/50000260-3488668</a>	Puerto Rico Government Launches Statehood Campaign in Congress (2018, January 11 <sup>th</sup> )	National
<a href="http://dcireporter.com/members-of-puerto-rico-shadow-congressional-delegation-meet-with-washington-dcs-delegation/">http://dcireporter.com/members-of-puerto-rico-shadow-congressional-delegation-meet-with-washington-dcs-delegation/</a>	Members of Puerto Rico Shadow Congressional Delegation Meet with Washington, DC's Delegation (2018, January 17 <sup>th</sup> )	DC Focus

<a href="http://latinousa.org/2018/01/09/puerto-ricos-resident-commissioner-plans-present-statehood-commission-congress/">http://latinousa.org/2018/01/09/puerto-ricos-resident-commissioner-plans-present-statehood-commission-congress/</a>	Puerto Rico Resident Commissioner Plans to Present Statehood Commission to Congress (2018, January 9 <sup>th</sup> )	National
URL	TITLE & DATE	MEDIA LEVEL IMPACTED
<a href="https://www.c-span.org/video/?439803-4/washington-journal-alfonso-aguiar-discusses-immigration-policy">https://www.c-span.org/video/?439803-4/washington-journal-alfonso-aguiar-discusses-immigration-policy</a>	*Video: Alfonso Aguilar on Immigration Policy (2018, January 16 <sup>th</sup> )	National
<a href="https://www.npr.org/2018/01/13/577900664/puerto-rico-government-takes-statehood-campaign-to-capitol-hill">https://www.npr.org/2018/01/13/577900664/puerto-rico-government-takes-statehood-campaign-to-capitol-hill</a>	Puerto Rico Government Takes Statehood Campaign to Capitol Hill (2018, January 13 <sup>th</sup> )	National
<a href="http://www.davidwebbshow.com/event/pedro-rossello-nevares/">http://www.davidwebbshow.com/event/pedro-rossello-nevares/</a>	*Recording: Pedro Rosselló on Puerto Rico's revived effort for Statehood (2018, January 17 <sup>th</sup> )	Stateside Local/Regional
<a href="https://pasquines.us/2017/03/09/rossello-unveils-plan-sending-puerto-rico-representatives-congress/">https://pasquines.us/2017/03/09/rossello-unveils-plan-sending-puerto-rico-representatives-congress/</a>	Rosselló unveils Plan for Sending Puerto Rico Representatives to Congress (2017, March 9 <sup>th</sup> )	Stateside Local/Regional
<a href="https://pasquines.us/2017/07/19/rossello-names-members-puerto-rico-equality-commission/">https://pasquines.us/2017/07/19/rossello-names-members-puerto-rico-equality-commission/</a>	Rosselló names members of Puerto Rico Equality Commission (2017, July 19 <sup>th</sup> )	Stateside Local/Regional
<a href="https://pasquines.us/2018/02/07/territorial-delegates-respond-state-union/">https://pasquines.us/2018/02/07/territorial-delegates-respond-state-union/</a>	Territorial Delegates Respond to State of the Union (2017, February 7 <sup>th</sup> )	Stateside Local/Regional
<a href="https://www.yahoo.com/news/puerto-rico-gov-approves-referendum-quest-statehood-210601950.html">https://www.yahoo.com/news/puerto-rico-gov-approves-referendum-quest-statehood-210601950.html</a>	Puerto Rico Approves Referendum Quest for Statehood (2017, February 3 <sup>th</sup> )	National
<a href="https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/what-s-next-fight-puerto-rico-statehood-n771236">https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/what-s-next-fight-puerto-rico-statehood-n771236</a>	What's next in the fight for Puerto Rico Statehood? (2017, June 12 <sup>th</sup> )	National
<a href="https://pasquines.us/2017/06/15/happens-now-puerto-rico-plebiscite/">https://pasquines.us/2017/06/15/happens-now-puerto-rico-plebiscite/</a>	What happens now after Puerto Rico plebiscite. (2017, June 15 <sup>th</sup> )	Stateside Local/Regional
<a href="https://people.com/chica/puerto-rico-government-lobbies-for-statehood-with-new-commission/">https://people.com/chica/puerto-rico-government-lobbies-for-statehood-with-new-commission/</a>	Puerto Rico Government Lobbies for Statehood with New Commission (2018, January 11 <sup>th</sup> )	National
<a href="https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/d-c-puerto-rico-governor-says-people-spoke-pushes-statehood-n773011">https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/d-c-puerto-rico-governor-says-people-spoke-pushes-statehood-n773011</a>	In DC, Puerto Rico Governor Says, 'People Spoke', Pushes for Statehood (2017, June 15 <sup>th</sup> )	National
<a href="https://www.yahoo.com/news/puerto-ricos-gov-seeks-statehood-referendum-amid-crisis-135123882.html">https://www.yahoo.com/news/puerto-ricos-gov-seeks-statehood-referendum-amid-crisis-135123882.html</a>	Puerto Rico's New Government Promises Immediate Push for Statehood	National



(2017, January 2<sup>nd</sup>)

<a href="https://pasquines.us/2018/01/30/puerto-rico-sends-delegation-congress-quest-statehood/">https://pasquines.us/2018/01/30/puerto-rico-sends-delegation-congress-quest-statehood/</a>	Puerto Rico Sends Delegation to Congress in Quest for Statehood (2018, January 30 <sup>th</sup> )	Stateside Local/Regional
<a href="http://miamiherald.typepad.com/nakedpolitics/2018/01/puerto-rico-leaders-create-a-shadow-delegation-in-washington-and-demand-statehood.html">http://miamiherald.typepad.com/nakedpolitics/2018/01/puerto-rico-leaders-create-a-shadow-delegation-in-washington-and-demand-statehood.html</a>	Puerto Rico Leaders Create a 'Shadow Delegation' in Washington and Demand Statehood (2018, January 10 <sup>th</sup> )	Stateside Local/Regional
<a href="http://caribbeanbusiness.com/puerto-rico-statehood-commission-presented-in-washington-d-c/">http://caribbeanbusiness.com/puerto-rico-statehood-commission-presented-in-washington-d-c/</a>	Puerto Rico Statehood Commission Presented in Washington, D.C. (2018, January 10 <sup>th</sup> )	PR & Stateside Local/Regional
URL	TITLE & DATE	MEDIA LEVEL IMPACTED
<a href="https://www.americanactionforum.org/insight/puerto-ricos-tennessee-plan/">https://www.americanactionforum.org/insight/puerto-ricos-tennessee-plan/</a>	Puerto Rico's Tennessee Plan (2017, July 13 <sup>th</sup> )	Stateside Local/Regional
<a href="http://www.latinorebels.com/2018/01/10/this-is-how-puerto-ricos-statehood-press-conference-went-today-in-dc/">http://www.latinorebels.com/2018/01/10/this-is-how-puerto-ricos-statehood-press-conference-went-today-in-dc/</a>	This is How Puerto Rico's Statehood Press Conference Went Today (2018, January 10 <sup>th</sup> )	National
<a href="https://www.elnuevodia.com/noticias/politica/nota/lacomisionparalaigualdadiniciacabildeo-2387958/">https://www.elnuevodia.com/noticias/politica/nota/lacomisionparalaigualdadiniciacabildeo-2387958/</a>	La Comision Para la Igualdad Inicia Cabildeo (2018, January 7 <sup>th</sup> )	PR Local
<a href="https://subscriber.politicopro.com/financial-services/article/2018/05/puerto-rico-statehood-push-picks-up-key-gop-endorsement-518372">https://subscriber.politicopro.com/financial-services/article/2018/05/puerto-rico-statehood-push-picks-up-key-gop-endorsement-518372</a>	This Morning in Politico Pro Financial Services: Colin Wilhem: Puerto Rico Statehood Push Picks Up Key Endorsement (2018, May)	DC Focus
<a href="https://www.politico.com/newsletters/florida-playbook/2018/01/25/unacceptable-scotts-office-on-broward-ballot-destruction-rubio-pushes-back-on-false-impression-over-puerto-rico-statehood-cuomo-takes-gaetz-to-sunday-school-240270">https://www.politico.com/newsletters/florida-playbook/2018/01/25/unacceptable-scotts-office-on-broward-ballot-destruction-rubio-pushes-back-on-false-impression-over-puerto-rico-statehood-cuomo-takes-gaetz-to-sunday-school-240270</a>	'Unacceptable: Scott's Office on Broward ballot destruction- Rubio pushes back on 'false impression' over Puerto Rico statehood- Cuomo takes Gaetz to Sunday School. Rubio v. Aponte Hernandez (2018, January 25 <sup>th</sup> )	DC Focus
<a href="https://www.politico.com/newsletters/huddle/2018/01/10/judge-blocks-daca-wind-down-house-gop-considers-lifting-earmarks-ban-trump-admin-hands-scott-a-win-on-florida-coastal-drilling-dems-ramp-up-russia-pushback-236030">https://www.politico.com/newsletters/huddle/2018/01/10/judge-blocks-daca-wind-down-house-gop-considers-lifting-earmarks-ban-trump-admin-hands-scott-a-win-on-florida-coastal-drilling-dems-ramp-up-russia-pushback-236030</a>	Puerto Rico Governor Ricardo Rosselló and Resident Commissioner Jennifer Gonzalez will hold a news conference with seven members of the Puerto Rico Statehood Commission to 'demand to be seated in the' House and Senate. (2018, August 10 <sup>th</sup> )	DC Focus



## ARTICLES, INTERVIEWS AND MEDIA MENTIONS ABOUT THE STATEHOOD IN GENERAL

URL	Title & Date	Media Level Impacted
<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/12/us/trump-puerto-rico-statehood-congress.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/12/us/trump-puerto-rico-statehood-congress.html</a>	Despite Vote in Favor, Puerto Rico Faces a Daunting Road Toward Statehood. (2017, June 12 <sup>th</sup> )	National
<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/puerto-rican-voters-head-to-polls-in-statehood-vote-1497182403">https://www.wsj.com/articles/puerto-rican-voters-head-to-polls-in-statehood-vote-1497182403</a>	Puerto Ricans Vote for Statehood (2017, June 11 <sup>th</sup> )	National
<a href="http://wlrn.org/post/nelson-gets-endorsement-former-puerto-rico-governor">http://wlrn.org/post/nelson-gets-endorsement-former-puerto-rico-governor</a>	Nelson Gets Endorsement from Former Puerto Rico Governor (2018, June 5 <sup>th</sup> )	Stateside Local/Regional
<a href="https://www.cnn.com/2017/06/09/us/puerto-rico-statehood-vote-2017/index.html">https://www.cnn.com/2017/06/09/us/puerto-rico-statehood-vote-2017/index.html</a>	Puerto Rico statehood referendum draws big support—but small turnout. (2018, June 12 <sup>th</sup> )	National
<a href="http://thefederalist.com/2018/04/27/podcast-puerto-ricos-hurricane-recovery-statehood-and-debt-crisis/">http://thefederalist.com/2018/04/27/podcast-puerto-ricos-hurricane-recovery-statehood-and-debt-crisis/</a>	Podcast: Puerto Rico's Hurricane Recovery Statehood, and Debt Crisis. (2018, April 27 <sup>th</sup> )	National
<a href="http://www.politico.com/agenda/story/2017/10/18/puerto-rico-hurricane-maria-statehood-000552">http://www.politico.com/agenda/story/2017/10/18/puerto-rico-hurricane-maria-statehood-000552</a>	Why Washington Should Finally Make Puerto Rico a state. (2017, October 18)	DC Focus
<a href="http://www.johnsoncitypress.com/Editorial/2018/06/02/Tennesseans-should-recognize-and.html?ci=stream&amp;lp=2&amp;p=1">http://www.johnsoncitypress.com/Editorial/2018/06/02/Tennesseans-should-recognize-and.html?ci=stream&amp;lp=2&amp;p=1</a>	Tennesseans Should Sympathize with Puerto Rico Push for Statehood. (2018, June 2 <sup>nd</sup> )	Stateside Local/Regional
<a href="https://www.roanoke.com/opinion/editorials/editorial-how-appalachia-and-puerto-rico-can-help-each-other/article_5baa8663-6e26-5ef9-acbd-c59b14395dcd.html">https://www.roanoke.com/opinion/editorials/editorial-how-appalachia-and-puerto-rico-can-help-each-other/article_5baa8663-6e26-5ef9-acbd-c59b14395dcd.html</a>	Editorial: How Appalachia and Puerto Rico can help each other (2017, October 15 <sup>th</sup> )	Stateside Local/Regional
<a href="https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/hurricane-maria-and-puerto-ricos-neo-colonial-legacy">https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/hurricane-maria-and-puerto-ricos-neo-colonial-legacy</a>	Hurricane Maria and Puerto Rico Neo-Colonial Legacy (2017, October 18 <sup>th</sup> )	National
<a href="https://dailycollegian.com/2018/02/the-u-s-must-take-a-more-active-approach-on-puerto-rican-statehood-votes/">https://dailycollegian.com/2018/02/the-u-s-must-take-a-more-active-approach-on-puerto-rican-statehood-votes/</a>	The US must take a more active approach on Puerto Rican statehood votes. (2018, February 28 <sup>th</sup> )	Stateside Local/Regional
<a href="http://www.newsweek.com/key-republican-congressman-endorse-puerto-rican-statehood-911298">http://www.newsweek.com/key-republican-congressman-endorse-puerto-rican-statehood-911298</a>	51 states? More Republican Politicians Say Puerto Rico Should Become a State. (2018, May 4 <sup>th</sup> )	National

<a href="https://subscriber.politicopro.com/financial-services/article/2018/01/puerto-rico-governor-sees-greater-statehood-possibility-in-wake-of-storm-276246">https://subscriber.politicopro.com/financial-services/article/2018/01/puerto-rico-governor-sees-greater-statehood-possibility-in-wake-of-storm-276246</a>	Puerto Rico Governor Sees Greater Statehood Possibility in Wake of Storm. (2018, January)	DC Focus
<a href="https://www.nbcnews.com/think/video/why-puerto-rico-deserves-statehood-1234531395553">https://www.nbcnews.com/think/video/why-puerto-rico-deserves-statehood-1234531395553</a>	Video: Why Puerto Rico Deserves Statehood. (2018, May 15 <sup>th</sup> )	National
<a href="https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/washington-secrets/puerto-rico-opens-bid-for-statehood-enlists-56-million-islanders-in-us">https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/washington-secrets/puerto-rico-opens-bid-for-statehood-enlists-56-million-islanders-in-us</a>	Puerto Rico Opens Bid for Statehood, enlist 5.6 million islanders in US. (2018, April 26 <sup>th</sup> )	DC Focus
<a href="http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/economy-budget/386895-does-new-high-profile-support-for-puerto-rico-statehood">http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/economy-budget/386895-does-new-high-profile-support-for-puerto-rico-statehood</a>	Does new-high profile support for Puerto Rico statehood bid increases its chances? (2018, May 9 <sup>th</sup> )	DC Focus
<a href="https://www.sltrib.com/opinion/commentary/2018/06/10/commentary-puerto-rico-is-retracing-utahs-steps-to-statehood/">https://www.sltrib.com/opinion/commentary/2018/06/10/commentary-puerto-rico-is-retracing-utahs-steps-to-statehood/</a>	Commentary: Puerto Rico is retracing Utah's steps to Statehood. (2018, June 10 <sup>th</sup> )	Stateside Local/Regional
<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/17/us/puerto-rico-florida-politics-midterm.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/17/us/puerto-rico-florida-politics-midterm.html</a>	Must-Do for Florida's Midterm Candidates: A Stop in Puerto Rico. Or Three. (2018, May 17 <sup>th</sup> )	National
<a href="http://thehill.com/opinion/civil-rights/371970-trump-academics-and-lawsuits-put-spotlight-on-puerto-rico-statehood">http://thehill.com/opinion/civil-rights/371970-trump-academics-and-lawsuits-put-spotlight-on-puerto-rico-statehood</a>	Trump, academics and lawsuits put spotlight on Puerto Rico statehood. (2018, February 2 <sup>nd</sup> )	DC Focus
<a href="https://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2018/06/04/613350827/puerto-ricos-push-for-food-independence-intertwined-with-statehood-debate">https://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2018/06/04/613350827/puerto-ricos-push-for-food-independence-intertwined-with-statehood-debate</a>	Puerto Rico push for food independence intertwined with Statehood debate. (2018, June 4 <sup>th</sup> )	National
<a href="http://thehill.com/homenews/administration/393506-trump-to-puerto-rico-governor-i-think-weve-helped-you-a-lot">http://thehill.com/homenews/administration/393506-trump-to-puerto-rico-governor-i-think-weve-helped-you-a-lot</a>	Trump to Puerto Rico Governor: I think we've helped you a lot. (2018, June 21 <sup>st</sup> )	DC Focus
<a href="http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/politics/os-puerto-rico-governor-town-hall-influence-20180111-story.html">http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/politics/os-puerto-rico-governor-town-hall-influence-20180111-story.html</a>	Puerto Rico Governor visit Central Florida: 'We need to be outraged' (2018, January 12 <sup>th</sup> )	Stateside Local/Regional
<a href="http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/latestnews/Hurricane-hit-Puerto-Rico-launches-new-drive-for-US-statehood?profile=1228">http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/latestnews/Hurricane-hit-Puerto-Rico-launches-new-drive-for-US-statehood?profile=1228</a>	Hurricane-hit Puerto Rico launches new drive for US statehood. (2018, January 10 <sup>th</sup> )	International Local/Regional
<a href="http://caribbeanbusiness.com/rep-bishop-says-puerto-rico-economy-must-be-vibrant-before-statehood/">http://caribbeanbusiness.com/rep-bishop-says-puerto-rico-economy-must-be-vibrant-before-statehood/</a>	Rep. Bishop says Puerto Rico economy must be vibrant before statehood. (2018, May 5 <sup>th</sup> )	PR & Stateside Local/Regional



<a href="https://www.politico.com/tipsheets/florida-playbook/2017/06/12/rubio-no-cuba-for-comey-deal-troutman-announces-ag-commish-run-with-25m-contribution-morgan-and-stones-medical-marijuana-make-up-nrcc-targets-murphy-220771">https://www.politico.com/tipsheets/florida-playbook/2017/06/12/rubio-no-cuba-for-comey-deal-troutman-announces-ag-commish-run-with-25m-contribution-morgan-and-stones-medical-marijuana-make-up-nrcc-targets-murphy-220771</a>	Clear Vote, No Clarity- 97 percent of Puerto Ricans who voted Sunday opted for statehood. (2017, June 12 <sup>th</sup> )	DC Focus
<a href="https://www.elnuevodia.com/noticias/politica/nota/elsenadoapruebaenmiendasalaleydelplebiscito-2312006/">https://www.elnuevodia.com/noticias/politica/nota/elsenadoapruebaenmiendasalaleydelplebiscito-2312006/</a>	El Senador aprueba enmienda a la ley del plebiscito (2017, April 18 <sup>th</sup> )	PR Local
<a href="https://apnews.com/75ec8c38f7924c449e16d15e614ac504">https://apnews.com/75ec8c38f7924c449e16d15e614ac504</a>	Puerto Rico files bill in quest to obtain statehood by 2025 (2017, January 4 <sup>th</sup> )	National

**APPENDIX E - OPINIONS EDITORIALS****OPINION EDITORIALS BY OR ABOUT THE STATEHOOD COMMISSIONERS**

URL		MEDIA LEVEL IMPACTED
<a href="http://thehill.com/opinion/international/377851-full-us-political-participation-should-be-recognized-as-fundamental">http://thehill.com/opinion/international/377851-full-us-political-participation-should-be-recognized-as-fundamental</a>	Full US Political Participation Should Be Recognized as Fundamental Right for Puerto Rico (2018, March 12)	DC Focus
<a href="https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2018/1/11/15782544/puerto-rico-pushes-for-statehood-explained">https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2018/1/11/15782544/puerto-rico-pushes-for-statehood-explained</a>	Puerto Rico Most Ambitious Push Yet for Statehood, Explained. (2018, January 11 <sup>th</sup> )	National
<a href="https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2018/01/23/puerto-rico-has-become-colonial-ghetto-time-make-51st-state/1034007001/">https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2018/01/23/puerto-rico-has-become-colonial-ghetto-time-make-51st-state/1034007001/</a>	Puerto Rico Has Become a Colonial Ghetto. Time to Make it the 51 <sup>st</sup> State. (2018, January 23 <sup>rd</sup> )	National
<a href="http://dailycaller.com/2018/06/04/puerto-rico-deserves-equality/">http://dailycaller.com/2018/06/04/puerto-rico-deserves-equality/</a>	All Citizens Are Equal Under the Law... But Some Are More Equal Than Others. (2018, June 4 <sup>th</sup> )	National
<a href="https://www.dailykos.com/stories/2018/1/11/1731794/-Puerto-Rican-Statehood-Commission-demands-end-to-second-class-status-with-a-push-for-statehood">https://www.dailykos.com/stories/2018/1/11/1731794/-Puerto-Rican-Statehood-Commission-demands-end-to-second-class-status-with-a-push-for-statehood</a>	Puerto Rican Statehood Commission Demand End to Second Class Status with a Push for Statehood. (2018, January 11 <sup>th</sup> )	National
<a href="http://www.orlandosentinel.com/opinion/os-ed-puerto-rico-ex-governor-calls-on-united-states-to-keep-promise-20180222-story.html">http://www.orlandosentinel.com/opinion/os-ed-puerto-rico-ex-governor-calls-on-united-states-to-keep-promise-20180222-story.html</a>	Puerto Rico's Former Governor: Make America a More Perfect Union (2018, February 22 <sup>nd</sup> )	Stateside Local/Regional
<a href="https://www.elnuevodia.com/opinion/columnas/las-utasparacombatirlapobreza-columna-2412391/">https://www.elnuevodia.com/opinion/columnas/las-utasparacombatirlapobreza-columna-2412391/</a>	Las Rutas para Combatir La Pobreza (2018, April 6 <sup>th</sup> )	PR Local
<a href="http://juneauempire.com/opinion/2018-04-10/puerto-rico-following-alaska-s-path-statehood">http://juneauempire.com/opinion/2018-04-10/puerto-rico-following-alaska-s-path-statehood</a>	Puerto Rico: Following Alaska's Path to Statehood (2018, April 10 <sup>th</sup> )	Stateside Local/Regional



## OPINION EDITORIALS BY OR ABOUT STATEHOOD IN GENERAL

URL	TITLE & DATE	MEDIA LEVEL IMPACTED
<a href="https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/opinion-puerto-rico-s-status-politics-theater-absurd-n776691">https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/opinion-puerto-rico-s-status-politics-theater-absurd-n776691</a>	Puerto Rico's Status Politics is Theater of the Absurd. (2017, June 26 <sup>th</sup> )	National
<a href="http://hpr1.com/index.php/opinion/last-word/paper-towels-for-puerto-rico-family-separations-for-refugees-of-color/">http://hpr1.com/index.php/opinion/last-word/paper-towels-for-puerto-rico-family-separations-for-refugees-of-color/</a>	Paper Towels for Puerto Rico; Family Separations for Refugees of Color. (2018, June 20 <sup>th</sup> )	National
<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/the-struggle-to-recover-from-hurricane-maria-reignites-calls-for-puerto-ricos-statehood-independence/2018/04/28/e9284fe2-2c7d-11e8-8688-e053ba58f1e4_story.html?utm_term=.563f432ce2e6">https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/the-struggle-to-recover-from-hurricane-maria-reignites-calls-for-puerto-ricos-statehood-independence/2018/04/28/e9284fe2-2c7d-11e8-8688-e053ba58f1e4_story.html?utm_term=.563f432ce2e6</a>	Sluggish recovery from Hurricane Maria reignites calls for Puerto Rico's statehood, independence. (2018, April 28 <sup>th</sup> )	National
<a href="http://thehill.com/blogs/blog-briefing-room/369819-rubio-puerto-rico-gov-should-put-aside-statehood-push-focus-on">http://thehill.com/blogs/blog-briefing-room/369819-rubio-puerto-rico-gov-should-put-aside-statehood-push-focus-on</a>	Rubio: Puerto Rico Gov should put aside statehood push, focus on governing. (2018, January 19 <sup>th</sup> )	DC Focus
<a href="http://thehill.com/opinion/civil-rights/368128-a-statehood-manifesto-after-120-years-the-us-needs-to-fully-embrace">http://thehill.com/opinion/civil-rights/368128-a-statehood-manifesto-after-120-years-the-us-needs-to-fully-embrace</a>	A Statehood Manifesto: After 120 years, the US needs to fully embrace Puerto Rico. (2018, January 9 <sup>th</sup> )	DC Focus
<a href="http://www.orlandosentinel.com/opinion/os-ed-puerto-rico-statehood-to-repay-veterans-20180531-story.html">http://www.orlandosentinel.com/opinion/os-ed-puerto-rico-statehood-to-repay-veterans-20180531-story.html</a>	Commentary: Congress can repay Puerto Rico's veterans by granting statehood. (2018, June 1 <sup>st</sup> )	Stateside Local/Regional
<a href="https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/statehood-for-puerto-rico-now_us_59f6730de4b06acda25f4b3a">https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/statehood-for-puerto-rico-now_us_59f6730de4b06acda25f4b3a</a>	Statehood for Puerto Rico Now. (2017, October 29 <sup>th</sup> )	National
<a href="http://thehill.com/opinion/finance/387633-congress-was-just-handed-a-blueprint-for-solving-puerto-ricos-debt-crisis">http://thehill.com/opinion/finance/387633-congress-was-just-handed-a-blueprint-for-solving-puerto-ricos-debt-crisis</a>	Congress was just handed a blueprint for solving Puerto Rico's debt crisis. (2018, May 14 <sup>th</sup> )	DC Focus
<a href="https://www.ft.com/content/988e9826-2c3c-11e7-bc4b-5528796fe35c">https://www.ft.com/content/988e9826-2c3c-11e7-bc4b-5528796fe35c</a>	Only statehood can end Puerto Rico's crisis (2017, May 4 <sup>th</sup> )	National
<a href="http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/politics/391366-response-to-hurricane-marie-shows-the-need">http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/politics/391366-response-to-hurricane-marie-shows-the-need</a>	Response to Hurricane Maria shows the need to fully enfranchise the people of Puerto	DC Focus



to-fully-enfranchise

Rico.  
(2018, June 8<sup>th</sup>)

<a href="https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/opinion-faris-puerto-rico_us_5acbb285e4b0337ad1ea_a828">https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/opinion-faris-puerto-rico_us_5acbb285e4b0337ad1ea_a828</a>	If Democrats Strategized like Republicans, Puerto Rico would be a State. (2018, April 10 <sup>th</sup> )	National
URL	TITLE & DATE	MEDIA LEVEL IMPACTED
<a href="https://blog.timesunion.com/hoffmanfiles/puerto-rico-is-coming-back/44436/">https://blog.timesunion.com/hoffmanfiles/puerto-rico-is-coming-back/44436/</a>	Puerto Rico is Coming Back! (2018, May 31 <sup>st</sup> )	Stateside Local/Regional
<a href="http://www.miamiherald.com/news/politics-government/article195590089.html">http://www.miamiherald.com/news/politics-government/article195590089.html</a>	Rubio calls out Puerto Rico's governor and tempers statehood push. (2018, January 19 <sup>th</sup> )	Stateside Local/Regional
<a href="http://buffalonews.com/2018/06/06/the-briefing-the-forgotten-disenfranchised-americans/">http://buffalonews.com/2018/06/06/the-briefing-the-forgotten-disenfranchised-americans/</a>	The Briefing: The Forgotten disenfranchised Americans (2018, June 6 <sup>th</sup> )	Stateside Local/Regional
<a href="http://www.orlandosentinel.com/opinion/os-ed-trump-puerto-rico-51st-statehood-push-20171025-story.html">http://www.orlandosentinel.com/opinion/os-ed-trump-puerto-rico-51st-statehood-push-20171025-story.html</a>	Commentary: How Trump can prevent Puerto Rico waterloo in Florida. (2017, October 25 <sup>th</sup> )	Stateside Local/Regional
<a href="https://blog.harvardlawreview.org/why-the-insular-cases-must-become-the-next-plessy/">https://blog.harvardlawreview.org/why-the-insular-cases-must-become-the-next-plessy/</a>	Why the insular cases must become the next Plessy. (2018, March 28 <sup>th</sup> )	National
<a href="http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2017/08/10/conservative-case-for-puerto-rico-statehood.html">http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2017/08/10/conservative-case-for-puerto-rico-statehood.html</a>	A Conservative Case for Puerto Rico (2017, August 10 <sup>th</sup> )	National

**APPENDIX F - DEAR COLLEAGUE LETTER**

March 6, 2018

Dear Colleague:

On March 2, 1917, on the eve of America's entry into World War I, the U.S. Congress granted American citizenship to the people of Puerto Rico through the Jones-Shafroth Act (P.L. 64-368). Since then, Puerto Ricans have proven their loyalty and contributed to the United States in countless ways. U.S. citizens from Puerto Rico have proudly served in the Armed Forces in every conflict since World War I. Along the way, Puerto Ricans have earned honors including one Congressional Gold Medal for the 65th Infantry Regiment "Borinqueneers", nine Medals of Honor, and thousands of Purple Hearts, all of which are a testament to the ultimate sacrifice Puerto Ricans have made to promote and protect American interests and values.

As this celebration of 100 years of American Citizenship comes to an end, we call on Congress to recognize that the U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico live at a disadvantage compared to our fellow citizens in the states. Puerto Ricans are subject to federal laws but do not have voting representation in the U.S. House of Representatives or any representation in the U.S. Senate. Our sons and daughters in uniform can be sent to war by the President of the United States, but even when they serve honorably, they cannot vote for the Commander-in-Chief. Congress can and does treat Puerto Rico unequally under federal laws, leading to incoherent and arbitrary policies that limit the Island's opportunities to maximize its economic potential. We are treated domestic for some purposes, yet foreign for others. And although we deeply cherish our American citizenship, our rights as citizens are not guaranteed by the 14th Amendment. Instead, we rely on a now 101-year-old statute Congress could repeal if it desired.

In 2012, voters in Puerto Rico soundly rejected the current undemocratic and unequal territorial status, and a majority favored statehood over all other non-territorial status options. In 2017, 97 percent of voters in Puerto Rico overwhelmingly re-confirmed that statehood is our preferred status option to end the inherently limiting territorial status. These votes demonstrate indisputably that Washington governs Puerto Rico without the consent of the governed. Moreover, the passage of the 2016 Puerto Rico Oversight, Management, and Economic Stability Act or PROMESA (P.L. 114-187) effectively increased the democratic deficit that we are subjected to as a territory by superseding the local self-government that Congress had granted Puerto Rico in the 1950's. It is now evident to both the U.S. citizens in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Congress that the current territorial status is obsolete and unable to meet the challenges of our time, especially during this critical recovery and reconstruction process post-Hurricane Maria.

While efforts to re-establish fiscal sustainability, restructure debts and rebuild after the hurricanes are all necessary, these measures are simply insufficient to overcome Puerto Rico's challenges. The reality is that Puerto Rico's territorial status is an inherent structural limitation on the island's true and full potential. America's best interests are simply not served by





continuing a century old failed territorial regime that can never be fixed. Ultimately, the only way that the various federal and territorial efforts underway as a result of PROMESA and the post disaster reconstruction process will ever unleash the full potential of Puerto Rico and the U.S. citizens that live on the island, there needs to be a concurrent effort to end the unequal and undemocratic territorial status. Among non-territorial options only Puerto Rico's admission as a state, with equal rights and responsibilities, would bring significant economic progress to the island, decrease dependence and increase interstate commerce for the mutual benefit of Puerto Rico and the rest of the Nation.

At this critical juncture, Puerto Rico cannot stand by idly while Congress decides to act. Following the historic footsteps of Tennessee and multiple other former territories that once faced delays in their admission but through their bold actions became States of the Union, our territorial government has created the Puerto Rico Statehood Commission to serve as our island's shadow delegation to the U.S. Congress. As Puerto Rico's shadow delegation, our mandate is to execute the "Tennessee Plan" by coming to Congress to advocate for and demand Puerto Rico's admission as a State. The Commission consists of seven members, 3 Republicans, 3 Democrats, and 1 Independent, and, in close collaboration with Puerto Rico's Resident Commissioner, Hon. Jenniffer González-Colón, we look forward to engaging you to advance this righteous cause.

The time to end Puerto Rico's undemocratic colonial territory status has come. After decades of federal elected officials claiming support for Puerto Rico's "self-determination," it is imperative that Congress respect and act upon the results of the 2012 and 2017 votes. We ask for your leadership to help us finally and definitively transition to a fully democratic system of government through statehood.

Sincerely,



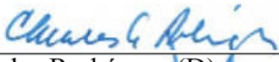
Zoraida Fonalledas (R)  
United States Senator (Shadow)



Pedro Rosselló (D)  
Member of Congress (Shadow)



Luis Fortuño (R)  
Member of Congress (Shadow)



Charles Rodríguez (D)  
Member of Congress (Shadow)



Alfonso Aguilar (R)  
Member of Congress (Shadow)



**APPENDIX G - RESOLUTIONS****RESOLUTION**

To call upon the Democratic members of the 115th Congress to respond to the democratic will of the people of Puerto Rico by approving legislation on the admission of Puerto Rico as the 51st state of the United States of America; and to respond to the damages and destruction in Puerto Rico caused by Hurricane Maria by approving legislation that includes a sufficient, equitable, and an appropriate relief aid package for the benefit of the people of Puerto Rico.

**WHEREAS**, Puerto Rico was colonized by Spain in 1493 and became a United States territory in 1898 by the Treaty of Paris which ended the Spanish-American War making Puerto Rico the oldest colony of the world and the longest held territory in the history of the United States.

**WHEREAS**, the persons born on the island are U.S. citizens by federal law since 1917 and carry an American passport.

**WHEREAS**, the insular government of the U.S. Territory of Puerto Rico exercises authority similar to that of the governments of the 50 states, is subject to federal law, and the island residents pay Social Security and Medicare taxes, but receive less funding in several federal programs when compared to other U.S. states.

**WHEREAS**, besides the abovementioned, U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico do not have full representation in their national government, since they cannot vote for the President while residing in the island. Nor do they elect Senators or Representatives to the U.S. Congress, having only a sole Resident Commissioner, who can only sponsor legislation and vote in committees of the House of Representatives to which he or she is assigned.

**WHEREAS**, Puerto Ricans have served proudly in the U.S. Armed Forces since 1917 with over 200,000 veterans, nine recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor, and over 25,000 active members in uniform protecting our freedoms and democracy; however, they cannot vote for their Commander-in-Chief.

**WHEREAS**, Puerto Rico is not treated equally with the states under many statutes, including key laws regarding health care, education, infrastructure and revenue measures that have a significant impact on the lives of its citizens.

**WHEREAS**, Puerto Rico's treatment under the current territorial status has substantially contributed to the demise of its economy and to the depression it has endured for the last decade; it creates uncertainty, a short-run approach to economic policy, a practice and ideology of reliance on special treatment by the U.S., and continual failure to build up bases for economic development within the island's own society.

**WHEREAS**, the longstanding policy of the United States has been that the American citizens of the territory have a right to self-determination to decide their future political status.

**WHEREAS**, Puerto Rico held a public election on the question of statehood in 2012, wherein 54% of voters rejected the current territorial status, and 61% of those voters chose statehood over the other options of independence, and nationhood in free association with the United States.

**WHEREAS**, the 2016 Democratic Party Platform declares that "Democrats believe that the people of Puerto Rico should determine their ultimate political status from **permanent** options that do not conflict with the Constitution, laws and policies of the United States" and that "Puerto Ricans should be able **to vote for the people who make their laws**, just as they should be treated equally..."

**WHEREAS**, on June 11, 2017, Puerto Rico held a status plebiscite to reaffirm and ratify the people's will previously expressed in the 2012 plebiscite in favor of statehood.

**WHEREAS**, the results of said plebiscite, as certified by the Puerto Rico Elections Commission, reflect a 97.18% support for statehood, 1.50% support for independence and free association; and 1.32% for the current territorial status.

**WHEREAS**, many prominent members of Congress, including members of the House leadership, have recognized the results of said plebiscite and have spoken in favor of Puerto Rico statehood.

**WHEREAS**, on September 20, 2017 Hurricane Maria, the most powerful, destructive and most devastating hurricane to ever hit Puerto Rico made its way across the island; taking lives, wreaking havoc, and leaving millions without power and running water.

**WHEREAS**, the response to the aftermath of Hurricane Maria by federal officials was unreasonably delayed, insufficient, inadequate, and inherently unequal when compared to the aid provided to other states affected by Hurricanes Harvey and Irma this same year.

**WHEREAS**, perpetuation of the territorial status allows for an unequal and discriminatory treatment, which in turn represents a continuation of economic stagnation and instability.

**WHEREAS**, it is morally and legally wrong for the United States of America, a world model for democratic principles, to maintain in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century over 3.4 million U.S. citizens in Puerto Rico deprived of their full-fledged U.S. citizen rights when they have

voted against remaining a territory and repeatedly through the ballot box endorsed becoming a state of the Union.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Democratic National Committee hereby calls upon the Democratic members of the 115th Congress to respond to the democratic will of the people of Puerto Rico by approving legislation on the admission of Puerto Rico as the 51st state of the United States of America.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Democratic National Committee hereby calls upon the Democratic members of the 115th Congress to respond to the damages and destruction in Puerto Rico caused by Hurricane Maria by approving legislation that includes a sufficient, equitable, and appropriate relief aid package for the benefit of the people of Puerto Rico.

Submitted by: Charles Rodríguez (PR), Johanne Vélez (PR), Hon. María “Mayita” Meléndez (PR), and Luis Dávila (PR).



**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE****4805 MT. HOPE DRIVE • BALTIMORE, MD 21215-3297 • (410) 580-5777**

**CORNELL WILLIAM BROOKS**  
*President & Chief Executive Officer*

**LEON W. RUSSELL**  
*Chairman, Board of Directors*

**1. NAACP Supports People of Puerto Rico in Their Call for Statehood**

**WHEREAS**, since 1898 the island of Puerto Rico has been an unincorporated territory of the United States, which means the island is neither a state nor independent country; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1917 Puerto Ricans were granted American citizenship, although since Puerto Rico does not enjoy full U.S. statehood, Puerto Ricans residing on the island cannot vote for President nor do they have voting representation in Congress; and

**WHEREAS**, as of the 2010 Census, 75.8% of Puerto Ricans identify as white, 12.4% identify as black, 0.5% as Amerindian, 0.2% as Asian, and 11.1% as "mixed" or other. Although estimates vary, most sources estimate that about 46% of Puerto Ricans have significant African ancestry. The vast majority of blacks in Puerto Rico are Afro-Puerto Rican, meaning they have been in Puerto Rico for generations, usually since the slave trade, forming an important part of Puerto Rican culture and society; and

**WHEREAS**, plebiscites regarding the status of Puerto Rico were held in 1967, 1993, 1998, 2012 and 2017; and

**WHEREAS**, on June 11, 2017, a plebiscite which offered voters three options: statehood, independence/free association, or "current territorial status" (the last option was added at the request of the Trump administration) was held; and

**WHEREAS**, those who voted in the June 2017 referendum entitled "Plebiscite for the immediate decolonization of Puerto Rico" overwhelmingly chose "statehood": the results were 97.18% for statehood, 1.5% for independence / free association, and 1.32% for current territorial status; and

**WHEREAS**, an independent opinion poll conducted by one of the daily newspapers conducted in late May 2017, indicates that the majority of Puerto Ricans favor statehood; and

**WHEREAS**, it is now up to the U.S. Congress to determine whether the island of Puerto Rico should be admitted to the union as a state; and

**WHEREAS**, similar to the situation in the District of Columbia, statehood for Puerto Rico is now a civil rights issue as the majority of the people have said that they want the core voting and citizenship rights that come with statehood.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) joins the majority of Puerto Ricans and its government in supporting U.S. statehood for the island nation; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the NAACP calls on the United States Congress to grant U.S. statehood to Puerto Rico, with all the democratic rights and responsibilities which go along with that status to its population.

**PASSED BY THE NAACP DELEGATES TO THE 2017 NATIONAL CONVENTION**

*July 25, 2017  
Baltimore, Maryland*

**RATIFIED BY THE NAACP NATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

*October 21, 2017  
Arlington, Virginia*



### **NASS Resolution in Support of Self Determination and Equality for Puerto Rico**

WHEREAS, the islands of Puerto Rico have been part of the United States of America, from 1898 to the present day; and,

WHEREAS, Puerto Ricans have been US citizens for more than a century, after the approval, in March of 1917 of the Jones Act, by President Woodrow Wilson; and

WHEREAS, since 1952 Puerto Rico has been governed under a Constitution approved by the people of Puerto Rico which provides for the democratic election of a governor and many other offices but not for representation in Congress or for presidential electors; and

WHEREAS, beginning with Gerald Ford in 1976, a number of U.S. Presidents have supported statehood for Puerto Rico, including Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, and George W. Bush; and

WHEREAS, on both November 6, 2012, and June 11, 2017, through a legitimate exercise of their right to political self-determination, the people of Puerto Rico voted in favor of statehood; and

WHEREAS, the National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS) is the nation's oldest, nonpartisan professional organization for public officials, serving as a medium for the exchange of information between states and fostering cooperation in the development of public policy affecting the lives of tens of millions of Americans, including the more than three million Puerto Ricans that reside on the island; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, by the National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS), that it hereby confirms its support of the Government of Puerto Rico and the Puerto Rican people's efforts towards attaining statehood, as such was the Puerto Rican electorate will expressed through their suffrage on November 6, 2012 and June 11 of 2017.

#### **Resolution Sponsors:**

- Hon. Luis Rivera Marín, Puerto Rico (R)
- Hon. Nellie Gorbea, Rhode Island (D)
- Hon. Wayne Williams, Colorado (R)
- Hon. Jim Condos, Vermont (D)

Adopted the 19th day of February, 2018  
in Washington, DC

Expires: Winter 2023





## Resolution in Support of Statehood for Puerto Rico

**WHEREAS**, the islands of Puerto Rico have been under colonial rule since 1493, when it became a territory of the Spanish Empire, and then, as a territory of the United States of America, from 1898 to the present day; and,

**WHEREAS**, Puerto Ricans have been US citizens for more than a century, after the approval, in March of 1917 of the Jones Act, by President Woodrow Wilson. Notwithstanding, to this day, the American citizens residing in Puerto Rico do not share equal rights to those enjoyed by the inhabitants of the continental United States, given Puerto Rico's status as a territory. And thus, suffer from a second-class citizenship with a lack of representation in both Houses of the U.S. Congress and the inability to vote for the President of the United States; and,

**WHEREAS**, just as it was a centuries old struggle for African-Americans and for women to have full access to all rights and obligations as American citizens, including the right to vote and to have political representation in the political branches of the Government under the Constitution, so has been the case with our fellow citizens in Puerto Rico.

**WHEREAS**, on both November 6, 2012, and June 11, 2017, through a legitimate exercise of their right to political self-determination, the people of Puerto Rico spoke plainly, loud and clear, as to their desire to be admitted to the United States as the 51st State of the Union; Now, therefore,

**WHEREAS**, the National Lieutenant Governors Association (NLGA) provides a medium for the exchange of views and experiences on subjects important to the people of the states and territories, including the millions of Puerto Ricans that reside on the island or in the 50 states; now, therefore,

**BE IT RESOLVED**, by the National Lieutenant Governors Association (NLGA), that it hereby confirms its support of the Government of Puerto Rico and the Puerto Rican



people's efforts towards attaining statehood, as such was the Puerto Rican electorate will expressed through their suffrage on November 6, 2012 and June 11 of 2017.



Dennis W. Cook  
Chairman

Passed  
April 8, 2017

### **Resolution in Support of Statehood for Puerto Rico**

WHEREAS, the Young Republican National Federation is an officially recognized allied group of the Republican National Committee;

WHEREAS, the Republican National Committee adopted the following language at the 2016 Convention as a part of the official Party Platform regarding Puerto Rico statehood,

"We (the RNC) support the right of the United States citizens of Puerto Rico to be admitted to the Union as a fully sovereign state. We further recognize the historic significance of the 2012 local referendum in which a 54 percent majority voted to end Puerto Rico's current status as a U.S. territory, and 61 percent chose statehood over options for sovereign nationhood. We support the federally sponsored political status referendum authorized and funded by an Act of Congress in 2014 to ascertain the aspirations of the people of Puerto Rico. Once the 2012 local vote for statehood is ratified, Congress should approve an enabling act with terms for Puerto Rico's future admission as the 51st state of the Union."

WHEREAS, the people of Puerto Rico have served alongside their fellow American Citizens in every American war since the turn of the 20th Century;

WHEREAS, both President Donald J. Trump and Vice President Mike Pence have called for self determination for Puerto Rico citizens, with President Donald J. Trump stating, *"I believe the people of Puerto Rico deserve a process of status self-determination that gives them a fair and unambiguous choice on this matter."* and, as indicated in the RNC resolution the American Citizens of Puerto Rico have determined they want statehood;

WHEREAS, each Republican President for the last 50 years, including Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, and George W. Bush, have called for self determination for Puerto Rico;

WHEREAS, the Young Republican National Federation has previously passed Resolutions in support of Puerto Rico statehood;

AND WHEREAS, Puerto Ricans have been American citizens since 1917;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Young Republican National Federation, believing 100 years is long enough for Puerto Ricans to be American citizens without having statehood, reaffirms our stance for Puerto Rican statehood and stands with President Donald J. Trump, Vice President Mike Pence and the members of the RNC in support of Puerto Rico statehood.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Young Republican National Federation is directed to share this resolution with Republican National Committee leadership, Speaker Ryan, Leader McConnell, President Donald J. Trump and other respective entities as deemed appropriate.

*Sponsored by Dennis W. Cook, Co-Sponsored by Chris Carmona, Adam C. Ellison, John W. Doyle, Jason F. Emert, Mike Thulen, Jr., Sarah Spence, Taylor Strand, Mike Puskaric, Katie Regan, Rick Veenstra, Temo Muniz, Rafael Bobe, Josué Rivera, Brian Bodine, Matthew Hebb, Clark Riemer, Joe Pinion, Clayton Turner*



*League of United Latin American Citizens*

**RESOLUTION TO CALL UPON THE 115TH CONGRESS TO RESPOND TO THE DEMOCRATIC WILL OF THE PEOPLE OF PUERTO RICO BY APPROVING LEGISLATION ON THE ADMISSION OF PUERTO RICO AS THE 51ST STATE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

**WHEREAS**, Puerto Rico was colonized by Spain in 1493 and became a United States territory in 1898 by the Treaty of Paris that ended the Spanish-American War making Puerto Rico the oldest colony of the world and the longest held territory in the history of the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, the persons born on the island are U.S. citizens by federal law since 1917 and carry an American passport; and

**WHEREAS**, the insular government of the U.S. Territory of Puerto Rico exercises authority similar to that of the governments of the 50 states, is subject to federal law, and the island residents pay Social Security and Medicare taxes, but receive less benefits than U.S. states; and

**WHEREAS**, despite the abovementioned, U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico are not treated equally under federal law as fellow American citizens, and do not have full representation in their national government, since they cannot vote for the President while residing in the island. Nor do they elect Senators or Representatives to the U.S. Congress, having only a sole Resident Commissioner, who can only vote in committees of the House of Representatives to which he or she is assigned; and

**WHEREAS**, Puerto Ricans have served proudly in the U.S. Armed Forces since 1917 with over 200,000 veterans, nine recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor, and over 10,000 active members in uniform protecting our freedoms and democracy; however, they cannot vote for their Commander-in-Chief; and

**WHEREAS**, Puerto Rico is treated as a state for purposes of laws, but is not treated equally with the states under several statutes regarding health care, education, infrastructure and revenue measures that have a significant impact on the lives of its citizens; and

**WHEREAS**, Puerto Rico's treatment under the current territorial status has substantially contributed to the demise of its economy and to the depression it has endured for the last decade because it creates uncertainty, a short-run approach to economic policy, a practice and ideology of reliance on special treatment by the U.S., and continual failure to build up bases for economic development within the island's own society; and

**WHEREAS**, the longstanding policy of the United States has been that the American citizens of the territory have a right to self-determination to decide their future political status; and



**WHEREAS**, Puerto Rico held a public election on the question of statehood in 2012, wherein 54% of voters rejected the current territorial status, and 61% of those voters chose statehood over the other options of independence, and nationhood in free association with the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, the 2016 Democratic Party Platform declares that “Democrats believe that the people of Puerto Rico should determine their ultimate political status from permanent options that do not conflict with the Constitution, laws and policies of the United States” and that “Puerto Ricans should be able to vote for the people who make their laws, just as they should be treated equally;” and

**WHEREAS**, the 2016 Republican Party Platform states that “We support the right of the United States citizens of Puerto Rico to be admitted to the Union as a fully sovereign state... Once the 2012 local vote for statehood is ratified, Congress should approve an enabling act with terms for Puerto Rico’s future admission as the 51st state of the Union;” and

**WHEREAS**, in 2016 the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Samantha Powers, recognized statehood as a valid and legally recognized permanent status option, as well as independence and nationhood in free association with another country; and

**WHEREAS**, the current Resident Commissioner, Jenniffer Gonzalez, introduced the “Puerto Rico Admission Act” at the beginning of the 115th Congress to enable the admission of the territory of Puerto Rico into the Union as a State, however, no actions have been taken by Congress; and

**WHEREAS**, on June 11, 2017, Puerto Rico held a status plebiscite to reaffirm and ratify the people’s will previously expressed in the 2012 plebiscite in favor of statehood; and

**WHEREAS**, the results of said plebiscite, as certified by the Puerto Rico Elections Commission, reflect a 97.18% support for statehood, 1.50% support for independence and free association; and 1.32% for the current territorial status; and

**WHEREAS**, given the aforementioned, it is obviously clear that an overwhelming majority of U.S. citizens residing in Puerto Rico want to replace the current territorial status with the permanent form of government that can be had as a state of the Union, which provides for equality and democratic representation in their national government; and

**WHEREAS**, continuation of territorial status will mean continuation of economic stagnation and instability. Statehood for Puerto Rico could be the foundation of economic progress, the route for the Puerto Rican people to enjoy a better quality of life in the 21st Century; and

**WHEREAS**, the Government of Puerto Rico recently approved a law creating the Equality Commission, consisting of a congressional delegation of two Senators and five Congresspersons, that as a state it would be entitled to have, with the objective to demand their seats in the U.S. Congress, and obtain admission and recognition of the Territory as the 51st state of the Union; and

**WHEREAS**, the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), the nation’s largest and oldest civil rights volunteer-based organization that empowers Hispanic Americans, fully supports self-determination of the people of Puerto Rico to decide their ultimate political status and has been championing a change in Puerto Rico’s territorial status since 1998; and



**WHEREAS**, the people of Puerto Rico have exercised their self-determination resulting in an overwhelming support for statehood and LULAC is committed in working with the Government of Puerto Rico to ensure that the U.S. Congress act on the will of the people of Puerto Rico, as expressed in the last two plebiscites; and

**WHEREAS**, it is morally and legally wrong for the United States of America, the democratic leader of the world, to maintain in the 21st Century over 3.4 million U.S. citizens in Puerto Rico deprived of their full-fledged U.S. citizen rights when they have voted against remaining a territory and repeatedly through the ballot box endorsed becoming a state of the Union;


**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the League of United Latin American Citizens hereby calls upon the 115th Congress to respond to the democratic will of the people of Puerto Rico by approving legislation on the admission of Puerto Rico as the 51st state of the United States of America;

**BE IT FUTHER RESOLVED** that copies of this Resolution be sent to:

1. Hon. Donald Trump, President of the United States
2. Hon. Michael Pence, Vice President of the United States
3. Hon. Paul Ryan, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives
4. Hon. Kevin McCarthy, U.S. House Majority Leader
5. Hon. Steve Scalise, U.S. House Majority Whip,
6. Hon. Nancy Pelosi, U.S. House Minority Leader
7. Hon. Steny Hoyer, U.S. House Minority Whip
8. Hon. Mitch McConnell, U.S. Senate Majority Leader
9. Hon. John Cornyn, U.S. Senate Majority Whip
10. Hon. Charles E. Schumer, U.S. Senate Minority Leader
11. Hon. Richard Durbin, U.S. Senate Minority Whip
12. Hon. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, U.S. House of Representatives
13. Hon. José A. Serrano, U.S. House of Representatives
14. Hon. Luis Gutiérrez, U.S. House of Representatives
15. Hon. Lucille Roybal-Allard, U.S. House of Representatives
16. Hon. Nydia Velázquez, U.S. House of Representatives
17. Hon. Grace Napolitano, U.S. House of Representatives
18. Hon. Mario Díaz-Balart, U.S. House of Representatives
19. Hon. Raúl Grijalva, U.S. House of Representatives
20. Hon. Linda Sánchez, U.S. House of Representatives
21. Hon. Henry Cuellar, U.S. House of Representatives
22. Hon. Albio Sires, U.S. House of Representatives
23. Hon. Ben Ray Luján, U.S. House of Representatives
24. Hon. John Garamendi, U.S. House of Representatives
25. Hon. Bill Flores, U.S. House of Representatives
26. Hon. Jaime Herrera Beutler, U.S. House of Representatives
27. Hon. Raúl Labrador, U.S. House of Representatives
28. Hon. Tony Cárdenas, U.S. House of Representatives
29. Hon. Joaquín Castro, U.S. House of Representatives
30. Hon. Michelle Lujan Grisham, U.S. House of Representatives
31. Hon. Raul Ruiz, U.S. House of Representatives
32. Hon. Juan Vargas, U.S. House of Representatives
33. Hon. Filemón Vela, U.S. House of Representatives

34. Hon. Pete Aguilar, U.S. House of Representatives
35. Hon. Carlos Curbelo, U.S. House of Representatives
36. Hon. Ruben Gallegos, U.S. House of Representatives
37. Hon. Alex Mooney, U.S. House of Representatives
38. Hon. Norma Torres, U.S. House of Representatives
39. Hon. Nanette Barragán, U.S. House of Representatives
40. Hon. Salud Carbajal, U.S. House of Representatives
41. Hon. Lou Correa, U.S. House of Representatives
42. Hon. Adriano Espaillat, U.S. House of Representatives
43. Hon. Vicente González, U.S. House of Representatives
44. Hon. Rubén Kihuen, U.S. House of Representatives
45. Hon. Brian Mast, U.S. House of Representatives
46. Hon. Darren Soto, U.S. House of Representatives
47. Hon. Jenniffer González, U.S. House of Representatives
48. Hon. Robert Menendez, U.S. Senate
49. Hon. Marco Rubio, U.S. Senate
50. Hon. Ted Cruz, U.S. Senate
51. Hon. Catherine Cortez Masto, U.S. Senate
52. Hon. Ricardo Rosselló, Governor of Puerto Rico

Voted & approved by the National Assembly of the 2017 LULAC National Convention on July 8, 2017.



Roger C. Rocha, Jr.  
LULAC National President



## Republican National Committee

Counsel's Office

### RESOLUTION AFFIRMING EQUAL CITIZENSHIP FOR ALL AMERICANS

**WHEREAS**, American citizens residing in foreign states are afforded more enjoyment of their rights as citizens of the United States of America than the American citizens residing in the territories of Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands;

**WHEREAS**, the purported legal basis for inhibiting the citizenship of American citizens residing in the territories of Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands are the so-called Insular Cases;

**WHEREAS**, the Insular Cases are based upon the racist, segregationist legal doctrine of Plessy v. Ferguson;

#### **THEREFORE, BE IT:**

**RESOLVED**, that all American citizens, regardless of their sex, race, color, ethnicity, religion, or creed, are entitled to the full enjoyment of their citizenship,

**RESOLVED**, that the Republican National Committee repudiates the so-called Insular Cases, which are rooted in the same racist, segregationist legal doctrine as Plessy v. Ferguson;

**RESOLVED**, that the Republican National Committee calls upon Congress to ensure that American citizens residing in the territories of Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands have unfettered enjoyment of their American citizenship, including the Second Amendment of the United States Constitution;

**RESOLVED**, that the Republican National Committee favors that the political status, or lack thereof, of the territories of Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands be justly resolved; and be it finally

**RESOLVED**, that a copy of this resolution, signed by the chairman and co-chairman of the Republican National Committee, shall be transmitted upon its adoption by the Republican National Committee to the president of the United States of America, the secretary of the Department of Interior, the assistant secretary of the Department of Interior for Insular Affairs, the speaker of the House of Representatives, the majority leader of the Senate, the chairman of the House of Representatives Committee on Natural Resources, the chairman of the Senate Committee on

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Candidate Or Candidate's Committee. [www.gop.com](http://www.gop.com)

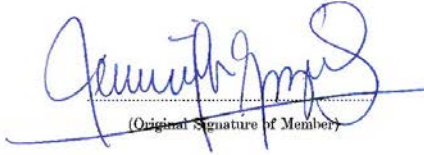


Energy and Natural Resources, and the governors of the territories of Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

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Candidate Or Candidate's Committee. [www.gop.com](http://www.gop.com)

**APPENDIX H - BILL TEXT H.R. 6246, PUERTO RICO ADMISSION ACT OF 2018**

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(Original Signature of Member)

115TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION**H. R.** \_\_\_\_\_

To enable the admission of the territory of Puerto Rico into the Union  
as a State, and for other purposes.

**IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico introduced the following bill; which  
was referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

**A BILL**

To enable the admission of the territory of Puerto Rico  
into the Union as a State, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

**3 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Puerto Rico Admission  
5 Act of 2018”.

**6 SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) Puerto Rico was ceded to the United States  
9 and came under this Nation’s sovereignty pursuant

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June 26, 2018 (11:35 a.m.)

(66585019)





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1 to the Treaty of Paris ending the Spanish-American  
2 War in 1898. Article IX of the Treaty of Paris rec-  
3 ognized the authority of Congress to provide for the  
4 political status of the inhabitants of the territory.  
5 Puerto Rico remained under the direct control of  
6 United States military forces until Congress enacted  
7 the Foraker Act (Public Law 56–191) on April 12,  
8 1900, bringing a civilian government, appointed by  
9 the President of the United States, to the island.

10 (2) Consistent with the establishment of United  
11 States nationality for the inhabitants of Puerto Rico  
12 under the Treaty of Paris, in 1917, Congress exer-  
13 cised its powers under the Territorial Clause of the  
14 United States Constitution (article IV, section 3,  
15 clause 2) to provide for the United States citizenship  
16 status of persons born in Puerto Rico (Public Law  
17 64–368).

18 (3) Under rulings of the United States Su-  
19 preme Court, including *Balzac v. People of Porto*  
20 *Rico*, 258 U.S. 298 (1922), only ambiguous, incon-  
21 sistent and indirect application of the United States  
22 Constitution has been established in the unincor-  
23 porated territories of the United States including  
24 Puerto Rico.

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## 3

1           (4) In 1950, Congress prescribed a procedure  
2     for instituting limited internal self-government for  
3     Puerto Rico pursuant to statutory authorization for  
4     a local constitution (Public Law 81-600). As a re-  
5     sult, a local constitution was approved by the people  
6     of Puerto Rico, ratified by Congress, subject to con-  
7     forming amendments enacted by Puerto Rico, and  
8     thereupon given effect in 1952.

9           (5) The approved constitution established a re-  
10    publican form of government in conformity with the  
11    United States Constitution and the principles of the  
12    Declaration of Independence and is the functional  
13    equivalent of a State constitution, but did not re-  
14    strict the authority of Congress under the Territorial  
15    Clause to determine the application of Federal law  
16    to Puerto Rico. Congress' plenary power under the  
17    Territorial Clause was most recently and dramati-  
18    cally evidenced in 2016 with the enactment of the  
19    Puerto Rico Oversight, Management, and Economic  
20    Stability Act (Public Law 114-187).

21          (6) Congressional policies to date have  
22    disenfranchised the approximately 3,400,000 United  
23    States citizens residing in Puerto Rico who do not  
24    enjoy a democratic form of government at the na-  
25    tional level as they cannot vote in the election of the

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1 President and Vice President of the United States,  
2 are not represented in the United States Senate, and  
3 only have one Resident Commissioner in the United  
4 States House of Representatives, who can only vote  
5 in the Congressional committees to which she or he  
6 is assigned.

7 (7) Furthermore, the Federal Government may,  
8 and often does, treat the United States citizens re-  
9 siding in Puerto Rico unequally under most Federal  
10 programs and other laws applicable to the several  
11 States and their residents. In its December 14,  
12 2016, Report to Congress, the Congressional Task  
13 Force on Economic Growth in Puerto Rico estab-  
14 lished that the territory is not treated equally with  
15 the States under more than 40 Federal statutes.

16 (8) The limitations of, and unequal treatment  
17 under, territory status has left Puerto Rico under-  
18 developed when compared to the States and has sub-  
19 stantially contributed to its fiscal and economic cri-  
20 sis, forcing a massive exodus that has resulted in  
21 5,400,000 United States citizens of Puerto Rican  
22 ancestry living in the United States mainland.

23 (9) Puerto Rico has been under United States  
24 sovereignty and within the United States customs  
25 territory for close to 120 years, making Puerto Rico

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1 the oldest, largest, and most populous colony in the  
2 world, yet Congress has failed to respond to the peo-  
3 ple of Puerto Rico's continued quest for equality and  
4 self-determination.

5 (10) It has been the longstanding policy of the  
6 United States that the United States citizens of a  
7 territory can democratically determine whether it  
8 should eventually become a State or a sovereign na-  
9 tion.

10 (11) On November 6, 2012, the Government of  
11 Puerto Rico held a locally sanctioned, two-part plebi-  
12 scite. This plebiscite was consistent with the rec-  
13 ommendations set forth by the President's Task  
14 Force on Puerto Rico's Status Report to Congress  
15 of March 2011. The first question asked if Puerto  
16 Rico should continue to be a territory of the United  
17 States, and 54 percent of the voters rejected terri-  
18 tory status. The second question asked the voters to  
19 express their preference among the three possible  
20 and internationally recognized permanent alter-  
21 natives to territory status—statehood, independence,  
22 or nationhood in free association with the United  
23 States—and 61 percent of the voters who selected  
24 an option chose statehood. The number of votes cast  
25 for statehood on the second question exceeded the

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1 number of votes cast for continued territory status  
2 on the first question.

3 (12) On June 11, 2017, the Government of  
4 Puerto Rico held yet another status plebiscite to rat-  
5 ify the results of the 2012 vote, on a ballot amended  
6 to specifically comply with the United States De-  
7 partment of Justice's requirements pursuant to Pub-  
8 lic Law 113-76. In this plebiscite, statehood re-  
9 ceived 97 percent, free association/independence re-  
10 ceived 1.5 percent, and current territorial status re-  
11 ceived 1.3 percent of the votes cast.

12 (13) Puerto Ricans have contributed greatly to  
13 the Nation in all fields of endeavor, both in war and  
14 in peace. Over 250,000 have served in the United  
15 States Armed Forces, many paying the ultimate sac-  
16 rifice. They not only deserve, but have earned the  
17 right to have their voices heard.

18 (14) Last year marked the 100th anniversary  
19 of the granting of United States citizenship to the  
20 people of Puerto Rico by Congress, who remain  
21 disenfranchised and trapped in a second-class citi-  
22 zenship that denies them the same rights and re-  
23 sponsibilities as their fellow citizens in the States.

24 (15) Equality within the Nation is required for  
25 a healthy American economy and essential for Puer-



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1 to Rico's social and economic well-being as well as  
2 for basic reasons of democracy. Puerto Rico should  
3 be transitioned into equality within the Union.

4 **SEC. 3. PURPOSE.**

5 The purpose of the Act is to respond to, and comply  
6 with, the democratic will of the United States citizens re-  
7 siding in Puerto Rico as expressed in the plebiscites held  
8 on November 6, 2012, and June 11, 2017, by setting forth  
9 the terms for the admission of the territory of Puerto Rico  
10 as a State of the Union.

11 **SEC. 4. ADMISSION.**

12 Subject to the provisions of this Act, and upon the  
13 issuance of the proclamation by the President of the  
14 United States required by section 6 of this Act, the terri-  
15 tory of Puerto Rico thereupon shall become a State of the  
16 United States, and admitted into the Union on an equal  
17 footing and in true permanent union with the other States  
18 in all respects whatsoever.

19 **SEC. 5. TRANSITION PROCESS.**

20 (a) **STATE CONSTITUTION.**—The constitution of the  
21 State of Puerto Rico shall always be republican in form  
22 and shall be in conformity with the Constitution of the  
23 United States. The current constitution of Puerto Rico is  
24 deemed to be republican in form and in conformity with

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1 the Constitution of the United States and is hereby ac-  
2 cepted as the constitution of the State of Puerto Rico.

3 (b) PLEBISCITE RESULTS DEEMED SUFFICIENT.—  
4 Immediately upon the enactment of this Act, the results  
5 of the November 6, 2012, and June 11, 2017, status plebi-  
6 scites are deemed sufficient to trigger the transition proc-  
7 ess to Statehood set forth in this section. This section does  
8 not preclude additional democratic self-determination  
9 under local or Federal law.

10 (c) TASK FORCE ON EQUALITY FOR THE UNITED  
11 STATES CITIZENS OF PUERTO RICO.—

12 (1) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established  
13 within the legislative branch a Congressional Task  
14 Force on Equality for the United States Citizens of  
15 Puerto Rico (hereinafter referred to as the “Task  
16 Force”).

17 (2) DUTIES.—The Task Force shall—

18 (A) survey the laws of the United States  
19 and make recommendations to Congress and  
20 the President of the United States as to how  
21 laws that do not apply to the territory of Puer-  
22 to Rico or apply differently to the territory than  
23 to the several States should be amended or re-  
24 pealed to phase-in equal treatment of Puerto

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1 Rico with the several States, as appropriate, no  
2 later than January 1, 2021;

3 (B) make recommendations on potential  
4 temporary economic measures to assist Puerto  
5 Rico's transition from a territory to a State,  
6 seeking the greatest degree of flexibility for the  
7 phase-in of Federal programs and the develop-  
8 ment of the territory's economy through fiscal  
9 incentives, alternative tax arrangements, and  
10 other measures;

11 (C) propose timelines and rules guiding  
12 elections for Federal offices; and

13 (D) study the effect of Puerto Rico's ad-  
14 mission as a State on the existing apportion-  
15 ment in the House of Representatives.

16 (3) MEMBERSHIP.—The Task Force shall be  
17 comprised of 9 Members as follows:

18 (A) 4 Members of the House of Represent-  
19 atives, 2 of whom shall be appointed by the  
20 Speaker of the House of Representatives, and 2  
21 of whom shall be appointed by the minority  
22 leader of the House of Representatives.

23 (B) 4 Members of the Senate, 2 of whom  
24 shall be appointed by the majority leader of the

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1 Senate, and 2 of whom shall be appointed by  
2 the minority leader of the Senate.

3 (C) The Resident Commissioner of Puerto  
4 Rico.

5 (4) DEADLINE FOR APPOINTMENT.—Appoint-  
6 ments to the Task Force shall be made not later  
7 than 30 days after the date of enactment of this  
8 Act.

9 (5) CHAIR.—The Speaker of the House of Rep-  
10 resentatives shall designate one Member to serve as  
11 Chair of the Task Force.

12 (6) VACANCIES.—Any vacancy in the Task  
13 Force shall be filled in the same manner as the  
14 original appointment.

15 (7) AGENCY COOPERATION.—The Departments  
16 and agencies of the executive branch and all offices  
17 and entities of the legislative branch of shall—

18 (A) cooperate with the Task Force in car-  
19 rying out its duties; and

20 (B) furnish it with such information and  
21 technical assistance as may be requested, in-  
22 cluding, but not limited to, views, recommenda-  
23 tions, and drafting services on the measures  
24 needed to fulfill the Task Force's mandate.

25 (8) REPORTS.—

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1 (A) Not later than 270 calendar days after  
2 its establishment, the Task Force shall submit  
3 a preliminary report of its recommendations to  
4 the House of Representatives, the Senate, and  
5 the President of the United States.

6 (B) Not later than 120 calendar days after  
7 the submission of the preliminary report, the  
8 Task Force shall submit a final report of its  
9 recommendations to the House of Representa-  
10 tives, the Senate, and the President of the  
11 United States.

12 (C) To the greatest extent practicable, the  
13 reports issued pursuant to subparagraphs (A)  
14 and (B) shall reflect the shared views of all 9  
15 Members of the Task Force but the reports  
16 may contain dissenting views.

17 (9) CONGRESSIONAL INTENT.—The enactment  
18 of this Act expresses the intent of Congress to pass  
19 legislation based upon the Task Force's final report.

20 (10) TERMINATION.—Upon issuing the final re-  
21 port under paragraph (8)(B), the Task Force shall  
22 terminate.

23 (11) IMPLEMENTATION.—Upon receipt of the  
24 final Task Force Report under paragraph (8)(B),  
25 Congress shall ensure that, as appropriate, Federal



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1 laws that do not apply to Puerto Rico or apply dif-  
2 ferently to the territory than to the several States  
3 are amended or repealed to phase-in the equal treat-  
4 ment of Puerto Rico with the several States no later  
5 than January 1, 2021. Generally, as part of the  
6 transition process—

7 (A) all Acts, or parts of Acts, in conflict  
8 with the provisions of this Act, whether passed  
9 by the Legislature of Puerto Rico or by Con-  
10 gress, shall be repealed or amended to conform  
11 to the provisions of this Act;

12 (B) Puerto Rico will cease to be an unin-  
13 corporated territory of the United States and  
14 will become an incorporated territory of the  
15 United States until its final admission into the  
16 Union as a State no later than January 1,  
17 2021; and

18 (C) with the exception of those parts that  
19 are not in conflict with this Act, the following  
20 shall be repealed:

21 (i) The Puerto Rican Federal Rela-  
22 tions Act of 1950 (Public Law 81– 600).

23 (ii) The Act of July 3, 1950 (48  
24 U.S.C. 731b–731e).

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1 (iii) The Act of April 12, 1900 (Public  
2 Law 56–191).

3 (iv) The Act of March 2, 1917 (Public  
4 Law 64–368).

5 **SEC. 6. ISSUANCE OF PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATION.**

6 Following the completion of the transition process set  
7 forth in section 5, the President of the United States shall  
8 issue a proclamation declaring that Puerto Rico is admit-  
9 ted into the Union on an equal footing with the other  
10 States, effective no later than January 1, 2021. Upon  
11 issuance of the proclamation by the President, Puerto Rico  
12 shall cease to be an incorporated territory of the United  
13 States and be deemed admitted into the Union as a State.

14 **SEC. 7. STATE OF PUERTO RICO.**

15 Upon the admission of Puerto Rico into the Union  
16 as a State, the following apply:

17 (1) **TERRITORY.**—The newly admitted State of  
18 Puerto Rico shall consist of all its islands, together  
19 with their appurtenant reefs and territorial waters in  
20 the seaward boundary, presently under the jurisdic-  
21 tion of the territory of Puerto Rico.

22 (2) **CONTINUITY OF GOVERNMENT.**—Persons  
23 holding legislative, executive, and judicial offices in  
24 the government of Puerto Rico shall continue to dis-  
25 charge the duties of their respective offices con-

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1       sistent with the United States Constitution and Fed-  
2       eral law applicable to Puerto Rico, and the State of  
3       Puerto Rico's laws and constitution.

4       (3) CONTINUITY OF LAWS.—

5               (A) TERRITORY LAW.—All of the territory  
6       laws in force in Puerto Rico shall continue in  
7       force and effect in the State, except as modified  
8       by this Act, and shall be subject to repeal or  
9       amendment by the Legislature and the Gov-  
10      ernor of Puerto Rico.

11             (B) FEDERAL LAW.—All of the laws of the  
12      United States shall have the same force and ef-  
13      fect as on the date immediately prior to the  
14      date of admission of Puerto Rico into the Union  
15      as a State, except for any provision of law that  
16      treats Puerto Rico and its residents differently  
17      than the States of the Union and their resi-  
18      dents, which shall be amended as of the date of  
19      admission to treat the State of Puerto Rico and  
20      its residents equally with the other States of the  
21      Union and their residents.

22       (4) UNITED STATES CITIZENSHIP.—No provi-  
23      sion of this Act shall operate to confer United States  
24      citizenship, nor terminate citizenship hereto lawfully  
25      acquired, nor restore citizenship terminated or lost

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1 under any law of the United States or under any  
2 treaty to which the United States is or was a party.

3 **SEC. 8. SEVERABILITY.**

4 If any provision of this Act, or any section, sub-  
5 section, sentence, clause, phrase, or individual word, or the  
6 application thereof to any person or circumstance is held  
7 invalid, the validity of the remainder of the Act and of  
8 the application of any such provision, section, subsection,  
9 sentence, clause, phrase, or individual word to other per-  
10 sons and circumstances shall not be affected thereby.

STATEHOOD COMMISSION



**PUERTO RICO**

SHADOW DELEGATION TO U.S. CONGRESS

Puerto Rico Statehood Commission

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