



PUERTO RICO STATUS

The political and economic realities of U.S. citizens in Puerto Rico are important to LULAC. We have one-hundred forty-seven LULAC councils located on the island. In addition, a large number of our members and councils in the mainland United States can trace their roots to the island. The 3.7 million U.S. citizens living in Puerto Rico deserve the same rights as all U.S. citizens living on the mainland.

THE RIGHT TO REPRESENTATION IS A MATTER OF CIVIL RIGHTS

- ❖ Although the nearly 4 million residents of Puerto Rico are U.S. Citizens, and have been so for nearly 100 years, they are unable to vote for a President, do not have a voting representative in either the Senate or the House of Representatives, and are excluded from participation in Federal programs.
- ❖ August 2013 marked the 93rd anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (Women's Right to Vote), which prohibited any U.S. citizen from being denied the right to vote on the basis of sex. Yet, nearly 2 million women in Puerto Rico and millions more over the past century have remained a disenfranchised minority.
- ❖ Like all other Latinos elsewhere in the Nation, Hispanics in Puerto Rico are striving to define their role in American society. In the best traditions of American democracy, our government should honor their desire by affording them the right to define themselves with the power of the vote.
- ❖ The nefarious doctrine called "separate but equal," which allowed the blatant discriminatory treatment of African-Americans for many decades, has been extended to Puerto Rican-Americans and has been openly converted into a legalized doctrine of "separate and unequal." These economic and civil rights inequities must be eradicated.
- ❖ LULAC urges the Administration to enhance, provide, and protect the most basic of civil rights for the people of Puerto Rico.

THE EXPRESSION OF THE PUERTO RICAN ELECTORATE MUST BE RESPECTED

- ❖ Puerto Ricans overwhelmingly support statehood. On November 6, 2012, the Government of Puerto Rico held a two-part referendum. The first question asked voters if Puerto Rico 'should continue to have its present form of territorial status.' 53.97 percent voted against continued territorial status.
 - The second question asked voters to express their preference among the three possible alternatives to territorial status: statehood, independence, and nationhood in free association with the United States. 61.16 percent voted for statehood.

CONGRESS SHOULD SUPPORT LEGISLATION LIKE H.R. 727

- ❖ Following this vote in Puerto Rico, in May 2013, Congressman Pedro Pierluisi introduced the "Puerto Rico Status Resolution Act" (H.R. 2000). This bill sets forth the process by which the President and Congress can admit Puerto Rico as a state. In the 114th Congress, the designation number is H.R. 727.
 - If passed, the People of Puerto Rico would be given the same rights as all American Citizens. Along with being treated equally with the other States in all Federal laws, H.R. 727 contains the following specific provisions:
 - Puerto Rico would be permanently united to the other States of the Union;
 - All provisions of the Constitution of the United States that apply to the States would apply to Puerto Rico;
 - Puerto Rico would be represented in the United States Senate and House of Representatives. It would also have votes in the Electoral College for the election of the President and the Vice President.