



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;

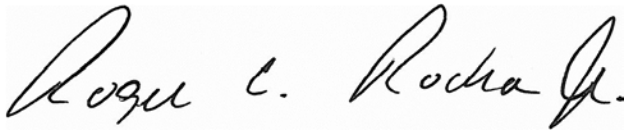
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the League of United Latin American Citizens hereby calls upon the 115th Congress to respond to the democratic will of the people of Puerto Rico by approving legislation on the admission of Puerto Rico as the 51st state of the United States of America;

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