



PUERTO RICO STATUS

The political and economic realities of U.S. citizens in the territory of Puerto Rico are important to LULAC. The 3.6 million U.S. citizens living in the territory of 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

- ❖ Puerto Rico has been a U.S. Territory since 1898. It is the longest held territory in the history of the U.S. All federal laws apply to Puerto Rico unless exempted by Congress. Residents of Puerto Rico pay federal taxes as determined by federal law. The federal government currently collects Social Security and Medicare taxes and income taxes on income from outside the island.
- ❖ Although Puerto Ricans are U.S. Citizens, and have been so for nearly 100 years since 1917, they are unable to vote for a President while living in the territory, do not have a voting representative in either the Senate or the House of Representatives, and are excluded from participation in most Federal programs or receive less benefits than other Americans in similar programs.
- ❖ Well over 200,000 Puerto Ricans have served in the U.S. Armed Forces and thousands have been killed or wounded in action in every war and conflict since World War I. Nine Puerto Ricans have received the Congressional Medal of Honor. Currently, more than 10,000 active duty military personnel from Puerto Rico serve across the branches of the U.S. Armed Forces. However, the men and women in uniform from Puerto Rico cannot vote for the President, their Commander in Chief.
- ❖ Puerto Ricans overwhelmingly support statehood. On November 6, 2012, the Government of Puerto Rico held a two-part referendum with a voter turnout of 78.19 percent of the registered voters.
 - 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 APPROVE LEGISLATION THAT ADMITS PUERTO RICO AS THE 51ST STATE

- ❖ Following this vote in Puerto Rico, the U.S. should proceed to approve legislation admitting the territory of Puerto Rico as the 51st State of the Union. The People of Puerto Rico have spoken through the ballot and Congress should act accordingly to the statehood vote. As the beacon of democracy in the world, the U.S. must execute the democratic will of its own citizens in Puerto Rico.
- ❖ The admission of Puerto Rico as the 51st State will emulate the post-territorial economic growth that states such as Arizona, Oklahoma, Alaska and Hawaii experienced when they entered the union.
- ❖ The economy of Puerto Rico will mirror the older and wealthier states of the union as political stability, legal certainty, investor confidence, and national synergy attracts domestic and foreign capital to the new state.