

GOVERNMENT OF PUERTO RICO

16th Legislative
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Session

SENATE OF PUERTO RICO

S. Conc. R. 65

November 9, 2012

Introduced by Mrs. *Romero Donnelly*

Referred to the Committee of Rules and Calendar

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To request the United States Congress take legislative actions to include the Territory of Puerto Rico as the 51st State of the United States of America, in accordance with the expressed results of its people during the November 6, 2012 Plebiscite Election.

STATEMENT OF MOTIVES

The President of the United States of America, Barack Obama, ordered the expansion of the White House Task Force for Puerto Rico to include real and acceptable alternatives to the Status question of the unincorporated Territory of Puerto Rico. Said Task Force presented a full report, amongst which they addressed the decades old controversies surrounding the political relationship between the territory of Puerto Rico and the United States. Amongst the different conclusions presented in the Report, the Task Force defined the non-territorial alternatives available to Puerto Rico for self-determination and the possible voting scenarios. As a matter of fact, the aforementioned task force and the newly re-elected President of the United States sustained that the people of Puerto Rico had to choose the type of relationship they supported for the island.

On November 6, 2012, Puerto Rico included a Status Plebiscite ballot during the General Election, to give the residents of Puerto Rico, the opportunity to express, in the form of two

questions, their preferred relationship with the United States. First, voters would state if they were satisfied with the current Commonwealth of Puerto Rico or if they wanted a change of Status. The second question gave the people the opportunity to choose amongst the three non-territorial statuses defined by the White House Task Force. The first question in the ballot, specifically asked: ***“Do you agree that Puerto Rico should continue to have its present form of territorial status?” YES or NO.***

The second question asked: ***“Regardless of your selection in the first question, please mark which of the following non-territorial options would you prefer.”***

“Statehood: Puerto Rico should be admitted as a state of the United States of America so that all United States citizens residing in Puerto Rico may have rights, benefits, and responsibilities equal to those enjoyed by all other citizens of the states of the Union, and be entitled to full representation in Congress and to participate in the Presidential elections, and the United States Congress would be required to pass any necessary legislation to begin the transition into Statehood. If you agree, mark here.”

“Independence: Puerto Rico should become a sovereign nation, fully independent from the United States and the United States Congress would be required to pass any necessary legislation to begin the transition into independent nation of Puerto Rico. If you agree, mark here.”

“Sovereign Free Associated State: Puerto Rico should adopt a status outside of the Territory Clause of the Constitution of the United States that recognizes the sovereignty of the People of Puerto Rico. The Sovereign Free Associated State would be based on a free and voluntary political association, the specific terms of which shall be agreed upon between the United States and Puerto Rico as sovereign nations. Such agreement would provide the scope of the jurisdictional powers that the People of Puerto Rico agree to confer to the United States and retain all other jurisdictional powers and authorities. If you agree, mark here.”

The preliminary results of the plebiscite celebrated on November 6, 2012, show that a majority of the People of Puerto Rico refused the territorial status of Puerto Rico; the first question resulted in 54% of the votes requesting a change away from the territorial status; the second question gave Statehood an absolute preference with over 61% of the votes.

For the first time in over 60 years, Puerto Rico has clearly stated that the current political territorial status must be changed, and that the change desired by the people is to become an incorporated State of the Union. It is now imperative that the United States Congress recognize and receive this Resolution as the first step in the process of creating the necessary changes to negotiate the inclusion of Puerto Rico as a State of the Union. Puerto Rico has become the 38th territory to request admission to the most Democratic Nation in the World, and thus expect that as it has done 37 times before, the United States take full action into the transition and integration process.

It is thus, in the best interest of all American Citizens that our nation move forward and become four million souls stronger.

Knowing that the People of Puerto Rico have made a sovereign decision supporting Statehood and that the Puerto Rico Legislature established the voting rules based solely on the recommendations of the Task Force Report, the US Congress should take immediate action in order to resolve the most severe status issue which has consistently limited our rights as American Citizens.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF PUERTO RICO:

1 Section 1.- To request the United States Congress take legislative actions to include the
2 Territory of Puerto Rico Territory as the 51st State of the United States of America, in
3 accordance with the expressed results of its' people during the November 6, 2012 Plebiscite
4 Election.

5 Section 2. - Copy of this Concurrent Resolution will be sent to the President of the United
6 States, all members of the United States House of Representatives and the United States
7 Senate.

8 Section 3. - Copy of this Concurrent Resolution will be provided to all the local, national
9 and international media for its divulgence.

10 Section 4. - This Concurrent Resolution shall take effect immediately upon its approval.