
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 20 Session of
2021

INTRODUCED BY CRUZ, JANUARY 25, 2021

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, JANUARY 25, 2021

A RESOLUTION

1 Urging the Congress of the United States to recognize and act
2 upon the results of the November 3, 2020, Puerto Rican
3 plebiscite.

4 WHEREAS, Puerto Rico became a United States territory in 1898
5 by the Treaty of Paris, which ended the Spanish-American War;
6 and

7 WHEREAS, In 1917, the residents of Puerto Rico were granted
8 American citizenship by their own free and voluntary election,
9 and after 1941 by birth, to further integrate Puerto Rico into
10 the Nation; and

11 WHEREAS, For more than 100 years, the people of Puerto Rico
12 have contributed greatly to the United States and to democracy
13 by serving with dedication and honor in all armed conflicts in
14 the United States Armed Forces; and

15 WHEREAS, Since becoming a territory of the United States,
16 more than 200,000 Puerto Ricans have served in the United States
17 Armed Forces, and more than 25,000 Puerto Ricans currently serve
18 on active duty; and

19 WHEREAS, As proud American citizens, Puerto Ricans have

1 distinguished themselves in every field of endeavor and
2 developed strong political, economic, social and cultural ties
3 to the United States; and

4 WHEREAS, Despite their United States citizenship, Puerto
5 Rican residents are ineligible to vote in United States Federal
6 elections and lack voting representation in Congress; and

7 WHEREAS, The denial of equal voting representation and equal
8 treatment by the Federal Government stands in stark contrast to
9 their contributions to the Union; and

10 WHEREAS, Unincorporated territory status has resulted in
11 millions of residents leaving Puerto Rico to seek greater
12 opportunities and a better quality of life available in a state;
13 and

14 WHEREAS, Approximately 3.4 million people live in Puerto Rico
15 and another 5 million Puerto Ricans live on the United States
16 mainland, including almost 478,000 living in the Commonwealth of
17 Pennsylvania; and

18 WHEREAS, It has been the longstanding policy of the United
19 States that American citizens of territories such as Puerto Rico
20 can determine whether the territory will ultimately become a
21 state in the Union or a nation; and

22 WHEREAS, Congress recognized Puerto Rico's "right to
23 determine its future political status" through the passage of
24 Public Law 114-187, enacted June 20, 2016; and

25 WHEREAS, Puerto Rico has held plebiscites to determine the
26 people's will regarding the island's political status in 1967,
27 1993, 1998, 2012 and 2017; and

28 WHEREAS, On November 3, 2020, Puerto Ricans once again
29 requested statehood in a nonbinding referendum with 52.3% of
30 voters in favor of changing the island's status from

1 unincorporated territory to United States state; and

2 WHEREAS, November's plebiscite upholds the people of Puerto
3 Rico's desire to reject the current territory status and
4 immediately be admitted into the Union as a state; and

5 WHEREAS, True power to amend the political status of Puerto
6 Rico lies in the hands of the United States Congress, wherein
7 the people of Puerto Rico do not have empowered representation;
8 and

9 WHEREAS, For many years, Puerto Rico's nonvoting
10 congressional delegates have introduced multiple bills to grant
11 statehood to Puerto Rico based on the outcome of a vote by those
12 living on the island; and

13 WHEREAS, Unfortunately, Congress has never acted on these
14 bills, and the Federal Government repeatedly avoids the question
15 of Puerto Rico's political status; and

16 WHEREAS, The perpetuation of the territorial status allows
17 for an unequal and discriminatory treatment, which in turn
18 produces a continuation of economic stagnation and instability;
19 and

20 WHEREAS, Under Article IV of the Constitution of the United
21 States, upon a United States territory reaching a sizable
22 populace, that territory should be granted statehood following
23 the territory voting in favor of statehood; and

24 WHEREAS, The latest November 3, 2020, plebiscite sends a
25 clear message to Congress regarding the people of Puerto Rico's
26 desire to attain the rights and privileges associated with
27 statehood; and

28 WHEREAS, Proposals to not immediately act on the will of the
29 people of Puerto Rico only reject the equality of Puerto Ricans
30 and their desire for statehood; therefore be it

1 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the
2 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania urge the Congress of the United
3 States to recognize and act upon the results of the November 3,
4 2020, Puerto Rican plebiscite; and be it further

5 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the
6 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania declare our support for statehood
7 for Puerto Rico so that Puerto Ricans shall finally have the
8 same legal rights and privileges of other United States
9 citizens; and be it further

10 RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be sent to the
11 President of the United States, the presiding officers of each
12 house of Congress and each member of Congress from Pennsylvania.