



HM 1165

2003

House Memorial

1
2 A memorial to the President and the Congress of the United
3 States, urging the President and Congress to permit the
4 United States citizens living in Puerto Rico to determine
5 Puerto Rico's future political status.
6

7 WHEREAS, on December 10, 1898, the Treaty of Paris was
8 signed by the United States and later ratified by the United
9 States on February 6, 1899, formally concluding the Spanish-
10 American War and establishing Puerto Rico as a territory of the
11 United States, and

12 WHEREAS, on March 2, 1917, President Woodrow Wilson signed
13 the Puerto Rican Federal Relations Act, popularly known as the
14 Jones Act, which extended United States citizenship to the
15 residents of Puerto Rico, but did not provide them with voting
16 representation in the United States Congress or give them the
17 right to vote for the President of the United States, and

18 WHEREAS, since 1917, 200,000 United States citizens in
19 Puerto Rico have served valiantly in every war and armed
20 conflict in which our nation has fought in defense of democratic
21 principles and self-determination, and

22 WHEREAS, four heroic Puerto Ricans, Hector Santiago-Colon,
23 Euripides Rubio, Carlos James Lozada, and Luis Fernando Garcia,
24 have been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for their
25 valor in defending American democracy and freedoms, and

26 WHEREAS, we recognize the many social, economic, and
27 political contributions that the 3.8 million United States
28 citizens residing in Puerto Rico make to preserve and enhance
29 this nation's democratic values, and



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30 WHEREAS, the State of Florida has a significant Puerto
 31 Rican community and an ever-increasing Hispanic population from
 32 which many of our state's business, cultural, and political
 33 leaders are drawn, and

34 WHEREAS, Florida's great history, including the ascension
 35 to statehood, is intertwined with our state's Hispanic heritage,
 36 and

37 WHEREAS, in 1997 the Legislature of Puerto Rico formally
 38 petitioned the United States Congress to respond to the
 39 democratic aspirations of the United States citizens of Puerto
 40 Rico by means of a federally sanctioned plebiscite to be held no
 41 later than 1998 and Congress has not yet responded to this
 42 petition, and

43 WHEREAS, as we begin a new millennium, we recognize that
 44 the time has come for Puerto Rico to exercise its right to self-
 45 determination regarding its desire to attain full self-
 46 government within the context of a congressionally authorized
 47 plebiscite, and

48 WHEREAS, the Florida House of Representatives urges all
 49 Floridians and the citizens of the United States to support the
 50 enactment of a federal law leading to full self-government for
 51 Puerto Rico, NOW, THEREFORE,

52
 53 Be It Resolved by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

54
 55 That the Legislature of the State of Florida requests that
 56 Congress enact and the President of the United States sign
 57 legislation that would define the political status options
 58 available to the United States citizens of Puerto Rico and
 59 authorize a plebiscite to provide an opportunity for Puerto



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60 Ricans to make an informed decision regarding the island's
61 future political status.

62 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature of the State of
63 Florida requests the Florida congressional delegation to
64 actively promote and support timely action on this important
65 national issue.

66 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
67 dispatched to the President of the United States, the President
68 of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States
69 House of Representatives, and to each member of the Florida
70 delegation to the United States Congress.