

By Senator Klein

30-1249A-03

1 Senate Memorial No. ____

2 A memorial to the Congress of the United
3 States, urging Congress to grant without
4 further delay Puerto Rico's pending petition
5 for a federally sanctioned plebiscite to
6 establish and define the political status and
7 electoral rights of United States citizens of
8 Puerto Rico.

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

15 WHEREAS, on March 2, 1917, President Woodrow Wilson
16 signed the Puerto Rican Federal Relations Act, otherwise known
17 as the Jones Act, extending United States citizenship to
18 citizens of Puerto Rico, but not authorizing them to qualify
19 as candidates for office in the United States Senate or in the
20 United States House of Representatives, or for the office of
21 President of the United States, and not authorizing them to
22 vote for any such candidate, and

23 WHEREAS, since 1917, 200,000 people who are citizens of
24 Puerto Rico have served valiantly as members of the United
25 States Armed Services in every war and conflict in which the
26 United States has been engaged in defense of democratic
27 principles and the freedom of individuals to exercise their
28 fundamental rights of self-determination, and

29 WHEREAS, four heroic Puerto Ricans, Hector
30 Santiago-Colon, Euripides Rubio, Carlos James Lozada, and Luis
31 Fernando Garcia, have been awarded the Congressional Medal of

1 Honor for their valor in defending American ideals and
2 freedoms, and

3 WHEREAS, the 3.8 million citizens of Puerto Rico have
4 made many invaluable social, economic, and public service
5 contributions to preserve, protect, and advance American
6 ideals and freedoms, and

7 WHEREAS, a significant number of the citizens of the
8 State of Florida originate from Puerto Rico and other Latin
9 American countries, and many such citizens serve as our
10 state's business, education, cultural, and public service
11 leaders, and

12 WHEREAS, Florida's great history, including its
13 ascension to statehood, is closely intertwined with a heritage
14 derived from the many invaluable contributions made by Puerto
15 Ricans and others of Latin American descent, and

16 WHEREAS, in 1997, the Legislature of Puerto Rico
17 submitted a formal petition to the Congress of the United
18 States asking that Congress respond to the many democratic
19 aspirations of citizens of Puerto Rico by authorizing a
20 federally sanctioned plebiscite to be held no later than 1998,
21 but Congress has not yet acted on the petition, and

22 WHEREAS, it is long overdue that citizens of Puerto
23 Rico be endowed with the political and electoral rights and
24 privileges that are commonly exercised by other United States
25 citizens, allowing them to qualify, seek nomination, and run
26 as candidates for office in the United States Senate and the
27 United States House of Representatives, and for the office of
28 the President of the United States, to vote in the elections
29 that are conducted to nominate and elect those who qualify to
30 run as candidates to hold such offices, and to exercise the
31 right of self-determination through establishment of

1 self-governance through a representative form of democratic
2 government, and

3 WHEREAS, the Florida Legislature urges all citizens of
4 Florida and of all the other states and territories of the
5 United States to support enactment of a federal law providing
6 opportunity for Puerto Rico to become a self-governing state,
7 NOW, THEREFORE,

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9 Be It Resolved by the Legislature of the State of Florida:
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11 That the Congress of the United States is urged to act
12 without further delay on Puerto Rico's pending petition by
13 promptly enacting legislation establishing and defining the
14 political status and electoral rights of citizens of Puerto
15 Rico, and authorizing a plebiscite to provide an opportunity
16 for such citizens to make an informed decision on the future
17 political status of Puerto Rico.

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be
19 presented to the President of the United States, to the
20 President of the United States Senate, to the Speaker of the
21 United States House of Representatives, to each member of the
22 Florida delegation to the United States Congress, and to the
23 Governor of Puerto Rico.

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