

By the Committee on Rules and Calendar; and Senator Klein

305-2172-03

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Senate Memorial No. \_\_\_\_

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, four heroic Puerto Ricans, Hector Santiago-Colon, Euripides Rubio, Carlos James Lozada, and Luis 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 of  
24 full representative government that are exercised by other  
25 United States citizens, and

26 WHEREAS, the Florida Legislature urges all citizens of  
27 Florida and of all the other states and territories of the  
28 United States to support enactment of a federal law leading to  
29 full self-government for Puerto Rico, NOW, THEREFORE,

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31 Be It Resolved by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

1           That the Congress of the United States is urged to act  
2 without further delay on Puerto Rico's pending petition by  
3 promptly enacting legislation establishing and defining the  
4 political status and electoral rights of citizens of Puerto  
5 Rico, and authorizing a plebiscite to provide an opportunity  
6 for such citizens to make an informed decision on the future  
7 political status of Puerto Rico.

8           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be  
9 presented to the President of the United States, to the  
10 President of the United States Senate, to the Speaker of the  
11 United States House of Representatives, to each member of the  
12 Florida delegation to the United States Congress, and to the  
13 Governor of Puerto Rico.

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15                           STATEMENT OF SUBSTANTIAL CHANGES CONTAINED IN  
16                           COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR  
17                           Senate Memorial 1360

18           The committee substitute differs from the original bill in  
19 that: the legislative intent is clarified to urge all  
20 citizens of Florida and all other states and territories of  
the United States to support enactment of federal legislation  
leading to full representative government for Puerto Rico.