



## LEAGUE *of* UNITED LATIN AMERICAN CITIZENS

Organize. Mobilize. Lead.

Dear Members of Congress:

LULAC is the largest and oldest Hispanic civil rights organization in the United States. The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), our National President, National Board Members and one hundred and thirty thousand members and supporters nationwide are appealing to you to support the Puerto Rico Statehood Admission Act, H.R. 1522 and S. 780.

**We strongly support H.R. 1522 and S. 780, the Puerto Rico Statehood Admission Act.** This legislation respects Puerto Rico's right to self-determination, as expressed in previous referenda, and empowers voters on the island to have a final say on becoming a state of the union.

Puerto Ricans have been clear about their demand for statehood, most recently in a referendum held last November. Voters were asked the question "Should Puerto Rico be admitted immediately into the Union as a state?" and 53% said yes, while 47% said no. Not only did the "yes" option win, it also got more votes than any elected official on the island, including the governor and at-large delegate to Congress. This vote was historic, and ignoring it means being complicit in the continued disenfranchisement of over 3 million Hispanic-Americans.

The island has been stuck in a territorial status limbo for decades, in no small part due to partisan infighting and the convenience of simply pushing the issue to the side. LULAC believes Congress has a moral responsibility to respond to the will of the people of Puerto Rico by offering a concrete path to statehood, particularly after the results of the 2020 referendum.

In addition to those on the island, statehood for Puerto Rico has the support of a vast majority of Puerto Ricans living in different U.S. states, including Florida, Pennsylvania, and New York. Additionally, a majority both Republicans and Democrats across the nation have supported the idea of making Puerto Rico a state for decades. There is no time to waste when it comes to securing the enfranchisement of over 3 million Hispanic-Americans, and this Congress has all the reasons it needs to get it done.

Above all else, LULAC listens to the will of the people of Puerto Rico, who value their American citizenship and have clearly stated their support for the rights that only statehood can assure. We are confident that the people of Puerto Rico would ratify that decision via popular vote, and we would be proud to welcome our nation's first majority-Hispanic state.



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A competing proposal in Congress is the Puerto Rico Self-Determination Act, introduced by Rep. Nydia Velázquez (D-NY) and Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT). LULAC stands in firm opposition to this bill as it is written, since it only offers a non-binding “status convention” as a solution rather than the binding ratification vote offered in the Puerto Rico Statehood Admission Act, H.R. 1522 & S. 780.

The only legislative option that respects the will of the people of Puerto Rico, and ensures a binding process of self-determination is H.R. 1522, the Puerto Rico Statehood Admission Act. By offering statehood, stipulating the terms of admission, and requiring a ratification vote, Congress would finally open the door to full equality and democracy for the U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico, while leaving the ultimate choice in their hands. Should a majority oppose statehood at that point, then the island would remain a territory with the capacity to pursue independence or free association through the procedural mechanism of their choice, including a status convention.