

# Puertorriqueños Unidos En Acción (PUA)

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June 11, 2021

President Joe Biden  
THE WHITE HOUSE  
Washington, D.C. 20502

*Re.: UNITED NATIONS DECOLONIZATION COMMITTEE HEARINGS ON PUERTO RICO  
June 18, 2021, Hearings*

Dear Mr. President Biden:

November 6, 2012 was a momentous day in the history of Puerto Rico and the United States. The people of Puerto Rico spoke out on this date. Fifty-five percent of the voters expressed their will to change the actual colonial relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States. Therefore, the era of colonialism by consent in Puerto Rico has ended.

As you should know, the Constitution assigns Congress the responsibility of defining the relationship between the federal government and U.S. territories. Now, more than ever, the President and Congress' role is significant in Puerto Rico's choice to end the present colonial status.

Over 1.8 million registered voters participated in this plebiscite. The numbers indicate the will of the people to change the present colonial status. However, Congress has been running counter to the United States' democratic beliefs by holding back on a meaningful process to end colonialism. The people of Puerto Rico have spoken. Now is the United States government's chance to express their will to change the current relationship between our two nations. The United States should commit to implementing the results of the 2012 referendum rejecting the actual relationship without any further referendums or delays.

As it has been stated in two Presidential Task Force Reports, "If the process produces a clear result, Congress should act on it quickly with the President's support." (See Presidential Task Force Report on Puerto Rico under President Bush, December 2007, page 23, and Presidential Task Report, March 2011, page 3 under former President Obama).

The current relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States has deteriorated. Congress arbitrarily implements laws that affect the well-being of many Puerto Ricans and their livelihood, from controlling the way Puerto Ricans practice their culture and traditions to deciding the way they manage their municipal budgets. Recent examples include imposing a finance control board that oversees Puerto Rico's finances with more power than the democratically elected government and the prohibition of the cockfighting sport; a tradition practiced for over 500 years.

We have the results since 2012 that support a realistic chance to decolonize Puerto Rico. I urge the President of the United States to move forward and achieve this goal of a free Puerto Rico and, in doing such, stand by the principles of democracy. The recognition of Puerto Rico's right to self-determination and the transfer of political powers to the people of Puerto Rico is not an issue to be debated. It is Congress and the President's responsibility. It is time to speak out.

On June 18, 2021, the United Nations Decolonization Committee will consider Puerto Rico's colonial status. **I urge the President to adopt this year's resolution and its recommendations, participate in the Committee's works and exhort your country's delegation to present the official position of the United States government regarding the case of Puerto Rico.** The voters of Puerto Rico decided in 2012.

Thank you very much for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



MANUEL RIVERA

cc: Ambassador to the UN Honorable Linda Thomas-Greenfield  
House Committee on Natural Resources, Congressman Raul Grijalva  
Ms. Julie Chavez Rodriguez, Director of the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs  
Ms. Grechen Sierra Zorita, Associate Director for Puerto Rico and the territories