



August 10, 2021

Hon. Raul M. Grijalva  
Chairman  
Committee on Natural Resources  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Grijalva:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Committee on Natural Resources to discuss Medicaid, SSI and SNAP in the U.S. Territories.

In response to Rep. Sablan's question, I would say that state-like treatment under the Medicaid and SSI programs during my tenure as Governor would have made a major difference in the quality of life of those most vulnerable in our society. As mentioned during my participation in the hearing, these are all American citizens. Many of them served courageously in our military to defend our Nation against foreign foes. Yet, they would have to move to one of the fifty states to attain the same rights that their fellow Americans enjoy in the rest of the country.

In terms of the Medicaid program, state-like treatment would have permitted us to extend all 17 required benefits under the Medicaid program. Today, almost ten years after I left office, only ten of those benefits are available to local Medicaid beneficiaries. Additionally, hundreds of thousands of those constituents did not qualify under the Medicaid program because the poverty levels imposed to participate in the program was set at a different level than in the fifty states.

The SSI program did not apply to Puerto Rico residents during my tenure. Recent studies estimate that if the SSI program were to apply in Puerto Rico today, almost 300,000 local residents would qualify. The positive effects of fully implementing both programs back then still hold today.

Should you have any additional inquiries with respect to the foregoing, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Luis G. Fortuño