



BUDPR OFFICIAL STATEMENT ON THE PRESENTATION OF THE PUERTO RICO STATUS ACT

The Puerto Rico Status Act introduced today in the U.S. House of Representatives is the result of a flawed process of so-called consensus that has been far less inclusive and democratic than Puerto Ricans deserve. It is the product of an our-way-or-the-highway approach from pro-statehood House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer that has backed advocates of a fair and just decolonization process for Puerto Rico into a corner: support this legislation or you get nothing and the status quo endures.

We denounce that state of affairs, artificially created by Congressional leaders who are playing politics with Puerto Rico's political future. For that reason, and for the lack of a real democratic, transparent, and inclusive process **we cannot support this bill as presented, and our support will be dependent on the celebration of public hearings and the presentation of amendments to the bill, by both Democrats and Republicans.**

We maintain that this bill—and the process that led to it—remains fundamentally flawed:

- It maintains the political illusion that a 50%+1 majority is sufficient for Congress to consider granting statehood to Puerto Rico, despite repeated warnings from both Republicans and some Democrats that they are unwilling to do so.
- It leaves unaddressed fundamental questions of language and culture that are of paramount importance, not just to Puerto Ricans, but to members of Congress who have frequently cited the centrality of those issues.
- It codifies definitions and transition plans for the various options negotiated behind closed doors in Washington, D.C., with minimal input from the Puerto Rican people.
- It is being rushed through without full public hearings in D.C., which prevents participation from the Puerto Rican diaspora, full transparency in front of the American people, and denies both Democrats and Republicans the opportunity to consider input that would give the bill increased chances of becoming law.



This bill exists in a bubble in which Republican opposition, the filibuster, and the Senate's repeated warnings that it will not consider statehood for Puerto Rico do not exist. Others may be content with a symbolic victory in the House Committee on Natural Resources. Those of us who urgently want Puerto Rico's colonial status to end must warn against efforts that, ultimately, will not lead to a productive outcome.

It did not have to be this way. The Puerto Rico Self-Determination Act, which had bipartisan support from 11 Senate co-sponsors, outlined a superior process to address the issue of Puerto Rico's status. It would have created a mechanism for Puerto Ricans to draft status definitions and transition plans in consultation with Congress but led by our own people. That would have ensured that the questions that matter most to Puerto Ricans would be addressed, and that the answers that are unacceptable in Washington, D.C., would not be considered.

We hope that, when the Puerto Rico Status Act fails, as it surely will, political leaders in Congress and in Puerto Rico will look to the Self-Determination Act again as a model. We encourage them to heed the warnings of our organization and many others who have anticipated the failure of any effort to force Congress to grant statehood to Puerto Rico, and take up our recommendations on what a productive, politically viable process should look like in the future.

In the meantime, we hope that the Puerto Rico Status Act will continue to spur debate in Puerto Rico and in the United States, and to confront Americans with the moral and political responsibility of ending 124 years of colonialism in Puerto Rico.

Sincerely,
Boricuas Unidos en la Diáspora (BUDPR)