



# Puerto Rico Young Republican Federation

## Statement regarding the Natural Resources Full Committee Hearing: Insular Affairs Legislative Hearing on Puerto Rico Political Status

April 14, 2021

On Wednesday, April 14, 2021, the Committee on Natural Resources Office on Insular Affairs held a remote Full Committee Legislative Hearing on the following bills:

- H.R. 1522 - To provide for the admission of the State of Puerto Rico into the Union. *Puerto Rico Statehood Admission Act*. This bill was introduced earlier this year by Congresswoman Jenniffer González-Colón (R-PR-AL) and Congressman Darren Soto (D-FL-9) following the overwhelming results of the latest political status plebiscite held in Puerto Rico.
- H.R. 2070 - To recognize the people of Puerto Rico's right to call a status convention through which the people would exercise their natural right to self-determination and establish a mechanism for congressional consideration of such decision for other purposes. *Puerto Rico Self-Determination Act of 2021*. This bill was introduced after H.R. 1522 by Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez (D-NY-7) in clear opposition of H.R. 1522 and the Puerto Rican people's electoral mandate to become the 51st state of the Union.

Through this statement the Puerto Rico Young Republican Federation would like to unequivocally express its support for bill H.R.1522 and its repudiation of bill H.R.2070.

Achieving statehood for the islands has been a top priority for the Puerto Rico Young Republican Federation since the day of its emergence. Puerto Rico became a U.S. territory as a result of the Spanish-American War of 1898, and its people have been American citizens for nearly as long. Puerto Ricans have significantly contributed to the well-being of the United States. Thousands of Puerto Ricans have served in the U.S. Armed Forces and fought in every major war since World War I. Tens of thousands currently serve. Puerto Rico statehood is simply the only right and moral political status option. It is long overdue for Puerto Ricans to attain the equality they deserve.

Furthermore, the people of Puerto Rico have reiterated their rejection of the island's current territorial status by supporting statehood at the ballot box, not once, not twice, but three times in the last ten years. Nonetheless, H.R.2070 seems to ignore fair and clean election results by disguising its opposition to Puerto Rico statehood and its furtherance



of the colonial status using an obscure definition of "self-determination". H.R. 2070's call for "self-determination" is a fallacy since it does not consider the choice of Puerto Rican voters and relies on a so-called "status convention" through which the people would exercise their natural right to "self-determination". More so, that won't be enough to change Puerto Rico's political status. H.R. 2070 calls for congressional consideration of the decision.

How is congressional power over the political status a form of "self-determination"? To make matters worse, H.R. 2070 was introduced by elected representatives who represent citizens of other jurisdictions outside of Puerto Rico and in an electoral process in which Puerto Ricans are not allowed to participate because of the current territorial status.

Let us be clear, Puerto Rico held fair and clean elections on November 3, 2020, where the latest political status plebiscite took place. Statehood won fair and square. Therefore, it is clear that Puerto Ricans have exercised their right to self-determination, and it is time for the United States Congress to honor their will.

We commend Congresswoman González-Colón's efforts that have led to the introduction of H.R. 1522 and resulted in attaining bipartisan support for this crucial piece of legislation.

We firmly believe that providing the people in Puerto Rico with the equal treatment they seek and deserve as proud citizens of the United States of America is long overdue, and we urge every single member of Congress, both Republicans and Democrats, to acknowledge this most pressing matter by joining representatives González-Colón and Soto in supporting H.R. 1522.

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