



SENATE

COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO RICO

José Luis Dalmau Santiago
President

November 10, 2021

The Honorable Raúl Grijalva
Chairman
Natural Resources Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC

Dear Chairman Grijalva:

I am writing to you as President of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and as President of the Popular Democratic Party, the party that controls the legislative branch of Puerto Rico and the majority of the municipalities.

During the past several months, the congressional committee that you lead has been evaluating two bills aimed at addressing the issue of Puerto Rico's political status. H.R. 1522, which calls for the admission of Puerto Rico as a state, and H.R. 2070, which proposes a binding process for the U.S. Congress to address Puerto Rico's political status through a status assembly.

As we have stated in previous communications, the Popular Democratic Party objects the content of the legislation in H.R. 1522 on the grounds that the bill offers the voters of Puerto Rico an unrealistic process of admission as a state of the Union.

Regarding H.R. 2070, we have expressed - and today reaffirm - our interest in submitting amendments to this bill with the goal of achieving its viability and create the appropriate conditions to approve in Puerto Rico an enabling law that would make a federally binding process possible.

Also, we reaffirm the position of our political party that any federal legislation must include an indispensable requirement to comply with the provisions of Public Law 113-76 (P.L. 113-76), the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014, which includes an appropriation of \$2.5 million for a plebiscite consultation to be legislated locally. For that appropriation to be disbursed, the Act requires that the U.S. Department of Justice certify that the political status options that are included

in a ballot - along with the ballot itself and the governmental educational campaign - are consistent with the Constitution, laws, and policies of the United States.

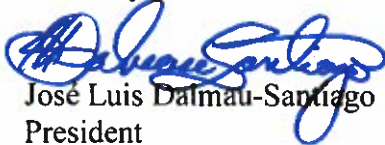
Understanding that any process of self-determination must be born from the will of the people of Puerto Rico, as President of the Senate, I have taken the decision to invite the presidents of the political parties registered in Puerto Rico to an open dialogue on this issue. This initiative has the purpose of identifying a common ground that will allow us to propose courses of action on procedural mechanisms that will effectively address the issue of political status either through congressional legislation or through initiatives to be legislated from Puerto Rico. I strongly believe that the matter of Puerto Rico status is best served if Puerto Rico takes the first steps through this initiative that will include all possible options.

In addition to the initiative that I have started as President of the Senate, I have also initiated a discussion process with our Popular Democratic Party's leadership to set the parameters of a formal proposal for the development and evolution of the Commonwealth. Such a proposal could be part of the content of federal legislation, if Congress is willing to include the Commonwealth option in any federal legislation as is required by the US Department of Justice.

Reaffirming our willingness to discuss possible amendments to House Bill 2070, I respectfully request that before holding a markup session of your committee, you allow us to present and argue the corresponding amendments that would allow the inclusion of the Commonwealth development option, as is the aspiration of the party that I lead.

I hope that you will give serious consideration to this request, which we make with a sense of responsibility to the people of Puerto Rico and the deference that U.S. Congress deserves.

Cordially yours,


José Luis Dalmau-Santiago
President