



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 57-A

Resolution calling on Congress to pass, and the President to sign, a bill in support of self-determination for Puerto Rico.

By Council Members Ayala, Rivera, Fariás, Hanif, Cabán, Restler, Avilés, Louis and Velázquez

Whereas, According to the United States (U.S.) Census Bureau’s 2017 American Community Survey, nearly one million New York City (NYC) residents are of Puerto Rican descent; and

Whereas, Because Puerto Rico is an insular U.S. territory and not a state, Puerto Ricans lack the right to have voting representation in Congress and to participate fully in federal elections; and

Whereas, The United Nations has recognized Puerto Rico as a self-governing political entity under General Assembly Resolution 748; and

Whereas, According to the Council on Foreign Relations, “Puerto Rico is a political paradox,” facing a multi-layered economic and social crisis that is rooted in its long-standing status as a U.S. territory and has been compounded by government mismanagement over the years; and

Whereas, According to the Harvard Political Review, recent economic and social issues stemming from repeated natural disasters, mishandled federal assistance, and rising debt have underscored the urgency of re-evaluating Puerto Rico’s status as a territory, prompting discussion of a democratic referendum on the issue; and

Whereas, Article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which the United States is a signatory and which it is required to recognize, establishes that all peoples have the right to self-determination and “by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development”; and

Whereas, According to a press release by Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley on October 9, 2020, “Puerto Rico’s status as a U.S. territory has served as a roadblock to the Island’s progress, inflicting over a century of hurt and harm on the Island’s residents and depriving them of their fundamental right to determine their own future.”; and

Whereas, Representative Nydia M. Velázquez of New York had introduced legislation in the U.S. House of Representatives on March 18, 2021, to recognize the right of the people of Puerto Rico to call a status convention through which they would exercise their right to self-determination; and

Whereas, In accordance with fundamental principles of human rights, Puerto Rico, rather than Congress, must determine its own future by having the authority to support its enfranchisement and democratic self-governance; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls on Congress to pass, and the President to sign, a bill in support of self-determination for Puerto Rico.

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