
Introduced by Senator Polanco

July 3, 2001

Senate Joint Resolution No. 21—Relative to the political status of Puerto Rico.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SJR 21, as introduced, Polanco. Puerto Rico: political status.

This measure would memorialize the Congress and the President of the United States to enact legislation that would explain the political status options available to the United States citizens of Puerto Rico and authorize a plebiscite to provide an opportunity for Puerto Ricans to make an informed decision regarding the island's future political status.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, On December 10, 1898, the Treaty of Paris was
2 signed by the United States and later ratified by the United States
3 on February 6, 1899, formally concluding the Spanish-American
4 War and establishing Puerto Rico as a territory of the United
5 States; and

6 WHEREAS, On March 2, 1917, President Woodrow Wilson
7 signed the Puerto Rican Federal Relations Act, popularly known
8 as the Jones Act, which extended United States citizenship to the
9 residents of Puerto Rico, but did not provide them with voting
10 representation in the United States Congress or give them the right
11 to vote for the President of the United States; and

12 WHEREAS, Since 1917, 200,000 United States citizens in
13 Puerto Rico have served valiantly in every war and armed conflict
14 in which our nation has fought in defense of democratic principles
15 and self-determination; and

1 WHEREAS, Four heroic Puerto Ricans, Hector
2 Santiago-Colon, Euripides Rubio, Carlos James Lozado, and Luis
3 Fernando Garcia, have been awarded the Congressional Medal of
4 Honor for their valor in defending American democracy and
5 freedoms; and

6 WHEREAS, We recognize that the ongoing civil disobedience
7 on the Puerto Rican island of Vieques regarding the role of the
8 United States Navy is the only recourse for disenfranchised
9 American citizens who are unable to express themselves at the
10 ballot box, through voting representatives in the United States
11 Congress, or as citizens of a sovereign nation; and

12 WHEREAS, We recognize the many social, economic, and
13 political contributions that the 3.8 million United States citizens
14 residing in Puerto Rico make to preserve and enhance this nation's
15 democratic values; and

16 WHEREAS, The State of California has a significant Puerto
17 Rican community and an ever-increasing Latino population from
18 which many of our state's business, cultural, and political leaders
19 are drawn; and

20 WHEREAS, California's great history, including the ascension
21 to statehood, is intertwined with our state's Latino heritage; and

22 WHEREAS, In 1997 the Legislature of Puerto Rico formally
23 petitioned the United States Congress to respond to the democratic
24 aspirations of the United States citizens of Puerto Rico by means
25 of a federally sanctioned plebiscite to be held no later than 1998
26 and Congress has not yet responded to this petition; and

27 WHEREAS, In 1941, without the approval of the people of
28 Puerto Rico, the United States Navy expropriated more than 78
29 percent of the territory of the island municipality of Vieques,
30 Puerto Rico for the purpose of conducting military maneuvers; and

31 WHEREAS, As we begin a new millennium, we recognize that
32 the time has come for Puerto Rico to exercise its right to
33 self-determination regarding its desire to attain full
34 self-government within the context of a congressionally
35 authorized plebiscite; and

36 WHEREAS, The California Latino Legislative Caucus urges all
37 Californians and the citizens of the United States to support the
38 enactment of a federal law leading to full self-government for
39 Puerto Rico; now, therefore, be it



1 *Resolved by the Senate and Assembly of the State of California,*
2 *jointly,* That the Legislature of the State of California and the
3 California Latino Legislative Caucus request that the Congress
4 and the President of the United States enact legislation that would
5 explain the political status options available to the United States
6 citizens of Puerto Rico and authorize a plebiscite to provide an
7 opportunity for Puerto Ricans to make an informed decision
8 regarding the island’s future political status; and be it further

9 *Resolved,* That the Legislature of the State of California and the
10 California Latino Legislative Caucus request the California
11 congressional delegation to actively promote and support timely
12 action on this important national issue; and be it further

13 *Resolved,* That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of
14 this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United
15 States, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Majority
16 Leader of the Senate, each Senator and Representative from
17 California in the Congress of the United States, and the Governor
18 of Puerto Rico.

