with their children and the bad schools in which they were trapped, applied for a measer 1,000 scholarships that would enable those mothers and those fathers to make a tangible change in their children’s lives.

The people of Washington, D.C., especially those who are not at the top rungs of the socioeconomic ladder, want their children to have the same opportunity as the wealthy people who have their children in Sidwell Friends. We have a bill that will bring to the floor here in a few days, a bill that would allow 2,000 scholarships for the very poorest families in America, from among those who apply to be chosen at random, so that those parents can use those scholarships to take their child to that school where the child can succeed.

Let me just say, Mr. Speaker, I have met some of those children who up to this point have been the lucky recipients of the private scholarships, privately funded scholarships that are available to their families. By over 60 percent, these bright young boys and girls say they like math and science the best. If we put a bright young mind in a school where they are encouraged, where somebody cares and takes the time, and yes, indeed, offers a little discipline along with that encouragement, we see a bright, happy child.

We will bring that bill to the floor. We will pass that bill. I hope Members on both sides of the aisle can find compassion for the children that overrides their desire to comply with unions, and I hope when we send that bill to the President and he picks up that pen, he will realize he has the lives of 2,000 beautiful children in his hands. He can sign the bill and give them the opportunity, or he can veto the bill and sacrifice the unions.

BEFORE WE SPEND OUR FEDERAL SURPLUS, WE BETTER MAKE SURE WE REALLY HAVE IT

(Mr. DUNCAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, every day we hear all kinds of talk now about how we are going to spend the Federal surplus. Before everyone gets all giddy about all this extra cash, however, we had really better take a closer look.

Alan Sloan, the Wall Street editor of Newsweek, recently wrote in the Washington Post, “But get a grip. There is no surplus. If you do math the normal way, instead of Uncle Sam’s way, there is nothing resembling a budget surplus on the horizon.” Mr. Sloan wrote that all the talk about a surplus comes because we are using Federal budget accounting instead of real world accounting.

As he pointed out, “Virtually the entire difference between Federal math and real-world math involves Social Security’s retirement and disability funds, whose surpluses are masking the deficit in the rest of the budget.”

If we were not using the Social Security and Medicare funds to offset or mask the size of the deficit, we would still have a huge deficit on top of an already horrendous $5.5 trillion national debt.

Mr. Speaker, before we begin celebrating and spending our supposed, alleged surplus, we had better make sure that we really have one. We are very far from it right now.

THE SOLOMON ENGLISH LANGUAGE EMPOWERMENT AMENDMENT

(Mr. SOLOMON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, in just a few minutes this House will begin debate on something that is probably the most important issue that we will take up on the floor this Congress during this entire year. It is the question of whether or not to start in motion the wheels that will begin to admit Puerto Rico as a State to this Union.

I would just hope that all Members, and because of their interest for their constituents, would pay particular attention. I would suggest that they come over here. This debate is going to take 7 or 8 hours on this floor, but it is very, very important.

I will be offering an amendment that will begin to do that, based on this premise, for the past two centuries we now have a nation out of our different peoples by emphasizing our common beliefs, our common ideals, and perhaps, most importantly, Mr. Speaker, our common language.

Our English language has permitted this country to live up to our motto, our national motto, and that motto is "out of many, one." The English is the reason that we have survived these last 200 years. Think about it.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 856, UNITED STATES PUERTO RICO POLITICAL STATUS ACT

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 376 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause (b) of rule XXIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 856) to provide a process leading to full self-governance for Puerto Rico. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed ninety minutes equally divided and controlled by Representative Young of Alaska; Representative Miller of California; Representative Solomon of New York; and Representative Gutierrez of Illinois or their designees. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. In lieu of the amendment recommended by the Committee on Resources now printed in the bill, it shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule the amendment in the nature of a substitute printed in the Congressional Record and numbered 1 pursuant to clause 6 of rule XXIII. That amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. Points of order against that amendment may be taken at the discretion of the Speaker. In the event of any other amendment, it shall be in order to consider the amendment printed in the Congressional Record and numbered 1 pursuant to clause 6 of rule XXIII. Consideration of that amendment shall be preceded by an additional period of general debate, which shall be confined to the subject of that amendment and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by Representative Solomon of New York and a Member opposed to that amendment.

(c) Amendments specified in subsections (a) and (b) of this resolution shall be considered as read and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. Consideration of those amendments, and all amendments thereto, shall not exceed one hour.
H764

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — HOUSE
March 4, 1998

SEC. 3. During consideration of the bill for appropriation, the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole may accede priority in recognition of the fact that the Member offering an amendment has caused it to be printed, and for the purpose of the Congressional Record designated for that purpose in clause 6 of rule XXIII. Amendments so printed shall be debated in the order of their printing, and the Chair will call the attention of the Committee of the Whole to any request for any record vote on any amendment; and (2) reduce to five minutes the minimum time for electronic voting on any postponement motion that follows another electronic vote without intervening business, provided that the minimum time for electronic voting on the first, and in any series of questions shall be fifteen minutes. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. Any Member may vote on electronic vote on the House or in the nature of a substitute made in order as original, but the previous question shall be considered as oral, and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without amendment, in the nature of a substitute made in order as original text.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLomon) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. SOLomon. Mr. Speaker, for purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to my good friend, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MOAKLEY), pending which I yield myself to the House, as I may, consume. During consideration of the resolution, all time yielded is for debate purposes only.

Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 376 is an open rule providing for consideration of H.R. 696, which is the United States-Puerto Rico Political Status Act. The rule provides 20 minutes of general debate, equally divided and controlled by the gentleman from Alaska (Chairman YOUNG) and printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD and numbered 1, which shall be considered as read. The rule also waives clause 5(a) of rule XXII prohibiting appropriations in a legislative bill against the amendment in the nature of a substitute. The Committee on Rules understands this waiver to be technical in nature, and further understands that the Committee on Appropriations has no objection to it.

Mr. Speaker, this is an open rule. However, the Committee on Rules decided to single out two significant policy amendments for particular treatment for debate on this floor. The committee determined that these amendments should receive a specified debate time and a time certain to close debate on those amendments and any amendments thereto.

These two amendments are the Solomon amendment, which clarifies the official role of English in government activities, and the Serrano amendment, which relates to eligibility of mainland U.S. citizens of Puerto Rican descent to vote in a referendum. After general debate on the bill, there will be an additional period of general debate on the Solomon amendment, and then 1 hour of consideration of the amendment. Mr. Speaker, the rule also provides that the amendment of the gentleman from New York (Mr. SERRANO) will have 30 minutes of additional general debate on the Solomon amendment, and 1 hour of consideration for the amendment process; in other words, amendments offered to that amendment.

The rule further provides that both the Solomon amendment and the Serrano amendment be considered as read and shall not be subject to a demand for a division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole, but there will be second degree amendments allowed to it, similar to an open rule process.

Mr. Speaker, the rule also provides that the Chair is authorized to accede priority in recognition to Members who have preprinted their amendments in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD that appeared today.

The rule also allows for the Chair of the Committee of the Whole to postpone votes during consideration of the bill and to reduce voting time to 5 minutes on a postponed question if the vote follows a 15-minute vote.

Finally, the rule provides for one motion to recommit, with or without instructions.

Mr. Speaker, as the Members are well aware, this is an extremely controversial issue. It is controversial among the American people, and it is certainly controversial among the people that reside on the island of Puerto Rico. Members of the House are divided on this issue, and not necessarily by party.

However, despite our differences over the substance of the legislation, many of us have agreed that the fairest way to consider this very controversial and difficult issue is under an open rule, and I commend Chairman YOUNG for his cooperation in bringing this matter to the floor under these considerations today.

Mr. Speaker, I admonished Members who appeared before the committee yesterday to comport themselves in a dignified manner and with restraint in determining which amendments to offer and how many would be offered. I am pleased to note that the Members who appeared before the Committee on Rules agreed to offer a finite and limited number of amendments. That means that those in opposition to the bill will probably only offer 10 or 12 amendments at the very most. Then there are several amendments by those that might be supportive of the bill itself, that might have some perfecting amendments as well. But other than that, we would expect that this debate would continue through the day, but under no circumstances would carry over into tomorrow.

So we would hope that Members would come here on the principle that should be dignified in their remarks, and that we would speak to the issues and not get into a lot of superfluous conversation. And I urge support of the rule.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MOAKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. MOAKLEY asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.

Mr. MOAKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLomon), my very dear friend, for yielding me the customary half-hour.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this open rule, and I commend my Chairman for allowing the rule to come to the floor in this position.

Mr. Speaker, the issue of self-determination for the people of Puerto Rico has been an issue for many, many decades. This year marks the 100th anniversary of Puerto Rico's being part of the United States.

Eighty-three years ago, Mr. Speaker, in the midst of World War I, Congress extended American citizenship to the residents of Puerto Rico with all of its rights and responsibilities, including being subject to the draft. Since then, over 200,000 Puerto Ricans have served in this country's various military endeavors. Puerto Ricans presently abide by all American laws passed by this Congress. They are also required to serve on juries. They pledge their allegiance to the flag of the United States.

This bill we consider today, Mr. Speaker, is a bill giving 3.8 million people of Puerto Rico their long-overdue right to self-determination. Contrary to what some people say, this is not a statehood bill. It simply allows the people of Puerto Rico to decide for themselves what kind of relationship they will have with the United States rather than having it forced upon them.

Under this bill, Puerto Rico has several options. They can be integrated into the Union, as has Hawaii, or they can remain a separate Nation as the
March 4, 1998

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — HOUSE

PHILIPPINES did. And since 80 percent of the voters of Puerto Rico go to the polls, we can be assured that their decision will represent a very strong majority.

Once they make that decision, no matter what that decision may be, I believe we should support them. And I am not the only one who feels that way.

Mr. Speaker, eight years ago I was an original cosponsor of the legislation which passed the House to allow Puerto Ricans to vote on the status of their relationship with this country. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, that bill died in the Senate, but it did have the support of the majority of this House.

Self-determination also had the support of one of America's most popular Presidents. I have here, Mr. Speaker, a statement by the idol of the gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON). President Reagan. He supported Puerto Rican self-determination in a statement dated January 12, 1982, which I would like to put in the RECORD.

In that statement, President Reagan says: "Puerto Ricans have fought beside us for decades and have worked beside us for generations. We recognize the right of the Puerto Rican people to self-determination. President Reagan also said that he believed that statehood would benefit both the people of Puerto Rico and their fellow American citizens in the States."

President Clinton supports the legislation, as did every Republican President since Dwight Eisenhower. Mr. Speaker, it is a good idea whose time is long overdue. After 83 years of American citizenship, this country owes these people the right to make their own decision. We owe them self-determination. They are American citizens, Mr. Speaker, and they should be treated as such.

Unfortunately, in addition to Puerto Rican self-determination, which is a very good idea, there is another issue which is being linked to the bill, the issue of whether the United States will pick an official government language. Although English is certainly the de facto language of our country, the framers of our Constitution deliberately refused to establish a national religion or a national language. People come from all over the world to live here, and are not linked to one another by common language. They are linked to one another, Mr. Speaker, because of their love of freedom, their love of liberty.

President Reagan said, and I would like the gentleman from New York, my dear friend, the former Marine to hear this, Mr. Reagan said, and I quote, "In statehood, the language and culture of the island, rich in history, would be respected, for in the United States the cultures of the world live together with pride."

In fact, when the Constitution was drafted, there were nearly as many people speaking German in this country as there were speaking English.

English is already the primary language used in business, government, cultural affairs in the United States. But if we require English in all governmental functions, who call 911 and cannot speak fluent English might be in a lot of trouble.

So rather than mandating English and prohibiting technicians from doing their jobs in life-threatening situations involving non-English speakers, I suggest we recognize the primary role of English in our national affairs, but allow the use of languages in other governmental functions when it is appropriate.

I think what I am trying to say, Mr. Speaker, is that people should be allowed to speak whatever language gets the job done at 911, in police departments, and with emergency and medical technicians. In doing so we would not only be respecting the wishes of our Founding Fathers, we also probably saving many lives in the process.

So I urge my colleagues to support this rule, and I would like to just read one other thing which is attributed to Ronald Reagan. It appeared in Roll Call Thursday, February 26. And I quote again from Ronald Reagan who said this January 12, 1982. He said, "In statehood, the language and the culture of the island, rich in history and in tradition, would be respected, for in the United States the cultures of the world live together with pride."

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this rule, to support the bill, and to defeat the English-only amendment.

Mr. Speaker, I include the following for the RECORD.

[The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, Jan. 12, 1982]

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

When I announced my candidacy for this office more than a year ago, I pledged to support statehood for the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, should the people of that island choose it in a democratic election. Today I reaffirm that support, still confident in my belief that statehood would benefit both the people of Puerto Rico and their fellow American citizens in the States.

While I believe that the people of this country would welcome Puerto Rican statehood, this Administration will accept no less than a majority of the island's population.

No nation, no organization nor individual would mistake our intent in this. The status of Puerto Rico is an issue to be settled by the peoples of Puerto Rico and the United States. There must be no interference in the democratic process.

Puerto Ricans have borne the responsibilities of U.S. citizenship with honor and courage for more than 64 years. They have fought beside us for decades and have worked beside us for generations. Puerto Rico is playing an important role in the development of the Caribbean Basin Initiative and its strong tradition of democracy provides leadership and stability in that region. In statehood, the language and culture of the island, rich in history and tradition, would be respected. In the United States, the cultures of the world live together with pride.

We recognize the right of the Puerto Rican people to self-determination. If they choose statehood, we will work together to devise a union of promises and opportunity in our Federal union of sovereign states.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume by responding to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. MOAKLEY)

Mr. Speaker, I would say, yes, I did serve in the United States Marine Corps back during the Korean War. I did not have the privilege of serving in combat, but I served with a great many Puerto Rican citizens of the United States and to this day they are some of the greatest friends that I have.

Unfortunately, they are divided on this issue just as the rest of the Puerto Rican people are, those that are still alive, some of which I talked to just in the last 48 hours. It breaks down where one-third of them are for statehood, one-third of them are for commonwealth, and surprisingly, one-third of them are for independence. I did not think that would be that high, but that is the issue.

Mr. Speaker, I take a little umbrage at the gentleman, my good friend, pointing the finger at the vets who appeared in Roll Call, and not just in Roll Call but in the Washington Times and all kinds of papers. Millions of dollars have been spent by lobbyists trying to force a particular issue on this Congress. I do not think the Congress is going to listen to that today because they are a pretty astute body.

But concerning my hero Ronald Reagan and, yes, he is my hero and he will forever be, even in spite of his physical condition today. It is so sad. But President Reagan, yes, he did. He supports self-determination, but he does not support this bill or its deliberately skewed language favoring statehood.

Mr. Speaker, let me read this letter that I just received dated February 27, and sent from the Ronald Reagan Foundation. It says, "Dear Congresswoman Solomon, thank you for your request to clarify President Reagan's participation in the current debate on Puerto Rican statehood. As I am sure you understand, President Reagan is no longer participating in campaigns of any kind. Despite the unauthorized use of his name, appearing in that Roll Call, "photograph and quotes in a recent ad in the Washington Times and Roll Call, he is not now nor will he ever be taking any position on H.R. 856, the issue of statehood for Puerto Rico, or self-determination for the Puerto Rican people." And it goes on to say, "I hope this clarifies that issue."

Mr. Speaker, I was not going to get into a debate on this during the rule because I was hopeful that we could move on to the general debate time itself so that we would not be interrupted by other votes. But there are many things that have held this country together over the last 100 years. Many of them, as I quoted before, "e pluribus unum" means out of many
one. It means patriotism, it means pride, it means volunteerism. But above all it means that we speak a common language in this country.

We are a melting pot of the entire world, of every ethnic background in the world, and we are proud of that. But had we let these various languages become a part of our American culture, this democracy would not be here today. And if my colleagues do not believe it, come up to my congressional district which borders on Canada, and see how we are faced with a situation in Quebec that literally tears that country asunder. We just cannot allow that to happen. And that is why at the appropriate time I will be offering an amendment that will clarify the English-first language in this country.

Having said all of that, I appreciate the remarks of the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MOAKLEY).

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG), one of the men I respect most in this body, chairman of the Committee on Resources, and the single representative from the great State of Alaska.

(Mr. YOUNG of Alaska asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. Speaker. I rise in support of the rule for consideration of the United States-Puerto Rico Political Status Act, H.R. 856.

The proposed open rule is consistent with the process which is followed by the Committee on Resources in the development of this bill to resolve the United States political status problem with Puerto Rico.

This was an effort to reach out and include as many sectors as possible in a fair manner in which the facts were openly aired and examined without respect to special interests or local political considerations. I can confirm that as the chairman of the House committee of jurisdiction for territorial affairs, the committee completed every legislative step in the development of this initiative during the past 4 years from 1995 to the present time.

Five executive hearings with the broadest participation possible were held in Washington and Puerto Rico. Testimony was heard from individuals with many different views on the future relationship of Puerto Rico and the United States. Special attention was given to allow the three principal parties in Puerto Rico, each representing the status of commonwealth, independence, or statehood, to present their position with their respective status options.

Subsequent deliberations by Members were complete and exhaustive. All the issues have been raised and debated.

Once Members examined the complexity of the problems, they realized that this bill is the most viable way to address the problems facing the United States and to permanently resolve Puerto Rico’s status.

The bill’s self-determination process in H.R. 856 is a carefully crafted three-stage process, a three-stage process leading to full self-government for Puerto Rico as a separate, sovereign nation or a State within the United States. If the majority of the people are ready to change the current form of local self-government to the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

110 Congress and the Americans of Puerto Rico will be required to vote in each of the three stages of the bill. I want to stress that the ruthlessness and the Americans of Puerto Rico will be required to vote in each of the three stages of the bill, an initial referendum, a 10-year transition plan, and the final implementation act. If there is no majority for change, then the status quo continues and United States citizens of Puerto Rico are consulted again by referendum at least once every 10 years.

The Committee on Resources overwhelmingly reported it twice, first in the 104th Congress and now in the 105th Congress. I firmly believe it is appropriate and necessary for the full House to consider the United States-Puerto Rico Political Status Act, H.R. 856.

In carrying out congressional responsibilities under the Constitution for territories, Congress will be able to directly respond to the request of the Legislature of Puerto Rico to the 105th Congress to define the status choices and authorize a process to resolve Puerto Rico’s political status dilemma. I support this bill and I will discuss in debate the merits of all amendments that come before us.

I want my colleagues to understand that this is nothing new. This is a project I worked on, my committee has worked on, the people of Puerto Rico have worked on for the last 4 years. It is time to act. It is time for this Congress, this House, to pass this legislation for America, for the people of Puerto Rico.

Mr. MOAKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. Maybe I did not make myself clear. I am not insinuating in any way that former President Ronald Reagan is for this bill. All I want to do was to read a statement he put out in a press release. Once a President speaks, use of that language is never unauthorized because that is his statement. It is history. Once again, he said, in statehood, the language and culture of the island, rich in history, rich in tradition, would be respected, for the United States, for the culture of the world live together with pride. Ronald Reagan.

The reason I make it so plain is because I know my dear friend, the gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON), idolizes President Reagan, and rightly so. I wanted to be sure he knew what the President’s thoughts were when he did address the Puerto Rican situation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. SERRANO) and ask permission to revise and extend his remarks.

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this rule and in strong support of the bill we are dealing with today. This is indeed a historic moment because, make no mistake about it, this is the first time that a bill has come to this Floor accompanying a bill of this nature that will, in my opinion, begin a process to end what I and many other people consider present colonial status of Puerto Rico.

In order to do this, we have to put forth a process. This process puts forth a process for the debate, and the bill puts forth the process for ending the colonial status. We have to immediately attack that which is being said either with lack of information on the Floor to defeat the bill, which is that this bill leads Puerto Rico towards statehood. How can it do that if this Congress is not committing to this point to any of the three options?

What this Congress is saying is, we will allow you in consultation with us to take a vote, and then the results of that vote will become our consideration here on the House floor. Some may be afraid that the vote would come out against the option they favor. I am afraid that the option somebody favors will never be dealt with. We can only find out. But I assure my colleagues that nothing will happen unless we approve this rule and approve this bill. In fact, I often tell people, I have a 31-year-old daughter and a 4-year-old granddaughter. I suspect that if this bill fails today, my grandchildren, as adults, will still be discussing the colonial status of Puerto Rico.

And we are close to the year 2000, and once in a while we listen to the U.N., the U.N. has suggested that all countries unload their territories and colonies before 2000. The government of the United States is busy on Earth still holds close to 4 million people in that kind of a situation. I do not care if statehood wins. I do not care if independence wins. I do care every day when I get up and I realize that the children of Puerto Rico are all members of a colony. It is good for the U.S. Government to change this. It is good for the Puerto Rican people to change it.

So I congratulate the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) for bringing this bill, and I congratulate my colleague the gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON) for this rule. I will not agree with the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG). I do not agree on many things during the session with the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG), but we agree on this beyond anything else, and that is why I was proud to add my name as a co-prime sponsor early on.
Rican Government is controlled by statehood supporters who know from past balloting and current polling that they would lose a fair up and down vote on statehood.

The statehood supporters have maneuvered the Committee on Resources into constructing a ballot that will not reflect the will of the people. This is because the definition of "commonwealth" in the bill describes a colonial status that is unacceptable to commonwealthers, leaving them no choice but to boycott the election since they oppose all 3 options offered by the bill.

Back in Puerto Rico, statehood supporters are gloating about how the definition being used in the bill will guarantee a victory for statehood even though they know the majority of people do not support statehood. They are right about the outcome of this bill, but they are wrong to do this to the people of Puerto Rico.

The phony pro-statehood majority produced by this bill then sets in motion a mandatory statehood vote in Congress next year and two more votes in Puerto Rico. But even then, that far down the road to statehood, H.R. 856 still does not provide the people of Puerto Rico an up or down vote, a yes or no vote as to whether or not they want to become a State.

Why are we so afraid to treat the people of Puerto Rico as we have every other State that has entered the Union? This is what we have done to every other people who wanted to join the Union. We have given them a yes or no vote on statehood. Why are people now trying to maneuver it so the people of Puerto Rico do not have this opportunity? Because they know that the people of Puerto Rico, given the opportunity, will vote "no" on statehood.

Mr. Speaker, the fair way to handle this is the way we have always done it, is to give the people a chance for an up or down vote. If this is a first step toward treating the Puerto Rican people as all other citizens of the United States, they should be treated just as equal, and trying to ignore the United States was treated. H.R. 856 rejects the simple, fair way that was good enough for everybody else and substitutes a skewed ballot with foreordained results. We should not stand for this unfair, undemocratic process. We should reject H.R. 856 and accept the rule.

Mr. MOAKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ).

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ).

Mr. MOAKLEY. The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). The gentleman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) is recognized for 2 minutes.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise in objection to the bill. I thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON) for providing the only thing that is fair about this bill, that is, to provide a rule that will provide a free and open debate. That is what this bill needs.

Mr. Speaker, this is not about self-determination. This is legislation that has been drafted by the statehood supporters. They were the ones who provided the definition for the commonwealth, indeed denying access to the democratic process by not allowing 48 percent of the people of Puerto Rico to participate in this debate. Forty-eight percent of the people of Puerto Rico supported commonwealth 5 years ago when the last plebiscite was held. But here we are presenting to the House floor legislation that will favor the statehood for Puerto Rico.

Mr. Speaker, make no mistake. By voting on this legislation, we are imposing statehood to the people of Puerto Rico. It is a shame that today by providing the definition that citizenship is statutory, it is shameful. It is a lack of respect to the people of Puerto Rico, it is a lack of respect to the people who have been denied, who have fought defending this country, and it is to say to even the supporters of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico that you cannot support the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico because we will take the citizenship away from you. This is not about self-determination. This is not sanctioned by the federal rule.

Mr. MOAKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman who represents the northern part of Puerto Rico, that is, Providence, Rhode Island (Mr. KENNEDY).

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MOAKLEY) for yielding me the time. I appreciate the chance to address the point of the gentleman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) about this bill because it was addressed earlier by the gentleman from Chicago, Illinois (Mr. GUTTENBERG) about that process was not fair. It is ironic that this process was not fair because it did not include the commonwealth definition. Yet in the bill itself, the commonwealth has an opportunity to vote for the status quo in this legislation.

But let me address the issue that she brought up. The reason why this is so awful to the gentleman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) and people of Puerto Rican descent is the same reason it is awful for people who feel that we ought to have statehood for Puerto Rico. That is, without statehood the people of Puerto Rico are put down.

Just as she said, without statehood, the people of Puerto Rico can have their citizenship denied, because it will be up to this Congress in its constitutional authority, given the fact that Puerto Rico is a territory under the territorial clause of this United States Constitution, that at any time this Congress can deny their citizenship of the people of Puerto Rico. At any time the people of Puerto Rico can have the Solomon language imposed on them.

The irony is, unless Puerto Rico becomes a State, they will not be able to decide what their language will be, they will not ever be able to vote for the things that we vote on regularly that affect them. The irony in this debate is that we keep hearing that this process is unfair.

Let us understand. The gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) said that we already had a referendum. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the problem is it does not matter what they do, it does not matter what they do. The whole purpose of this debate is that the Congress has to give its approval so that Puerto Rico can decide. They cannot decide now. They never had the decision. Those plebiscites were not sanctioned by the United States Congress. And because they were not sanctioned by the United States Congress, they have no meaning. Why? Because, once again, Puerto Rico is under the territorial clause of the United States Constitution, meaning until they become a State or until they become an independent nation, they cannot choose for themselves.

That is why we are putting this bill forward, because we believe they ought to be able to decide for themselves. That is what this debate is all about. I want to commend the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG), and I want to commend the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MOAKLEY). I want to thank them for having this debate and allowing this debate to come on the floor.

I need to repeat this. We can argue until we are blue in the face about any other issue. Just understand this. Puerto Rico is under the territorial clause of the United States Constitution. I am a member of the Committee on Resources. The Committee on Resources has jurisdiction over territories and commonwealths and Native American reservations. Have my colleagues ever heard of that before? It is called the territorial clause. We have to vote on a bill to allow the people of Puerto Rico the right to make a choice.

I am really looking forward to this debate because the fact of the matter is, if we understand the simple fact that this is simply about giving the congressional authority to the people of Puerto Rico so they can make up their own mind, then I think this debate will become clearer.

Let me just conclude by saying with respect to English as the mandatory
H772

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—HOUSE

March 4, 1998

Mr. ROGAN. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 27, I was inadvertently detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."
The monument to these gallant mean stands highest above all else in Arlington National Cemetery. Many others lost their lives in the ensuing Spanish-American War amid the cries of "Remember the Maine." But why didn’t Congress declare war and send Americans in harm’s way in the defense of the sacred ideal: self-determination? We won the war, and American sovereignty over Cuba, Puerto Rico, and some of Spain’s Pacific possessions. All but one are no longer territories. Only Fiji, and which is still a state, and has been asked by the people of Puerto Rico in numerous years and numerous times by the president of the Senate, by the Presidents in the past in their platforms.

The United States-Puerto Rico Political Status Act, H.R. 856, establishes in Federal law for the first time a process to resolve Puerto Rico’s political status, I remind my colleagues it will not happen overnight, regardless of what we do here today. This is just a process that will take place.

My colleague was speaking on the rule that the public wants to hear more from Congress. I believe President Teddy Roosevelt’s words are even more true today to this bill than when he spoke them in 1905.

Our fellow Americans in Puerto Rico, now numbering some 4 million, have been at the forefront of a movement to achieve independence. They have fought in every major conflict and have been at the forefront of that movement. The legislation sent joint resolutions to Congress in 1993, 1994, and 1997 requesting congressional action. I agree with my colleagues, and I believe it is time for us to pass this bill.

In the context of the war against the Kingdom of Spain by the people of the United States, in the cause of freedom, justice and humanity, their military forces have come to occupy the island of Puerto Rico. They have been at the forefront of that movement. The legislation sent joint resolutions to Congress in 1993, 1994, and 1997 requesting congressional action. I agree with my colleagues, and I believe it is time for us to pass this bill.

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good friend and we talk about what good friends we are, it is a poison pill amendment. America is a melting pot. It is a great country; it has one flag. We all speak different languages at different times. Some of us are more fortunate to speak more than one language, but we must always recognize the cohesive part of the United States, and that is being an American. English will come. But to pick out one part of this bill and to say this is a requirement before it ever happens is a poison pill amendment to this legislation.

Let us talk about history again. This is the last territory of the greatest democracy, America. A territory where no one has a true voice, although our government does an excellent job, but there are approximately 4 million Puerto Ricans that have one voice that cannot vote. This is not America as I know it. This is an America that fails one thing and walks another thing. This is an America that is saying, if Members do not accept this legislation, "you think we are some of the greatest Americans who have ever served in our armed forces and are proud to be Americans but do not have the representation that they need.

This legislation is just the beginning. It is one small step of many steps. It is a step for freedom. It is a small step for just one small step for America. But collectively it is a great stride for democracy and for justice.

This legislation should pass. The amendment of the gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLON) should be defeated. We should go forth and show the people of America, show the people of Puerto Rico, that our hearts are true, so that the rest of the world will follow the example of the great United States and free their territories and free the people so they can have self-determination. This is what this bill does, and that is all it does.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Chair

Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ. Mr. Chair

The suggestion was that if you voted for commonwealth, you would then be empowered to pick your way through the Constitution of the United States and the laws of the United States and pick and choose which laws you wanted to apply and not have apply, and that you did not have to live under the power of the Congress of the United States or of the Constitution of the United States. That simply was unacceptable to the overwhelming majority of the committee. I believe it is unacceptable to the overwhelming majority of this House. Someone can certainly come forward and offer that amendment this afternoon, should they decide that they would clearly, and I believe that they would be unacceptable to the people of this country.

So what we put forth is a definition of commonwealth that recognizes their current status today, that they live in a commonwealth arrangement. It says Puerto Rico is joined in relationship under the national sovereignty of the United States. It is the policy of the Congress that this relationship should only be dissolved by mutual consent. That is the situation that we have.

We went on to say that in the exercise of the sovereignty, the laws of the commonwealth shall govern Puerto Rico to the extent that they are consistent with the Constitution of the United States. There is no other way to do business, consistent with the Constitution of the United States, treaties and laws of the United States, and the Congress retains its constitutional authority to enact laws that it deems necessary relating to Puerto Rico.

That is the burden of commonwealth. This is why some people do not like it. Some people would prefer independence over commonwealth, and some people would prefer statehood. There is a certain burden to commonwealth. We cannot pretend that there is not. But the people of Puerto Rico ought to be able to choose that. They ought to be able to choose the status that they want.

That is what this legislation does. It enables the people of Puerto Rico to make their choice; not our choice, their choice. And hopefully under this legislation, the Congress would then honor that choice after the President and others have worked out a plan to enable that choice to go forward. That is what this legislation does. Nothing more, nothing less.

I think it is an important piece of legislation. I think it is recognized that the people of Puerto Rico are entitled to and must have a free vote on this matter. I would hope that my colleagues would support this legislation to allow that to happen.

Mr. Chairman, the House today considers H.R. 856, a complex bill that has, at its core, a very basic concept: the right of a free people to determine the political system under which they live.
March 4, 1998

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—HOUSE

H775

was heard, and that we ultimately agreed on definitions that are fair and accurate. They are included in Mr. Young’s substitute, and I support that substitute strongly.

I have seen more intense lobbying on an issue. It is obvious that opinions are divided on Puerto Rico’s status and on this legislation, but let us address some of the misrepresentations that are being circulated about this bill, because Members should not be confused and should not be deceived into voting on this subject based on inaccuracies.

No one in this Chamber is more qualified than I to speak about how we addressed the Commonwealth issue. I strongly advocated the inclusion of a Commonwealth option that I was accused of being pro-Commonwealth. The definition of Commonwealth supplied by that party, which is similar in many respects to the definition on the ballot during the 1993 referendum in Puerto Rico, is not accurate and is not acceptable to the Congress. It is not acceptable to the people of Puerto Rico that would be eligible for full participation in all federal programs without paying taxes; it is not acceptable that Puerto Rico would pick and choose which federal laws apply to the island; it is not acceptable that Puerto Rico would be free to make its own foreign treaties.

I appreciate that this is what the supporters of “enhanced Commonwealth” want. But the Congress is not prepared to give such unprecedented rights to Puerto Rico while denying them to every state in the Union. Nevertheless, I voted against the definition in the Resources Committee so that it would be clear what is and is not acceptable to the Congress. It was overwhelmingly, and bipartisanship, defeated. And Congress should not offer an option to the voters of Puerto Rico that we are not prepared to embrace.

The definition of Puerto Rico now included in the substitute by Mr. Young may not be utopian, but it is historically and Constitutionally accurate.

There are some who argue that this bill is unfair because it fails to recognize that Puerto Rico is a “nation.” Puerto Rico, like many other areas of the United States, has a unique history and unique culture; that is in part what makes it so remarkable and endearing. But Puerto Rico is not a nation in any sense under U.S. law or international law. Our refusal to recognize Puerto Rico as a “nation” is a slight, but a slight. It is acceptable.

There are those who oppose this bill because they do not want America to “wake up tomorrow” and find out Puerto Rico is going to be the 51st state. This bill provides for a plebiscite to choose among three options, only one of which is statehood. Even if that option is chosen, there is a transition period of up to a decade during which a plan for achieving statehood would be developed, and then voted on in the Congress and in Puerto Rico. And Congress also will vote on an admissions act. So no one should be under a misimpression that this legislation railroad statehood.

Some have raised concerns that admitting Puerto Rico at some point in the future will cost some states seats in this House. I personally support increasing the size of the House to accommodate the 6 new seats Puerto Rico would occupy. In any event, that is a statutory decision to be made by the Congress, just as Congress increased the size of the House permanently when other multi-Member territories were admitted in the 19th and early 20th century.

There is no doubt that Puerto Rico would cost the federal government money, it would be a state. I would hope that the financial status of citizens would not be an issue in determining whether they are accorded the full rights of citizenship. I thought we had resolved that issue by declaring the poll tax and property ownership unconstitutional. And we should be careful about applying such a standard: as of FY 1996, 29 states—more than half—received more federal expenditures than they paid in taxes. Let’s not impose a standard on Puerto Rico that we wouldn’t apply to other states.

I also have noted some questions as to why the bill calls for periodic referenda should either permanent status—dependence or statehood—not be selected. Let us be clear that the bill authorizes additional referenda, it does not mandate them. The purpose of the referenda is to determine permanent status, and commonwealth is generally recognized not to meet that test. Should the voters of Puerto Rico decide to continue as a commonwealth, they should not apply to other states.

Lastly, let me address what has unfortunately become a centerpiece of this debate: whether we should, in this legislation, mandate English as the official language of the Commonwealth.

The House voted on that legislation in 1966; the leadership could bring it before the full House again at any time. But this is not the time or place to do it. The Solomon amendment declares English to be the native language, but it imposes a series of additional de facto constitutional burdens on the people of Puerto Rico, requiring that “all communications with the federal government by the government or people of Puerto Rico shall be in English”; requiring that “English will be the sole official language of all federal government activities in Puerto Rico”; imposing English as the “language of instruction in public schools.” We don’t need to single out Puerto Rico like this, to infringe on the liberty of a 500-year-old culture of 4 million Americans. We have a reasonable alternative amendment that is going to be introduced by Congressmen Fazio, Brown, Bonilla, and Dol Young, and I hope that this is a different and fairer approach. The Clinton Administration supports our substitute.

Our amendment says Puerto Rico, if it becomes a state, will be treated exactly like every other state. If Congress decides that English is to be the official language and passes a comprehensive law to that effect, then Puerto Rico will be covered. Just like every other state. But let’s not single out Puerto Rico in a divisive and unconstitutional manner for special treatment.

Our amendment also calls for Puerto Rico to promote the teaching of English because that language is clearly the language that allows for the fullest participation in all aspects of American life. And we call for inclusion in any proposal of proposals and incentives for promoting English proficiency in the schools and elsewhere in Puerto Rico. Surely, we can reasonably address this issue in an equitable manner without passing a confrontational and unfair insult to our fellow countrymen.

The time has come to tell the people of Puerto Rico that the rest of the nation of which they are a part is prepared to hear their views and respond to their desires. That we will stand by our historic and legal tradition that inclusion in America is not dependent on one’s background or ethnicity, but on a common allegiance to this nation and its Constitution. After being a part of the United States for 100 years, after sending its sons to war five times in this century, it is time that this Congress recognized the right of Puerto Rico to determine its future in a democratic process. And the policy contained in H.R. 856, and I call on the House today to pass this bill, and defeat the divisive Solomon amendment.

Mr. SOLONOM. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

In April of 1775, hundreds of brave men stormed the bridges of Boston and Concord, setting in motion a revolutionary struggle for liberty that culminated in my hometown of Saratoga. New York, in the debate and in the struggle for individual freedom and democracy in all of human history. That blood-stained victory of our forefathers has left the legacy that you and I and all of us call America.

Liberty and justice and democracy, those words that do more than describe our Nation’s ideals and principles. They are the very essence of this country of ours. These ideals are able to thrive and to dominate the political and economic landscapes of the United States because of the people’s devotion to its state, to an idea that there is something unique, something distinct about being an American.

Throughout my military service, my small-business career and the last 31 years in public office, I have dedicated my life to furthering the principles of freedom and democracy, and self-determination throughout this world. Like all of my colleagues, I have been blessed to live in this most free and democratic Nation in which sometimes you ought to travel overseas into the former Soviet Union and see how much they respect this democracy.

It was a privilege and a pleasure to speak and sweat and commitment to principle, of those who have gone before us.

While serving in the United States Marine Corps during the Korean era, I was privileged to serve side by side with so many Puerto Rican Americans, great people, great personal friends of mine, and to be stationed for a time on the island of Vincas in Puerto Rico where I made some of my closest friendships that today still exist, and during that time I came to gain a personal affection for the people of Puerto Rico and for their love of liberty and their distinct culture. As a result Puerto Rico and its people hold a very warm space in my heart.

Today the House considers a bill which may lead to a dramatic and permanent change in the lives of these U.S. citizens. It is billed by its supporters as a bill to permanently resolve the political status of Puerto Rico through a process of self-determination. But however lofty and worthy the objectives of this bill, it is a flawed measure.
that flips the very principles of self-determination and democracy on their heads, Mr. Chairman. In establishing a self-determination process for Puerto Rico, Congress, under the U.S. Constitution, must answer to two distinct yet equally important interests, my colleagues should listen to this, the citizens of Puerto Rico and the citizens of the United States. I believe this bill as drafted fails to answer to either interest, either the Puerto Rican citizens or the American citizens on this mainland, for this bill actually violates self-determination, should the conference, read the report of this bill which was authored by the gentleman from California (Mr. MILLER).

I strongly support allowing the citizens of Puerto Rico to vote on the future of their political status. In fact, they actually do not need to get permission from this Congress of the United States to do so. In fact, they already did in 1952, in 1967, and again in 1978. However, I firmly believe that in order for a political process to deliver self-determination, it must always allow for the participation of all of its constituents, not just some. This bill as currently drafted not only requires, but listen to this, it demands that Puerto Rico hold a plebiscite before the end of the year. Who are we to tell them? In that referendum the citizens of Puerto Rico will be asked to choose between commonwealth, between separate sovereignty and statehood. This seems to be simple enough. However, Mr. Chairman, there is a catch to it. I think the committee should be aware that the Statehood Party of Puerto Rico supports the ballot definition of statehood in this bill, and the Puerto Rican Independence Party supports the ballot definition of independence in this bill. However, the Commonwealth Party, the party that actually won every past referendum on political status, does not support the definition of commonwealth in this bill. And ask yourself why not?

The definition of commonwealth was written not just once but twice by the supporters of the statehood movement without the approval of the vast majority of the people in Puerto Rico, the Commonwealth Party. What this means is that the largest political party in Puerto Rico is faced with a grave choice under this bill. They can either choose to campaign, to support, to vote for a ballot definition that directly contradicts the very premise of their political party's existence, or they cannot participate in the referendum. They have chosen not to participate, and that is a terrible shame.

So first and foremost, the House is debating a measure designed to determine Puerto Rico's political status in which one of the three local political parties, in fact the largest in Puerto Rico, will not even participate. How is this going to take an accurate and democratic measure of the political choices of those 3.8 million U.S. citizens there? The fact is, it is not.

Mr. Chairman, back in 1980, the last time this House considered similar legislation, all of the parties were supportive of the process and supported that bill because it was a fair bill. I voted for it. It sailed through the House under suspension of the rules only to be killed in the other body. Today we debate a controversial bill not just here in the United States, but also in Puerto Rico.

One final comment on this bill's self-determination problems, Mr. Chairman. As this bill currently stands, it requires Puerto Rico permanently to hold this referendum every 10 years until statehood gets 50 percent plus 1. Then the transition and implementation process begins. Since the current support for independence hovers around 5 percent and for statehood around 45 percent, the likely outcome of a forced biennial vote seems likely to be statehood with hardly half the population supporting it.

This bill also contains certain constitutional problems. The Chairmen Members should carefully to what I am about to say because their constituents want to know this. Under this bill, if the Puerto Rico choose statehood in the first referendum, the constitutional protections given States begin to apply to Puerto Rico upon the President's submission of a transition plan taking Puerto Rico from commonwealth to statehood.

What this means is that the process of integrating Puerto Rico into this Union begins with a vote of the transition bill. Members remember best that. According to the Supreme Court in Balzac v. People of Puerto Rico, way back in 1922, once the process of integration begins, it is very difficult to reverse, and we will not reverse it.

The catch with this provision is that under this bill, Congress will be required to vote on this transition plan as early as early next year. While Puerto Rico may join the Union for another 5 or 6 or 7 or 10 years, the vote to begin the admissions process could take place as early as next year, and there should be no turning back at that point.

Such a voting strategy is almost identical to that done when we gave away the Panama Canal to Panama and when Great Britain gave Hong Kong back to China. Members better start thinking about that because their constituents are thinking about it. A vote to do it occurs now, while it actually changes hands sometime in the future. That is what we are voting on here today.

Mr. Chairman, our constituents want to know, they want us to listen and to be careful about this. With the referendum required to be held before the end of this year, this bill requires the President to send Congress transition legislation within 180 days of that referendum. That means that referendum is held in December, as late as December of this year, within 180 days the President is ordered to send us a transition bill. Within 5 days of the receipt of that bill, the majority leaders of the House and the Senate are ordered to introduce the bill. And within 120 days of introduction, a vote occurs on the bill on the floor of this House of Representatives, which could be held in either body.

Today we debate a controversial bill not just here in the United States, but also in Puerto Rico. In essence, this bill sets up a process whereby the citizens of Puerto Rico are forced to vote until they choose statehood, and then the process kicks in to high gear fundamental constitutional procedures as I have just outlined.

Yes, it is true that it may take up to 10 years, as the bill says, for the process to run its course, but the bulk of the actual process occurs up front, and Members had better understand it.

The most serious constitutional reservation of this bill involves the treatment of the rights enjoyed by the people of Puerto Rico currently under the commonwealth status. That reservation was obtained in the bill states that Congress may determine which rights under the United States Constitution are guaranteed to the people of Puerto Rico.

This statement is wrong at several levels. First, it rests upon the remarkable premise that Congress has the authority to deprive the people of Puerto Rico of any and all of their constitutional rights. This provision of this bill is demonstrably false. Mr. Chairman, because even Puerto Rico, if it were an unincorporated territory, the people of Puerto Rico would be still guaranteed fundamental constitutional rights. That is why so many people in Puerto Rico support commonwealth.

The description of the citizenship rights of Puerto Rico is similarly flawed. It states that Puerto Ricans are merely statutory citizens and implies that their citizenship may be revoked by Congress. Well, the people of Puerto Rico are United States citizens within the meaning of the 14th amendment. Get the amendment out. Read it. The 14th amendment was clearly enunciated yesterday by our colleague, the chairman of the House Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on the Committee. We have it over here, if Members want to read it.

Third, and finally, this bill fails to clearly lay out how assimilation would occur under the bill for either Puerto Rico or the United States, and this is the most important part of this entire debate. As I stated earlier, I have a great deal of respect for the pride and for the culture of the people of Puerto Rico. They are wonderful people. I believe, as do many of my colleagues, that Puerto Rico is a nation. It is unique and distinct in its own right, and Puerto Rico has every right to preserve and enhance this rich heritage of culture and history. That is their right.

But if the citizens of Puerto Rico free choose to seek statehood, they should understand clearly, and I think my good friend the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. GUTIERREZ) made this point
earlier, what are the assimilation expectations of the American people, of the 260 million Americans in this country? Puerto Rico deserves a clear, concise and direct discussion of these issues. They have not had that. They do not know what the assimilation would be. Admitting a State requires the assimilation of a territory within the Union of States, and language differences are the number one barrier to actual assimilation. The bill before us today contains the most vacuous statement of language policy that I have ever seen.

How will the average citizen of Puerto Rico understand what this means if we cannot even understand what it means ourselves? And I would ask every Member back in their offices to please read the bill and read it. In this regard, the bill’s language regarding English is weak, it is inadequate, and must be clarified for the benefit of the people of Puerto Rico. Yet because they need to know what they are getting into,

My fellow colleagues, it was Winston Churchill who stated that the gift of common language is a priceless inheritance. And Members, not explicitly stating what role Puerto Rico’s inherited Spanish language and our common tongue, English, would play in a State of Puerto Rico, I believe, would be a great mistake for everyone.

To rectify this I intend to, later in the debate, offer an amendment regarding the role of the English language, which I believe very clearly explains this issue to both the American people and to the people of Puerto Rico.

Now, some of my friends are going to argue that I have specifically selected the statehood option for the bulk of my criticism with this bill and that it is merely a process bill which includes that as an option. Let me make something perfectly clear. For my constituents in upstate New York, who are within the vicinity of Canada and New York City, between Quebec and New York City, the statehood option for Puerto Rico is the choice with the furthest-reaching and permanent consequences. It is a permanent relationship that requires assimilation, and that choice needs to be decided by an overwhelming majority of the citizens of Puerto Rico before my constituents and before my colleagues’ constituents will agree to let them join the Union.

As good friends in Puerto Rico that if they choose statehood, it is still within Congress’ powers as representatives of this country to say no. Statehood may be an option at some point in the future, but the American people are going to have to examine that situation at that time, and that time is today. We cannot force a decision on the citizens of Puerto Rico and the citizens of Puerto Rico can come to the United States to accept a decision.

The Puerto Rican people deserve to know exactly what they are voting on and the American people deserve to know the ramifications of each of those options. Until this bill becomes an actual selection bill, the constitutional muster in all of its components, and fundamentally addresses the issue of assimilation, I will oppose this bill and I hope we can clarify it by adoption of my amendment later on this afternoon.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Chairman, I rise as the designee of the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. GUTIERREZ), and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I rise today to express my strenuous opposition to H.R. 856, the United States-Puerto Rico Political Status Act. Mr. Chairman, I think that we can all agree that the people of Puerto Rico must be given the right to self-determination that the Constitution, fortunately, H.R. 856 does not accomplish.

This bill is the product of a flawed legislative process that was designed to produce a very specific result. It was written without consulting all the parties that have a very real interest in its outcome.

Proponents of H.R. 856 will try to say that this is a bill about self-determination. They are misleading their colleagues. Instead, H.R. 856 is a one-sided bill that is biased in favor of Puerto Rican statehood. It was written by the party that supports statehood in a way that promotes statehood without consulting all the participants in this very, very sensitive process.

Under H.R. 856, Puerto Ricans will be given the choice between statehood, Commonwealth status or separate sovereignty. Yet the Commonwealth option does not even guarantee citizenship. Why was citizenship not statutorily back in 1990, when this House voted for this bill? I do not understand what happened since 1990.

The authors of this legislation have said that our citizenship is statutory. Simply put, this means that our citizenship can be taken away. Tell that to the widows of men who fought and died in the service of the Commonwealth. The citizenship of all Americans will be guaranteed. Mr. Chairman, tell that to my uncle, who fought valiantly in Korea for my colleagues and for me and for all Americans everywhere.

Furthermore, if the people of Puerto Rico were to choose Commonwealth status, the bill will require further plebiscites until either statehood or separate sovereignty wins. This double standard applied to Commonwealth shows how the deck is stacked in favor of statehood. Under those conditions, not even the most forceful defender of Commonwealth status will vote for it.

Many people forget that the original version of this bill did not even include a Commonwealth option. The party that supported statehood status had no input in the drafting of H.R. 856 and has been repeatedly shut out of the process. Amazingly, the president of the Commonwealth party learned about the bill’s definition of Commonwealth from a reporter.

In fact, the statehood party had to rewrite the Commonwealth definition after a poll in a major Puerto Rican newspaper showed that 75 percent of Puerto Ricans supported the inclusion of a fair and balanced Commonwealth option, which this bill lacks. Today, and I repeat, today in Puerto Rico a new poll was released that shows that 65 percent of the people of Puerto Rico reject this bill.

Mr. Chairman, it is an outrage to the democratic process that the definition for Commonwealth status was written by the very party that opposes it. It is like allowing Republicans to decide who could appear on a Democratic ballot.

Five years ago, the people of Puerto Rico had their say and chose to maintain their current status. This situation that the losers in that contest do not seem willing to accept is not acceptable. Fortunately, it reaffirmed the permanent United States citizenship of the people of Puerto Rico that is guaranteed under the Constitution. It acknowledged the bilateral nature of the U.S.-Puerto Rico relationship. It confirmed the autonomous status of Puerto Rico, which cannot only be changed by mutual consent.

The supporters of H.R. 856 are rejecting both and every one of these arguments when they say that citizenship can only be protected under statehood. Puerto Ricans are American citizens and we are proud to be American citizens. We do not need a plebiscite to prove that we are Americans any more than the people of Massachusetts or Virginia do.

This bill is not the result of a democratic process. It does not define all the choices to the satisfaction of the very people who will participate in the plebiscite. By defeating this bill we will be sending a message that we truly honor the idea of self-determination for the people of Puerto Rico.

Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to not be fooled by the arguments of the other side. A vote for H.R. 856 is a vote for statehood, not a vote for self-determination.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. McCOULUM).

Mr. McCOULUM. Mr. Chairman, we have embarked on one of the more significant debates this Congress will have in this 2-year period, maybe one of the more significant debates that we can have because we are trying to find a way to resolve concerns we all have about a part of the United States. Make no mistake about it, Puerto Rico is part of the United States.

In my State of Florida, which is right next door, it is a neighbor, it is a very
friendly neighbor, the people of Puerto Rico are citizens of the United States. There are no Customs checks or border delays between our country and theirs or my State and Puerto Rico.

Puerto Rico is a Commonwealth. It is a funny kind of status to most of us because we take it for granted. I do not think of it this way very often, at least I do not. I know that anybody who lives in Puerto Rico can come live at my State or Texas or Minnesota or New York, anywhere, any time they want to. That is fine.

Travel is free. People talk to each other all the time. There is a common bond that is there. And I think it is important for us as we debate this bill today to recognize the depth of this relationship and the importance of it and the tenderness of it.

The people of Puerto Rico have sacrificed many times over for the United States. Many men have given their lives in the service of this country from Puerto Rico over the years. We have been partners for years and years already.

I believe it is very, very important that we give the people of Puerto Rico, as this bill does, an opportunity to determine whether they wish to continue to consider in this Congress in the coming years regarding their future status.

It is not, as has been said before, that this legislation would determine whether or not Puerto Rico were to be a State or not. It is to give to the people of Puerto Rico a plebiscite, a vote, an opportunity to say yes to statehood, we would like you to consider that. Congress, or no, we would rather stay in the Commonwealth status, or possibly we would rather be independent.

If this is not resolved in favor of statehood or independence now, it provides a vehicle for there to be future opportunities for the people of Puerto Rico to speak out on this issue and to debate all of those things that have been discussed today that need to be debated. We need to be that voice.

Yes, if Puerto Rico becomes a State, there would be expectations on both sides. We will have to have a further hearing of that. That is what the plebiscite debate in Puerto Rico would be all about.

Certainly assimilation in that broad sense of the word has always been part of the American tradition. But we assimilate immigrants into this country, and Puerto Ricans are not immigrants. They are citizens. But we assimilate immigrants into this country, and ultimately, they make their citizens every day, every day. We have done it since the beginning of the nation's history.

We should not be concerned about the challenges involved in it. I do not think either side should be concerned. But we can be open about it. We should discuss it, and we should have a fair debate about it. But above all else, we need to be sure that the people of Puerto Rico get the chance to have that debate first.

So I urge my colleagues in the strongest sort of way to vote for this resolution today to give the Puerto Rican people that opportunity.

I would like to make a couple of comments about the legislation, without this in the past. We have heard people debate, what did Ronald Reagan or George Bush say about it? Well, when the Puerto Rican plebiscite was being discussed in November 1953, Ronald Reagan said,

Our friends, as you consider whether or not you wish to continue being a part of the United States, I want you to know one thing. The United States will welcome you with open arms.

We've always been a land of varied cultural backgrounds and origins, and we believe in our diversity. There is much Puerto Rico can contribute to our Nation, which is why I personally favor statehood. We hope you will join us.

Thank you and God bless you.

So I think it is important that we understand that the history has been of this Nation that many, many, many people have urged statehood on Puerto Rico in the past. But, again, that is not the purpose of the plebiscite. It is for the people of Puerto Rico to decide that.

We are also going to hear the question about English being discussed here. The governor from New York (Mr. Solomon), a moment ago, was discussing that question.

I favor English as the official language of the United States. I have been a co-sponsor of bills to do that for a long time. All 50 States, and if we get a 51st State, the 51st State, too, should abide by that. That should be our official language. We should put it in the statute of the books of this country to say that. But to attach it to this bill sends the wrong signal.

We are interested in seeing Puerto Rico treated as everybody else. If we actually have an official language statute ever become law, and I hope it does, it should apply to all of the territories, the Commonwealths, the possessions of the United States. It should be known that English is the official language of the United States. But I do not believe it should be adopted on this bill today.

I would urge the support for the substitute amendment that I am helping to sponsor later on.

The CHAIRMAN. Who rises as the designee for the gentleman of California (Mr. Miller)?

Mr. ROMERO-BARCÉLÓ. I do, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SOLOMÓN. Mr. Chairman, we have a Member that has to get back to a hearing, so I would take him out of order.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. Goodlatte).

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Chairman, I asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 856 because I have serious reservations about the constitutionality of this legislation which authorizes the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico to hold a referendum to determine Puerto Rico's political future and prescribes the wording of the ballot to be submitted to the voters.

Under the Act, the voters of Puerto Rico purportedly may choose to maintain the current Commonwealth status, break off from and become a new independent Nation. The ballot language mandated by the Act, however, severely mischaracterizes and denigrates Puerto Rico's current Commonwealth status.

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The ballot language mandated by the Act, however, severely mischaracterizes and denigrates Puerto Rico's current Commonwealth status. These repeated misstatements clearly appear to be designed to ensure that the statehood option prevails. Any doubt on this vanishes when the Act's prescribed ballot is read in conjunction with other provisions of the act.

For instance, the Act calls for a referendum every 10 years until the statehood option prevails. And the legislative history, the committee report is openly hostile to the current Commonwealth status. Thus, a referendum using the prescribed ballot would deny the people of Puerto Rico an informed and accurate choice concerning their future political status and would reveal nothing about the true sentiments of the people of Puerto Rico on this important question.

The most serious misstatements contained in the Act relate to its treatment of the rights enjoyed by the people of Puerto Rico under Commonwealth status. The ballot contained in H.R. 856 states that Congress may determine the rights under the United States Constitution that are guaranteed to the people of Puerto Rico. This statement is wrong.

The Act's description of the citizenship rights of the people of Puerto Rico is simply flawed. The people of Puerto Rico are merely statutory citizens and implies that their citizenship may be revoked by Congress. The people of Puerto Rico, however, right now are United States citizens within the meaning of the 14th Amendment of the United States Constitution.

The ballot language mandated by H.R. 856 also mischaracterizes Puerto Rico's current political status. The Act describes Puerto Rico as an unincorporated territory of the United States. Beyond the pejorative connotations associated with this term, which was used to describe the United States' colonial possessions, this description is inappropriate because the United States Supreme Court has held that Puerto Rico, like a State, is an autonomous political entity sovereign over matters not ruled by the Constitution.

But these falsehoods are to be right on the ballot, mischaracterizing the Commonwealth's status, when Puerto Ricans vote.

The purpose of the proposed referendum is to learn the sentiments of the
people of Puerto Rico. In light of the fundamental inaccuracies, any referendum using the prescribed ballot could not be held, nor as an honest reflection of the sentiments of the people of Puerto Rico. Accordingly, the act as currently formulated necessarily fails to accomplish its very purpose.

Equally important, these fundamental inaccuracies in the ballot’s description of the commonwealth status option effectively deny the people of Puerto Rico their constitutional right to exercise the franchise in a meaningful way. As the proponents of Puerto Rican statehood well understand, the commonwealth option described in the ballot will attract no significant support among Puerto Rico’s voters, including voters who are otherwise ardent advocates of continuing Puerto Rico’s commonwealth status.

Thus, the referendum contained in the bill vandalizes the voting rights of the people of Puerto Rico by presenting them with a factually inaccurate choice, a false choice as to their political status. In short, H.R. 856 presents the people of Puerto Rico with a ballot that is stacked in favor of the statehood option. From the very start, the ballot is rigged. The ballot language mandated by the act is designed to ensure this result regardless of the true sentiments of the people of Puerto Rico.

Such a palpably deficient ballot raises serious constitutional issues. Moreover, as a matter of policy, it certainly cannot be justified as an effort to give Puerto Ricans meaningful self-determination. Mr. Chairman, I oppose this legislation and I ask others to do so as well.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 30 seconds to respond to the gentleman’s comments. I want everybody to understand one thing. As chairman of this committee, I did this job right.

The gentleman talks about constitutionality. He does not know the Constitution. He is not a constitutional lawyer. Everything in this bill is constitutional. I did this job correctly as chairman. To have someone say it is not constitutional or allude it is unconstitutional when it has been thoroughly reviewed by those that know the Constitution, I think is inappropriate.

Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. KENNEDY).

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island. Mr. Chairman, let me just underscore this. Let us go over it and over it and over it again. If Members do not like the language of this bill, if they do not like the definition of commonwealth in this bill, they do not like commonwealth. If Members find that the language that we use to describe commonwealth is repugnant—

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume. Let me explain to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. KENNEDY) why we are deciding this bill. We are deciding this bill because, unlike the description that the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ) has given, we did not welcome the United States to Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico was invaded by the United States during the Spanish-American Civil War. Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island. No argument there. No argument there.

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Chairman, I rise to strongly oppose H.R. 856 because this is the exact opposite of what its supporters pretend it to be. H.R. 856 is supposed to be a bill for self-determination, not for statehood, which my friend from Rhode Island has every ability, he is for statehood. That is what he is for statehood and I was willing to gamble everything for statehood, I would be for this bill because this is a guarantee that statehood is going to win the plebiscite. I can understand that. Let us be clear.

Now I want to be clear about my position. Also, Mr. Chairman, I am for independence for Puerto Rico. I am for independence for Puerto Rico. There was a time that the stateholders and the commonwealthers and the whole system would jail people like me for being for independence for Puerto Rico. As they jailed the people of your former fatherland, Ireland, for wishing the independence and the sovereignty of that nation.

I would suggest to everybody what we can oppose, and it is wrong. Supporters of this bill have approached their colleagues on both sides of the aisle, Mr. Chairman, and told them that the passage of this bill only means that Congress authorizes Congress to express their preference for political status among 3 options.

Some supporters of the bill have played a very cynical game with some of my Democrats, "Vote for this bill, and you will have 6 new Democratic Members of the House and 2 new Democratic Senators. That is why we should vote for the bill." That is being and that should be said here, because that is part of the debate and the conversation, and we should fully explain to the people of Puerto Rico how it is that this Congress is arriving at a decision to make their self-determination.

At the same time, some of the very same people have circulated a memorandum full of very strange statistics. Mr. Chairman, beware of strange numbers for they could be telling stranger lies. It is a memorandum entitled "Puerto Rico, Republican Territory," in which some magician tries to convince the uninformed that Puerto Rico will produce 6 Republican Congressmen and 2 Republican Senators.
It sounds strange to me. The gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ), a Puerto Rican; the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. GUTIERREZ), of Spanish descent; the gentleman from New York (Mr. SERRANO); and even the Resident Commissioner has decided to sit on our side of the aisle, the main component of this bill, and he is in the Democratic Caucus. Let us not play games with one side or the other getting some advantage over this, because that is not respectful. Mr. Chairman, this is a strange manner in which to conduct a serious debate on the future of a whole people.

Self-determination is a serious matter. The sacred right of self-determination has to be exercised in a totally democratic, open and above-board fashion. The true sovereignty of any nation, and Puerto Rico is indeed a nation, rests with its people. I think that the Members of this Congress should understand the people of Puerto Rico believe, because this is something that is going to affect them.

They did a poll in Puerto Rico, El Nuevo Dia, that is The New Day, the largest paper of circulation in Puerto Rico; by the way, owned by a statehood. They asked the people. On the nationality question, 63 percent of the people see themselves as Puerto Rican and not American, 65 percent of the people in Puerto Rico; 62 percent of the people consider their Nation to be Puerto Rico and not the United States.

But at the same time, 75 percent consider their American citizenship to be very important. Strange, you say, that sounds like a contradiction. It is the contradiction of colonialism, obviously. But it is also what the authors of this understand very well. On the one hand, they tell you, Puerto Rico is not a nation, it is just a group of people. It is this little island that sits out there somewhere in the Caribbean.

But let me tell everybody in this room, the people of Puerto Rico which you declare today their own nation, consider themselves as a Nation. They consider to have a nationality, that nationality being Puerto Rican. You should understand that you should understand that very, very clearly.

At the same time they want to keep their American citizenship. I think that that is very clear. Just March 4, they asked the people of Puerto Rico what they think about the Young bill. They asked the people of Puerto Rico. They said 35 percent reject the Young bill, 33 percent support the Young bill, and another third do not have an opinion on the Young bill. It says if Puerto Ricans within the great diaspora of Puerto Rico, that is Puerto Ricans in the United States, do not get to vote on this, over half of them say we should reject the Young bill.

That is the people of Puerto Rico. But let me go further, Mr. Chairman, because I think it is very, very, very important that we understand what is going on here.

Look, there is a value I hold even dearer than my wish for the independence of Puerto Rico, and that is the respect that I have for the real aspirations of the Puerto Rican people. That is their inalienable right of the people of Puerto Rico to their self-determination.

That is precisely why I oppose this bill so strongly. H.R. 856 is exactly the opposite. It is a bill, read it, it is a bill that is cleverly designed to obtain an artificial majority for statehood for Puerto Rico and to lead Congress down an irreversible path, first through the incorporation of Puerto Rico, and then to the admission of Puerto Rico as the 51st State of this great union. In fact, some opponents of H.R. 856 call this a trap.

Now, Congress makes an offer of statehood to the people of Puerto Rico. The only requirement, the only requirement, is that a simple majority vote in favor of statehood. But the bill is so small in statehood that I am going to read a quote, and, please, listen to this quote: The Resident Commissioner, CARLOS ROMERO-BAÑELO, said, "Victory for statehood is guaranteed because the definition of "commonwealth" does not include fiscal autonomy and does not include U.S. citizenship, a guarantee. The definition of Commonwealth in this bill is that of a territory. We just left the word "territory" out." Quote-end quote of the Resident Commissioner of Puerto Rico here.

So I am not saying this bill is stacked in favor of statehood; the very proponent, the Resident Commissioner of Puerto Rico, has stated this publicly, and that is wrong, to play politics, partisan politics.

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG). I want to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. MILLER), because both gentlemen are of descent with me. When I asked to participate in their hearings, they both know that they had to override objections of certain Members of this Congress, but they did.

The gentleman from California (Mr. MILLER) and the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) have always listened to me, have always come and said, "Luis, what do you think? Let us talk about this."

I know that the gentleman from California (Mr. MILLER) tried to fix this. I know he did. He did make every attempt to fix this, and I know that he went to everybody and tried to bring people together. He testified so yesterday, and I know it to be a fact. Unfortunately, it was not able to be done. It was not able to be done. This has to be a process of consensus, of building people together.

Mr. Chairman, do you know something? This is why I did not yield, because when I asked for the opportunity to speak about this issue, I was obstructed to time and time again. I will respect the wishes of those who wish to speak to this issue that have respected the wishes of the people of Puerto Rico and all Members of this House, but I do not expect treatment from me which others have disregarded for others.

Once the people of Puerto Rico vote for statehood under this rather unfair game plan, the Commonwealth Party has said it cannot participate in the plebiscite. That is going to be a problem. You have got about 48 percent of the people who say if you do it this way, we are not going to participate in this thing.

Now, I am going to make one last statement and then reserve the balance of my time. Look, this is serious. This is serious. If you approve this Young bill, do you know what you have said? You have said that 3.8 million Puerto Ricans do not have the protection of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, not the Constitution of the United States. You have said that their American citizenship is not guaranteed.

I will tell you what people will say. They will never take it away. This Congress would never take an action.

Do you know something? My dad did not get to see me until I was a year old, I would say to the gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON), because when he was called to duty, he served. He served, Mr. Chairman.

How can we say that my dad and tens of thousands of other Puerto Ricans who have served this Nation, right, that their citizenship is statutory, can be taken away from them at whim of Congress? I do not believe that.

As a matter of fact, in the 1950 Nationality Act, this Congress approved something that says the 50 states and Puerto Rico, anyone born there, is protected by the 14th Amendment and are citizens of this country. That is what the 1950 Nationality Act says.

So do not come back here and say that Commonwealth is statutory citizenship, because, you know what? I want Puerto Rico to be a free and independent nation, and in that I disagree with my colleague, the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. ROMERO-BAÑELO). The gentleman wants to be assimilated and a state, but I think it is important, it is important, that the people of Puerto Rico have the definitions that they can have.

Lastly, in 1993, when the Resident Commissioner's party was in power in Puerto Rico, the Statehood Party, they controlled the two houses, the House and the Senate, and they controlled the government. They had a plebiscite in Puerto Rico.

Why, when they controlled all the rules in Puerto Rico, was the Commonwealth status not just a territory? Why was not the citizenship not statutory when that came up?

Why is it? As a matter of fact, in 1990 we unanimously accepted some definition here, 1990, and none of these considerations. Do you want to know why? Because they want to stack the cards.
March 4, 1998

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—HOUSE

H781

If the people of Puerto Rico want statehood, I will be the first one to congratulate and support statehood for Puerto Rico, but it has got to be a fair process. People can laugh and people can chide, because they do not understand the seriousness of this matter. This is about the 14th Amendment. This is about my dad, this is about my wife, Soraida, born in Moca, Puerto Rico. I am not going to go back to her tomorrow and say her citizenship is any less than mine. She was born a citizen of this country, and I am going to protect her right. It is not statutory, it is protected.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT), the minority leader.

Mr. GEPHARDT. Mr. Chairman, there is no right more fundamental to our democracy than the right of people to decide their political future. American democracy was conceived in the great struggle of the Revolutionary War, and it originated out of a fight for self-determination by the American colonists to be able to control their own affairs.

We have long asserted this right, not only for Americans, but for people all over the world. We have insisted that this is a universal human right that every human being should enjoy. So certainly it should and must be a fundamental right for people living under the American flag as American citizens. Yet almost 4 million American citizens, the people of Puerto Rico, have not enjoyed this right.

We have the opportunity to ensure today that American citizens who have sacrificed their loved ones in our wars, working for a country on the world stage, and who obey our laws, should have a say in their political future. The people of Puerto Rico deserve an opportunity to decide on their future political status, and this bill simply gives them that opportunity. The choice should be theirs, and this Congress should respect that outcome.

This is a simple issue of basic human rights. The bill should easily become law. But today there are many in this Congress who want to hold this legislation hostage to an extreme agenda.

The Solomon English-only legislation, which House Republicans pushed through 2 years ago, but which all died in the Senate and which has laid dormant ever since, would impose English-only restrictions that are unnecessary and divisive. While immigrants from all ethnic groups understand the importance and the necessity of learning English, the Solomon amendment does nothing to make this happen any quicker or easier.

The fact that some have raised this issue today is a slap in the face to the people of Puerto Rico, who lost America and love their heritage. Instead of enforcing political rights, this amendment would undermine them by weakening the Voting Rights Act and ending bilingual access. Instead of expanding access to government, the Solomon amendment adds layers of confusion to the understanding of our Constitution and the meaning of the 14th Amendment.

Finally, it is time to get on with the business at hand. It is time to extend the same rights to the people of Puerto Rico that millions of other people around the world take for granted. Puerto Rico has been a member of our American family for over 100 years. The people of Puerto Rico have waited long enough to finally decide their own destiny. More than a half decade ago Franklin Roosevelt said this to Congress. He said, "Freedom means the supremacy of human rights everywhere." Our support, he said, goes to those who struggle to gain those rights or keep them.

Mr. Chairman, we have a magnificent opportunity today, a bipartisan opportunity, an opportunity to extend the magic and the understanding of freedom and human rights and self-determination to the almost 4 million citizens of the United States, the people of Puerto Rico. Vote "yes" on the Solomon amendment, vote for the bipartisan substitute, and vote for this legislation for the meaning of America to be brought to the people of Puerto Rico.

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Guam (Mr. UNDERWOOD).

Mr. UNDERWOOD of Alaska. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Guam.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Guam (Mr. UNDERWOOD) is recognized for 2½ minutes.

Mr. UNDERWOOD of Alaska. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. UNDERWOOD. I yield to the gentleman from Alaska.

Mr. UNDERWOOD of Alaska. Mr. Chairman, I would like to apologize to the gentleman. In my passionate plea for Puerto Rico, I forgot the great Territory of Guam working very closely. I slurred my words. So I do apologize to the gentleman.

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Chairman, reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman for entering that into the RECORD.

Mr. Chairman, I stand in strong support of H.R. 856 and urge my colleagues to vote for this very important legislation. I applaud the work of the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG), the gentleman from California (Mr. MILLER), and my fellow statutory citizen, the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ).

H.R. 856 is significant because it establishes Federal responsibility in a process of self-determination for the people of Puerto Rico that would lead to decolonization. The Treaty of Paris, which ceded Puerto Rico and Guam to the U.S. in 1898, clearly gave the responsibility to this body for determining the political status of the inhabitants of these territories. Until this body does this, these areas will continue to remain colonies, 100 years since the end of the Spanish-American War. Until we do this, there will not be clarity in the ultimate political status of these unincorporated territories.
around the world. It is difficult because we need to determine what group, what size, how many do you need for self-de
termination? Is it needed for an identifiable, geographic area? If so, how large? It is an issue that we deal
with in Yugoslavia.
always, always the United States is on the side of those who as
pire to make their own decisions. On this floor we have heard some very ar
ticulate expressions on both sides of this issue, from people who know the
politics of Puerto Rico far more than I. But I know that those articulate peo
ple will debate this issue vigorously, and it will be the people of Puerto Rico
who make this decision, as it should be. But it is important that this Con
gress express at home, within our own Nation, that same conviction on behalf
of self-determination that we express around the world.
I would hope that we would over
whelmingly, in a bipartisan way, pass
this legislation. I want to commend the
gentleman from Alaska (Mr. Young) for
this issue, and the gentleman from California (Mr. Mill
er), and indeed, the delegate from Puerto Rico, and all of those who par
ticipate in this debate as a whole.
Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ. Mr. Chair
man, I yield 2 minutes to the gen
tleman from Maryland (Mr. Wynn).
Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from Puerto Rico for
yielding me this time.
Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of the
bill before us today. I rise in opposition
to the Solomon amendment. I rise in
support of the bipartisan substitute.
Mr. Chairman, the essence of the bill
before us today is to allow the people of Puerto Rico to make the decisions
about their own destiny, what we like to refer to as self-determination.

Now, we have talked long and often hard about the
importance of self-determination in all parts of the world: in Russia, in Cuba,
and in Africa. It is now time, I think, to talk about self-determination for one of our
nearest neighbors.

This is not that complicated. That is the
case of democratic elections. Members have heard here today that
there are lots of points of view about this issue within Puerto Rico. Those
differences can be resolved by demo
cratic elections. That is what we are
here today to do, not to impose any particular form of government, be it
statehood, independence, or Common
wealth status, but rather, to let the
people, the people themselves decide
what form of government they believe is most desirable.

The point is that today Puerto Ricans can fight in our wars but cannot
elect the Commander in Chief. They can contribute to Social Security, and
they do, but they cannot receive Social Security benefits. We need to change
to that situation, and I believe our time-honored democratic processes to do that.

Mr. Chairman, let me talk for a mo
ment about this notion embodied in
the Solomon amendment of English
only. We all recognize that English
is the common language of our country.
It is the dominant language of our
country. But was it that who decided that to be an American you had to speak
the language of the British Isles?
I am not sure that this is the case.

We were a country founded on tol
erance, multiculturalism. It seems to me
we can make room for those people who speak other languages. We left the
Old World to create the New World for
precisely this reason, to leave the
conformities and traditions of the Old
World behind. I think it is time we
move forward to true multiculturalism
and accept the fact that we do not have
to have an ordered language in our so
ciety. I urge the adoption of the bill be
tore us.

Mr. Young of Alaska. Mr. Chair
man, I yield 3 minutes to the gen
tleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. Bonilla).

(Mr. Bonilla asked and was given permission to revise and extend his re
marks.)

Mr. Bonilla. Mr. Chairman, the de
bate are we hearing today reminds me
of the demagoguery we heard back
when the new majority took over in January of 1985. We tried to do some
things that were right for the country, and we were demagogued as those who
were trying to end the school lunch
program, as those who were trying to
eliminate Medicare, and as those who
were trying to hurt the environment.
We all knew that was not true, but yet
the demagoguery continued.

The demagoguery continues today by
those who are opposed to this bill, who
say that it is going to somehow create
a State, a new State, instantly. That is
false. That is demagoguery.

There is also demagoguery about how
this bill might be promoting bilingual
ism. That is not true, but none
theless the arguments continue. They
say this is anti-Commonwealth. That is
also not true. The demagogues know it
and they continue these argu
ments, in spite of the truth and sub
stance of what we are trying to accom
plish here today.

For those who think somehow that this is going to end the official lan
guage of the world, it is also a case of
demagoguery. English is the official
language of the world. One hundred
fifty-seven of 188 airlines have English
as their official language. There are
5,000 newspapers printed in English in the
country of India. Six members of the
European Free Trade Association all
conduct their business in English, de
spite the fact that none of the six
members are from English-speaking
nations. Three hundred thousand Chi
nese speak English in their own coun
try. Forty-four countries have English
as their official language.

The size of the English language, the
number of words in the English lan
guage, is told if we count the
insects, and entomologists say there are a million known insects that
could also become words, if we added
them to our language, you could make 2 million words that would be part of
the English language, compared to the other languages, like German, about
184,000, and French, that has about 100,000 words.

For those fear-mongers who think we need some kind of amendment on
this bill to help us promote English, English is already the official language
of the world. We do not need an amend
ment to tell us that. It is going to con
inue to be the official language of the
world. We should support H.R. 856, and
all proudly, because of what it stands for,
and not be fear-mongering about
what it might do to the great language
of English that is used worldwide.

I say to my friends, let us step the
demagoguery, let us stop the fear
mongering that we have injected into
this debate. Lighten up and support
H.R. 856.

Mr. Romero-Barceló. Mr. Chair
man, I yield 1½ minutes to the gen
tleman from Florida (Mr. Deutch).

Mr. Deutch. Mr. Chairman, I thank the
gentleman for yielding time to me.

Mr. Chairman, this is truly a historic
debate in this Congress. This is my
sixth year as a Member of this Con
gress. It is the first time we are really
talking about an issue about the
fundamental union of our States. That is
really what we are talking about.

In this Chamber over the last 100
years, and before that in the other Chamber just down the hall for 100
years before that, or just about, this is the kind of debates that went on.
Unless it was one of the first original 13 colonies, each State went through
a process. There were different debates and different things that went through
that process. But that is where we are now.

I think part of the acknowledgment of this bill is something that obviously is
controversial, but I think the fact, and people can debate it, is that the
status of Commonwealth is out of equilibrium. In a sense, the bill ac
knowledges that. It can continue, but it cannot continue indefinitely. The
process of the legislation specifically puts that into statute, and that is why
it is critical that this legislation pass.

I would mention that the amendment
by the gentleman from New York (Mr.
Solomon), I think we should acknowl
dge what the amendment offered by
the gentleman from New York (Mr.
Solomon) attempts to do. We need to be
direct about this.

This amendment is really not ger
mate to this bill. It is an issue that in
and of itself can be discussed and de
bated, but to turn English into the offi
cial language of the United States is
not about this bill. It does not deserve
to be on this bill, and it is inappropr
ately on this bill. I think we have to
understand the reason it is on this bill is
to help us.

However anyone in this Chamber feels about that particular issue, and I
know it is a passionate issue, I urge the
March 4, 1998

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—HOUSE

H783

defeat of the Solomon amendment and the support of the substitute offered by the late Mr. Young from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) and the gentleman from California (Mr. MILLER) and others to assure that this historic opportunity is not wasted.

Mr. Chairman, H.R. 855 will enable Congress to administer and determine the status of Puerto Rico in the same manner this institution has administered and determined the status of other territories of the United States.

For too long Puerto Rico has been diverted from the historical process of decolonization. Because local self-government was established under P.L. 81-660 in 1952, Congress has pretended that Puerto Rico could be administered permanently as a territory with internal constitutional self-government. However, the local constitution did not create a separate nation to be a member of the commonwealth in Puerto Rico argues. Puerto Rican born Americans are still disenfranchised in the federal political system which is supreme in the territory and also in the United States.

Puerto Rico is not a "free associated state" in the U.S. constitutional sense or under international law as recognized by the United States. Puerto Rico remains a colony that is not my choice of words, that is the term used by the McKinley Administration to describe Puerto Rico. It is also the term used by the former chief justice of the Puerto Rico Supreme Court who was one of the architects of the commonwealth constitution.

Because H.R. 855 will define the real and true options that the Congress and the people in Puerto Rico have to resolve the status question, I strongly support this bill. Informing the voters in the territory of the real definition of commonwealth, statehood and separate sovereignty including free association is necessary because of the misleading adoption in 1952 of words for "pro-commonwealth" by the pro-commonwealth party to describe the current commonwealth status. No wonder people are confused!

Only when people understand the real options can there be informed self-determination, and only when there has been informed self-determination can Congress decide what status is in the national interest. Then the status of Puerto Rico can be resolved if there is agreement on the terms for status change. If not the status quo continues, but the process to decolonize Puerto Rico will exist. Then Puerto Rico's colonial status will continue on as long as the people of Puerto Rico are unable to choose between statushood and independence as they choose in Congress.

To promote a better understanding of the nature of free association, I would like to share the following background paper on free association written by the U.S. Ambassador who negotiated free association treaties for President Reagan. The U.S. has a free association relationship with three Pacific island nations, and that status is very different from the free association espoused by the so-called "autonomists in Puerto Rico"—who want to be a separate sovereign nation but also keep U.S. national and citizenship.

That "have it both ways" approach to free association was attempted in the case of the Micronesia/Navajo Free Association, but the State Department, Justice Department and Congress rejected that model as unconstitutional and unwise. It was an attempt to "perfect" the legal theory of the Puerto Rican constitution but fail the commonwealth as a form of permanent self-govern, a nation-with-in-a-nation concept that has always failed and always will fail because the U.S. constitution is too much like a Quebec-like problem in our Federal system.

Ambassador Zeder's explanation of free association as an option for Puerto Rico makes the ground rules for this form of separate sovereignty very clear and easy to understand. I include his statement for the RECORD:

The statement referred to is as follows:

"Understanding Free Association as a Form of Separate Sovereignty and Political Independence in the Case of Decolonization of Puerto Rico" (By Ambassador Fred M. Zeder, II)

Consistent with relevant resolutions of the U.N. General Assembly, Puerto Rico's options for full status are: Independence (Example: Philippines); Free Association (Example: Republic of the Marshall Islands); Commonwealth (Hawaii, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands). The latter is essentially a two-party agreement among two independent nations who do not seek full integration but rather seek to maintain close political, economic and security relations. By 1992, after separate sovereignty is achieved, this could be accomplished by treaty between the two independent nations. The U.S. Constitution of 1789 is a form of separate sovereignty that usually arises from the relationship between a colonial power and a people formerly in a colonial status who at least temporarily want close ties with the former colonial power for so long as both parties agree to the arrangement.

Free association is recognized as a distinct form of separate sovereignty, even though legally it also is consistent with independence. Specifically, free association is consistent with independence because, as explained below, the special and close bilateral relationship created by a free association treaty or pact can be terminated in favor of conventional independence at any time by either party.

In addition, the U.S. and the international community have recognized that a separate nation can be a party to a bilateral pact of free association and cooperate in the international conventions at the same time. For example, the Republic of the Marshall Islands is party to both the Compact of Free Association with the United States, but has been admitted to the United Nations as an independent nation.

Thus, the international practice regarding free association actually is best understood as a method of facilitating the decolonization process leading to simple and absolute independence. Essentially, it allows new nations not prepared economically, socially or strategically for emergence into convention independence to achieve separate nationhood in cooperation with the former colonial power or another existing nation.

Under international law and practice including the relevant U.N. resolutions and ex-fetation of U.S. sovereignty the relationship between Congress and the U.S. Constitution must be terminable at will by either party in order to establish that the relationship is consistent with separate sovereignty and the right of self-determination, as recognized. This international standard, also recognized by the U.S., is based on the requirement that free association agreements become merely a new form of internationally accepted colonialism.
Specifically, free association is not intended to create a new form of territorial status or quasi-sovereignty. It is not a "nation-within-a-nation" relationship or a form of irrevocable permanent union, but is, again, a sovereign-to-sovereign treaty-based relationship which is either of limited duration or terminable at will by either party acting unilaterally.

In either case, both parties have a sovereign right to terminate the relationship at any time by the free association treaty which provides for the terms and measures which will apply in the event of unilateral termination of the treaty. Either party to do so can so not be conditioned or encumbered in such a manner that the exercise of the right to terminate a relationship effectively is impaired or precluded.

For that reason, the territory and population of Puerto Rico must be within the sovereignty, nationality and citizenship of that nation, and the elements and mechanics of a treaty must be defined consistent with that requirement. Separate and distinct sovereignty and nationality must be established at the time of decolonization and preserved under the relationship or the ability of either party to terminate will be impaired.

Thus, the major power may grant to people of the free associated nation special rights without harmonizing with the major power's own citizenship classifications, such as open immigration and residence rights. However, such arrangements are subject to the same terminology as the overall relationship, and thus may be either for a limited duration or subject to unilateral termination by either party at any time.

Consequently, there can be no permanent dual nationality because this would be inconsistent with the preservation of the underlying separate sovereignty. Any such special rights or classifications of the major power extended to the people of a free associated nation must be subject to unilateral termination as well.

Both during and after any period of free association, the status of each of the two nations will owe their allegiance to and have the separate nationality of their own country. Any attempt to deviate from these norms of international law and practice would undermine the sovereignty of both nations and its ultimate ability to determine the future of self-determination which must be preserved to ensure the relationship is based on consent rather than coercion.

In summary, the United States recognizes each of the three U.N. accepted status options for Puerto Rico to achieve full self-government. One of those options, integration, is within U.S. sovereignty and the federal political union, the other two, independence and free association, exist without U.S. sovereignty, nationality and citizenship.

Obvious implementation of the free association treaty would not unilaterally establish a new status. This is so not only because of U.S. sovereignty and the authority of Congress under the territorial clause, but also because Puerto Rico seeks the agreement of the U.S. to the terms under which any of these options would be implemented. This means Congress must agree to the terms under which a new status is defined and implemented.

There is no right on the part of Puerto Rico unilaterally to define its relationship with the United States. Nor would it be consistent with U.S. commitments to respect the right of self-determination for non-self-governing people under U.S. administration to dispose of the territory of Puerto Rico in a manner which does not take into account the freely expressed wishes of the residents.

Thus, as the two parties which must define and carry out a future relationship based on consent and the right of self-determination which each must exercise, Congress, on behalf of the United States, and the people of Puerto Rico have a constitutional process, must decide whether decolonization will be completed through completion of the process for integration into union or separation and nationality apart from the U.S. for Puerto Rico.

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY).

Mr. KENNEDY of Massachusetts. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

Mr. Chairman, I have been impressed in this debate thus far about the determination of us as Members of Congress to provide for real self-determination for the great people of Puerto Rico. I think it is fundamentally important to the future of the Puerto Rican people to recognize that as Americans, when we talk about the most important issue, perhaps, that we can determine in this Chamber, as we do not and when we define as American citizens, that we are clearly saying to the Puerto Rican people that they are welcome as not only citizens of this country, but they are in fact welcome as a State.

But, and I mean a serious but, for anyone who has taken the time to visit Puerto Rico, to not just visit there in the sense of getting a nice suntan, but going there and talking with the Puerto Rican people and gaining a better understanding of their own identification, the truth of the matter is there are millions of Puerto Ricans that consider themselves to be Puerto Ricans, Puerto Rican first.

American citizens, yes. They are willing to fight and die for this country. But I do not consider myself a Massachusetts citizen. And when an American, I consider myself to be an American.

I think that we as American citizens have the freedom to fundamentally be wide enough in the breadth of our knowledge and our sense of other human beings to allow them their own self-identification. That means that we ought to respect those that believe in the Commonwealth party.

I have a great many friends that are Commonwealthers and statehooders. But I have great respect for the Commonwealth party, and I believe that this bill unfairly slants the way we define Commonwealth by bringing up issues as to whether or not this means that Puerto Rican people are going to be forever faced with determinations by this body as to whether or not we are going to consider them to be citizens, whether or not we are going to tax them, a whole series of questions that effectively places one group of Puerto Ricans that over and over again has stood up for equality status versus statehood.

If the people of Puerto Rico claim and vote for statehood, I would be the first in this Chamber to vote with them and stand with them in the voice they have here in the Congress of the United States. But if in fact they choose Commonwealth status, then let us respect that as well, and let us have this an end-of-the-debate that does not slight one side or the other, but gives this important issue the respect it is due.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN), the honorable chairman of the Committee on International Relations.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON) for yielding me this time.

Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of H.R. 856, the United States-Puerto Rico Political Status Act, allowing Puerto Ricans to determine their future political status.

This bill would give the U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico the right to self-determination. I believe every U.S. citizen should be afforded that opportunity.

The right to self-determination is a foundation of our freedoms. By voting against this bill, we would be sending a message that we don't give other people the opportunity and privilege of voting that we enjoy.

Puerto Ricans have served and died in wars defending democracy for years, yet they cannot elect a President or participate in the legislative process. This is unjust and un-American. Voting for H.R. 856 will enshrine 3.5 million Hispanics who currently reside in Puerto Rico with the power of an educated vote on self-determination.

Furthermore, voting for H.R. 856 does not commit the United States to Puerto Rico, but merely establishes a referendum that sets the terms and clarifies the choices to allow Puerto Ricans to determine their future political status. With regard to the Commonwealth, Puerto Rico recognized English as an official language of the local government in 1902—longer than any other American domain. English is the language of the local and federal governments, courts, and businesses, and is also in the curriculum of all the schools on the island of Puerto Rico.

As chairman of the International Relations Committee, I recognize the importance of supporting democratic principles abroad. Supporting H.R. 856 were enormously helpful to strengthen U.S. relations with Latin American nations. It is equally important to support these democratic standards here in America, by voting for a non-binding referendum. For these reasons, I urge my colleagues to join in voting for H.R. 856, and grant Puerto Ricans the right to self-determination.

Mr. ROMERO-BARCEL0. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON).
Ms. NORTON. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. ROMERO-BARCÉLÓ) for yielding me this time.

Mr. Chairman, a matter of self-determination should be a matter that brings unanimous consent of the body, and it pains me to see divisions and splits. If the bill is imperfect, there are many hurdles yet to go: additional island votes and additional congressional votes provided by the bill. Also, the vote to be taken in Puerto Rico is non-binding. Above all, we cannot get ahead of the Puerto Rican people. In 1963, we in the District of Columbia had a historic vote on statehood. That is not what this vote is about. It is about allowing the Puerto Rican people to decide what affiliation they themselves desire. This is what we say we want people around the world to decide.

I represent half a million people in the District of Columbia who identify with the Puerto Ricans because we also are treated as less than full Americans, living here right under the noses of the Congress of the United States. We know it is like to fight and die in wars while suffering denial of conscripted rights.

The District has even fewer rights than Puerto Ricans because we do not have the right to self-government. We in the District feel a deep kinship which demands for self-determination on the whole, and especially self-determination among our own in Puerto Rico.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. TAYLOR).

Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi. Mr. Chairman, as we debate this, there are 20,000 Puerto Ricans serving in the Armed Forces of the United States. In this century, 200,000 have taken the pledge to defend our country. As recently as the Vietnam war, almost as many Puerto Ricans as Mississippians gave their lives for our country. And as recently as the Gulf War, when American casualties were miraculously low, four Puerto Ricans died for the United States of America.

Mr. Chairman, if that is not the price to pay for the privilege of deciding whether or not they want to be a State, then what? They have paid the price. They deserve the right to make that decision.

Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to please vote in favor of this bill.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. HORN), one of the Members that would probably be considered the least partisan of all on both sides of the aisle.

(Mr. HORN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HORN. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. SCOTT) and the Chairman of the Committee on Rules, for yielding me this time.

Mr. Chairman, I feel very strongly in support of the amendment offered by the gentleman from New York. I will support it. But I will also vote against this bill.

We have a wonderful Resident Commissioner here from Puerto Rico. There is excellent representation from Guam, the District of Columbia, Virgin Islands, American Samoa, and the District of Columbia. But I think this is just wrong public policy. We should not be raising false expectations of any group. I think the one way to do it is to say right now, let us not kid ourselves, this is not a good idea.

Puerto Rico is the result of the Spanish-American War. It has a wonderful people. What the gentleman from Mississippi said is absolutely correct. Many of them have given their lives for our country. There are also wonderful people in Guam, Saipan, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa, and the District of Columbia.

Mr. Chairman, I say to the gentleman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) that we can solve the District’s problem very easily and do what Congressmen in Nineteenth Century when it ceded back to Virginia that part of the District of Columbia which had been carved out of Virginia. Give it back to Virginia, and the District would have full representation.

But Puerto Rico should never have been a territory. Cuba was never a territory. Cuba has been independent. Granted, the Marines occupied them and a number of other countries from time to time. But we should have left Cuba independent. We did. We should have left Puerto Rico independent. We did not. And we need not continue that error forever.

We kept our promise to the Philippines that they would be independent in 1946. There is many a Filipino life of the Philippine Scouts, Philippine Army, that helped the United States in the sad, sad days of 1941 when the Japanese Empire extended its military and naval forces southward in Asia.

Many of the Cambodian refugees in my City of Long Beach have talked to me and asked if Cambodia could become a State. Now, that would be a wonderful idea. They are wonderful people. No, they are not just the people except the Jews, the Kurds, the Armenians, and a few others have had to go through the hell that the people of Cambodia have gone through. One million were killed by Pol Pot. But as I have told them, it does not make sense to them to be a State of the United States. We have to draw the line.

And for those who have small States and want the second representative, just forget about it if the representatives come in from anywhere, Puerto Rico or any other territory that seeks statehood. The niceness of the people and their heroism, we should honor. But we should not be getting ourselves entangled in situations that will be another Quebec, no matter how much we teach them the English language. And, frankly, we have to say “no” from the beginning. Let us not make a major mistake. Vote "yes" for the Solomon amendment and "no" on the passage of this bill.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Illinois (Mr. GUTIERREZ) has 1 minute remaining; the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. ROMERO-BARCÉLÓ) has 3 1/2 minutes remaining; the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) has 1 minute remaining; and the gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON) has one-half minute remaining.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Chairman, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman will state it.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Chairman, I believe under the procedures of the House that it would be appropriate at this time for the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. GUTIERREZ) to use up his time, then the gentleman from Puerto Rico, then myself, and then reserving the closing for the chairman of the committee. Would that not be in order? I would suggest it, at any rate.

The CHAIRMAN. We will recognize Members to close debate in reverse of the order in which the Members opened. Therefore, the Chair will recognize Members to close debate as follows: The gentleman from Illinois (Mr. GUTIERREZ), the gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON), the gentleman from California (Mr. MILLER), and the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG).

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Chairman, I think the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. TAYLOR) was very eloquent when he spoke about the thousands of Puerto Ricans that have given their lives in the armed forces. And the gentleman ended his statement by saying they should be able to vote for statehood. Indeed, they should.

That is not the question here. The question is should not they be able to vote for other statuses also, and should we stack the deck in favor of statehood? Listen, I want everybody to understand this. We cannot have self-determination if the people are going to have to vote how we say. It is not agree with the definitions, if we say to those people when they walk into the ballot box, and this is what we are asking them to do: statehood, citizenship guaranteed, commonwealth, maybe, including those thousands and thousands that have served in the Armed Forces that are citizens today. That is weighting it against, and it is unfair.

So if we are going to bring up the question if we are going to bring up the commitment and the service, let them decide in a fair manner what their future is. And I remind my colleagues, this is not a group of people. It is not a territory. It is a nation. They feel that they are a nation. Puerto Rico is a separate and distinct country.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Chairman, briefly, the reason I have opposed this bill in its present
form is because it sets in motion a procedure that would possibly bring Puerto Rico into the United States with a simple vote of 50 percent plus 1. When Alaska cannot, by 83 percent, get the people-want ed statehood. When Hawaii came in, in 94 percent of the people wanted statehood. We cannot have another Quebec on this side of the Canada. If the overwhelming majority of the people of Puerto Rico want statehood, I will be the first to stand up here to fight for their admittance. Until that time, I think we should oppose this bill.

Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentle woman from Hawaii (Mrs. MINK).

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ) for yielding me this time.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of H.R. 856, and oppose the Solomon amendment and support the Miller substitute.

Mr. Chairman, I commend the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) for his leadership in this matter. His State and my State have gone through years and years of agony, of pleading with this Congress to be admitted as a complete partner, as a State. We went through much, this same type of argument on many side issues. And I regret that my dear friends are in opposition to this proposal on the grounds that they do not feel that the ballot is fairly stated.

The central issue here is that the people of Puerto Rico are being given the decision-making opportunity. They have to cast their ballots one way or another. The issue of statehood versus commonwealth will be clearly debated by the people.

Mr. Chairman, I feel that this is an issue which goes to the very heart of this democracy and the people of Puerto Rico ought to be given the right to vote.

Mr. Chairman, H.R. 856 is the first congressionally recognized framework that establishes aquid pro quo between the people of Puerto Rico to determine whether they choose to be a commonwealth, state, or independent nation.

H.R. 856 is not a bill granting statehood. It is a bill to allow American citizens to determine their political future. Some argue against H.R. 856 because they do not like the definition of commonwealth or simply do not support statehood and do not want to see the same rights and benefits accorded all states given to Puerto Rico. We do not know how the people of Puerto Rico will vote. However, we owe our fellow Americans the chance to decide for themselves what relationship they wish to have with the United States.

For example, some say the bill's definition of statehood's current territorial or 'commonwealth' status is not attractive as statehood. Each status has its advantages and disadvantages. If a majority of the residents of Puerto Rico and my State were to remain a commonwealth under H.R. 856, their relationship with the United States would not change.

There are some who oppose the possibility of Puerto Rico becoming a state because both Spanish and English are the official languages of Puerto Rico. These opponents wish to "assimilate" Puerto Rico into the United States and believe the only way to "assimilate" these residents is to declare English as the official language. This is not true. At least four territories, Louisiana, Maine, Alaska, and Hawaii were admitted as states with constitutional provisions protecting the rights of French, Spanish, Native American, and Native Hawaiian speakers. How can we impose such differing standards of Puerto Rico?

Many would have us believe that Puerto Rico residents have no interest in speaking or teaching or conducting business in English. This is simply incorrect. For example: 85 percent of Post-Secondary school students speak English and Spanish.

English is used in all official communications by federal agencies on the island. All documents presented before the United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico are in English. Court proceedings in the Federal Court are conducted in English.

Since 1900 the public school system has offered bilingual education. English is taught from kindergarten and up.

The Puerto Rico Department of Education is implementing a program to strengthen the bilingual skills of public school students. This program consists of a strong emphasis on reading English and Spanish starting in kindergarten; English textbooks in math and science; English immersion programs; as well as teacher exchanges program between the continental United States and Puerto Rico to improve English teaching skills.

32 professions in Puerto Rico require their members to take licensing examinations in English. They include Accounting, Architecture, Engineering, Medicine, and Optometry. Puerto Rico's largest weekly newspaper, The Caribbean Business, and the Pulitzer Prize-winning The San Juan Star, the third largest daily newspaper, are both completely in English.

Even with this English foundation already existing in Puerto Rico, H.R. 856 stresses the need for a continued English presence by stating that "English is the common language of mutual understanding in the United States."

Proposing an "English-only" amendment to H.R. 856 opines up the threat of Puerto Rico. An amendment declaring English as the official language of the United States affects every state. This is an unnecessary amendment that is larger than the bill at hand and should be debated standing alone and not attached to H.R. 856.

English is by far our Nation's common language. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 95 percent of Americans currently speak English "well" or "very well." It is because English is already the language of the U.S. and its people, and because there is no threat that English will be subsumed by other languages, that I do not think English-Only amendments affecting all Americans should be enacted.

For the past 100 years, the people of Puerto Rico have served America with loyalty, pride and commitment. They have a right to decide what form of government Puerto Rico should have with the United States. I support a plebiscite. Hawaii as a Territory also was accorded U.S. citizens status and later voted to become a state. The people of Puerto Rico should also decide this for themselves. H.R. 856 allows them to do so.

I urge the passage of H.R. 856. Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL).

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of H.R. 856. To me this is a question of equity and fairness. There are nearly 4 million Puerto Ricans who are American citizens who are denied the right to self-determination. This bill simply starts a process. It is nothing more, nothing less.

We will be able to find out from this process what Puerto Ricans want. We can then respond to that process. This is an easy fair. The people of Puerto Rico did not ask to be a part of this country 100 years ago, remember. They became a part by the Spanish-American War, to insure that they were loyal citizens. They have the same right to self-determination as all Americans do.

Mr. Chairman, I represent a district in the Bronx, in Westchester County in New York. We have many, many Puerto Ricans living there and the people are positively excited about the fact that their brethren on Puerto Rico will have the opportunity to have this dialogue. As my colleague from Hawaii said, the people of Alaska and Hawaii went through much the same thing. Much of the arguments that were raised against them coming into the Union are being raised now.

We do not favor any one thing. We want the process to start. The people of Puerto Rico deserve no less.

Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may conclude.

Mr. Chairman, I guess we should be discussing here an amendment as to whether this Nation should be allowed to make any country that does not speak English. That is the problem.

Mr. Chairman, there has been so much demagoguery here. When they discuss it they say that we are allowing the people that support commonwealth to vote because we say that citizenship is statutory. What else is it? There is a Constitution of the United States that says that those born in a State are citizens and also those that are naturalized are citizens. The Constitution does not say anything else.

So it is by law in 1917 that established that those born in Puerto Rico shall be citizens of the United States, so we are citizens by a statute. And that statute cannot be repealed to deny those that are citizens the right of citizenship. But that statute can be repealed to say and amended to say that those that are born from the year 2,000 on will no longer be citizens by reason of birth, and the people of Puerto Rico should know that under commonwealth that could happen. We say it will probably not happen because it is the policy of the Nation to make sure that those that are born in Puerto Rico from now on as also citizens, but they must know the truth.

The people of the commonwealth have been voting for lies for many,
March 4, 1998

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — HOUSE

H787

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Chair-
man, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Again, this is our opportunity, as we
close this debate to thank everybody participating in the debate for their de-
corating that honesty and their strong beliefs. I believe that this is the
right thing to do. I believe it is the
right thing to do. This is justice.

I will strongly oppose the Summary amendment. I will support the bipartis-
ian amendment of BURTON-YOUNG-MIL-
LER, and I suggest respectfully that this is the right thing for Congress
today. And as we stop this great century and begin a new century, the right
thing to do for the Americans of Puer-
to Rico and the great United States of America.

Mr. LAZIO of New York. Mr. Chair-
man, I rise in support of the Puerto Rico Political Stat-
us Act. The bill would grant the four million U.S. citizens living in Puerto Rico the right to
determine their own future.

This year marks the one hundredth anniver-
sary of Puerto Rico's accession into the United States at the end of the Spanish-
American War. Over that time, Puerto Rico has
maintained its contributions to this nation, includ-
ing the service of more than 200,000 of its young men and women in the armed forces of
the United States. More than 6,000 have given their lives for the cause of our nation's freedom.

Given the many contributions residents of Puerto Rico have made to the United States, I support this initiative for Puerto Rico's self-
determination.

The self-determination process of H.R. 856 ensures that the people of Puerto Rico and
the people of the United States, through their representatives in Congress, will each vote in the three stages of resolving Puerto Rico's political status. As you know, the bill al-
loves residents of Puerto Rico to determine the political status of their island by a democratic referendum process. Under the bill, voters choose either to retain the current common-
wealth structure for local self-government as a territory, separate sovereignty, or statehood.

This bill does not mandate that Puerto Rico
become a state. The bill would leave the deci-
sion to the local residents to exercise their col-
lective voice and determine the future of Puer-
to Rico. However, should residents favor statehood, the bill outlines a transition plan that includes incentives and opportunities for residents to learn English.

Mr. Chairman, the United States is known
the world over as the promoter and keeper of
political freedom. We must allow the United
States citizens living in Puerto Rico to deter-
mine their political future as well.

Mr. BUNNING. Mr. Chairman, I rise in oppo-
sition to H.R. 885, the United States-Puerto Rico Political Status Act.

Back during my baseball days, I actually
lived in Puerto Rico for two years. And I think I have some idea of the island. It has a long, rich history, and a vibrant culture.

Living there was a wonderful experience.

But, I think that it's this history and culture that dictate that Puerto Rico should be inde-
pendent from the United States. Nobody
how hard the proponents of statehood, or those who support continuing commonwealth status, argue their case. I don't think they can
reconcile the fact that Puerto Rico has strong traditions that profoundly separates it from

It is a separation that cannot be bridged.

I recognize that on the surface there are
similarities between America and Puerto Rico. Politically and economically, some links have been forged during Puerto Rico's years as an
American Commonwealth.

But these connections are only skin deep.
Beyond that, the customs and culture of Puerto Rico are predominantly their own, or at
least more closely identified with other Latin or His-
panic cultures.

The vast majority of its residents speak
Spanish, not English. And in the most recent referenda, held just five years ago, the resi-

dents were profoundly divided over their is-
land's future. None of the options—indepen-
dence, statehood, or commonwealth status—re-
ceived even a majority vote, much less a ring-

If an overwhelming majority of residents
wanted to join the United States that would be
one thing. But the indecision among Puerto Ricans simply reflects the fact that the dis-
tance between the U.S. and Puerto Rico is much greater than the 950 miles of ocean that
separate San Juan from Miami.

Mr. Chairman, I think Puerto Rico should be independent, and I don't think it should be a state,
and I don't think it should be a commonwealth.

And I think that no matter what we do here
today, there is no way we can overcome the
fact that America and Puerto Rico are separ-
ated by profound differences.

The bill before us today claims to present us
with a choice for helping Puerto Ricans deter-
mine their future. But, it is a false choice be-
cause no matter how long we debate this mat-
ter in Congress, and no matter how many referenda are held in Puerto Rico, their is only
one inevitable outcome—dependence.

Mr. FALCOMAVAEGA. Mr. Chairman, I rise

in support of the Young-Miller substitute
for H.R. 856, the United States-Puerto Rico Political Status Act.

The political status of Puerto Rico has been
a topic of discussion of the Committee on Re-

sources, and its predecessor Committees, for

decades. Mr. Miller and Puerto Rico began in
the 1970's when I was a member of the staff of
Congressman Phil Burton of California.

I learned then of the political divisions within
Puerto Rico; and those political divisions are
still in existence.

From my perspective, all three political par-
ties in Puerto Rico make persuasive argu-
ments in support of reflective positions.

I believe all three are viable political op-

tions. Additionally, I believe a political status of
free association is a possibility for Puerto Rico
to consider; at some point in the future, but
given the present political makeup of the com-
monwealth, I do not believe it should be in-
cluded on the ballot at this time.

Because of the opposition of the one of the
major political parties to a key definition in the

bill, it was not an easy decision for me to sup-
port this bill. I support the definitions contained in the Young-Miller substitute, but want to note
that I do not consider the definition of Com-
monwealth as describing a static relationship
as some have stated. Rather, I believe it describes the dynamic relationship between the people of Puerto Rico and the people of the United States, which can and should be changed over time.

Second, some may not consider Puerto Rico's current relationship with the United States to be a permanent one. It does not make sense to force a change on the people of Puerto Rico which they do not want. It would be a serious mistake to encourage the people into a "permanent" political status that will not best serve their long-term interests.

Third, Mr. Speaker, is the issue of the use of the English and Spanish languages in Puerto Rico. Coming from an insular area in which Samoan and English are spoken I see nothing to gain and much to lose by forcing the citizens of Puerto Rico to give up part of their Spanish heritage by prohibiting them from speaking to each other in Spanish.

On the other hand, we will not be well served as a nation if the vast majority of the citizens of one of our states do not speak English, and speak it well. The example of Quebec demonstrates that it has been often cited in these last few weeks, but that is not the only example. I would also point to the problems in the Balkans and in many countries in sub-Saharan Africa. This is a very difficult issue, one which I believe is appropriately addressed in the Burton-Miller-Young amendment, and I support that amendment.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of H.R. 856, legislation which would provide a framework by which the people of Puerto Rico may determine their political status.

Various speakers during today's debate will discuss a number of aspects of this legislation and the sensitive issues it raises. However, as the ranking Democratic Member on the Subcommittee on Surface Transportation, I will limit my remarks to how Puerto Rico is currently being treated under the federal highway and transit programs, and what the process of self-determination could mean to the island.

Today, the people of Puerto Rico are the beneficiaries of federal highway dollars even though they do not pay any federal motor fuel taxes into the Highway Trust Fund.

On the surface, that may appear to be a good deal for Puerto Rico and a bad deal for the rest of the country.

Yet, our contribution to the highway infrastructure of the island is relatively small. Indeed, over the six-year life of ISTEA, starting with 1992 and ending with 1997, Puerto Rico received $492 million in highway dollars.

It is interesting to note that with a population of about 3.8 million people, Puerto Rico received considerably less than Hawaii, a State with similar characteristics in terms of the factors used to apportion federal highway dollars to the States.

With a much smaller population of 1.2 million, Hawaii received a little more than $1 billion in federal highway dollars during ISTEA compared to the $492 million sent to Puerto Rico.

On the other hand, if we simply look at population, Connecticut with about 3.3 million people received $2.2 billion over ISTEA compared to Puerto Rico's $492 million.

As such, while Puerto Rico, which pays no federal motor fuel taxes, receives federal highway dollars, the amount is nowhere near what it would receive if it was a State and its residents contributed into the Highway Trust Fund.

In fact, under existing formulas, if Puerto Rico were a State it would receive back in federal highway dollars what it contributes in motor fuel taxes as is the case with Hawaii, Connecticut and many other States.

There is a pressing need to make transportation improvements in Puerto Rico, yes, certainly.

Anyone who has driven the streets of Santruce, of Rios Piedras, of Bayamón or anywhere else in San Juan knows of the massive congestion which plagues that city.

This is not to say that the government is not making efforts to make improvements. For example, Tren Urbano is one of the best new transit systems anywhere in the United States. Yet, the federal share currently is only 30% of that project while other, less deserving transit projects, have federal shares of at least 50% with some up to 80%.

Why is this? I think in part it is due to the resourcefulness of the governor and his administration. I also think it is in part because they feel there may be limits to the extent of federal transit dollars they can seek under Commonwealth status.

In conclusion, I would observe that the people of Puerto Rico have shed their blood in defense of the United States. For over 100 years they have been a joint partner in the development of the greatest Democracy in the world that is this country. The relationship has been mutually beneficial.

However, I believe it is time, once again, for the people of Puerto Rico to make a determination as to their political status.

Do they want a full seat at the table that is these United States, to be a full and equal partner, or do they want to continue to sit at that table on a small stool as a commonwealth or do they want to go their own way as a separate nation.

That is what this legislation is about. I urge a yes vote on H.R. 856.

The CHAIRMAN. All time for general debate has expired.

Pursuant to the rule, the amendment in the nature of a substitute printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD and numbered 1 is considered the original bill for the purpose of amendment and is considered as having been read.

The text of the amendment in the nature of a substitute is as follows:

Amendment in the nature of a substitute: Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE: TABLE OF CONTENTS.
(a) Short Title.—This Act may be cited as the "United States-Puerto Rico Political Status Act".
(b) Table of Contents.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:
Sec. 1. Short title, table of contents.
Sec. 2. Findings.
Sec. 3. Political status alternatives.
Sec. 4. Process for Puerto Rican self-government, including the initial decision stage, transition stage, and implementation stage.
Sec. 5. Requirements relating to referendum, including inconclusive referendum and applicable laws.
Sec. 6. Congressional procedures for consideration of legislation.

Sec. 7. Availability of funds for the referendum.
regarding the political status options available to the people of territories yet to complete the process for achieving full self-governance. The two established forms of Full self-government are national independence, free association based on separate sovereignty, and association with another nation on the basis of equality.

(7) The ruling of the United States Supreme Court in the 1993 case Hawaii v. Rosario (466 U.S. 651) confirmed that Congress continues to exercise authority over Puerto Rico pursuant to the Territorial Clause found at Article IV, section 3, clause 2 of the United States Constitution; and in the 1982 case of Rodriguez v. Popular Democratic Party (457 U.S. 1), the Court confirmed that the Congress delegated powers of administration to the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico sufficient for it to function "like a State" and as "an autonomous political entity" in respect of internal affairs and administration. "Sovereign over matters not ruled by the Constitution of the United States and yet a part of the United States. These rulings constitute judicial interpretation of Puerto Rico's status which is in accordance with the clear intent of Congress to preserve and develop local political government which has been attained by Puerto Rico, and the responsible political government of the Federal Government to enable the people of the territory to freely express their wishes regarding political status and achieve full self-government, this Act is adopted with a commitment to the development and implementation of procedures through which the permanent political status of the people of Puerto Rico is determined."

(8) LANGUAGE—English is the common language of the United States and, and in all of the States duties and freely admitted to the Union. The Congress recognizes that at the present time, Spanish and English are the joint official languages of Puerto Rico, and have been for nearly 100 years; that English is the official language of Federal courts in Puerto Rico; that the ability to speak English is a requirement for Federal jury service, and that English is currently the predominant language used by the majority of the people of Puerto Rico; and that Congress has the authority to expand existing English language requirements in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. In the event that the referendum held under this Act result in approval of sovereign statehood, it is anticipated that upon accession to Statehood, English language requirements of the Federal Government shall apply in Puerto Rico to the same extent as Federal law applies throughout the United States. Congress also recognizes the significant advantage that proficiency in English has bestowed on the people of Puerto Rico, and further that this will serve the best interests of both Puerto Rico and the rest of the United States in our mutual dealings in the Caribbean, Latin America, and throughout the Spanish-speaking world.

SEC. 4. PROCESSION MURICAN FULL SELF-GOVERNMELT, INCLUDING THE INITIAL DECISION STAGE, TRANSITION STAGE, AND IMPLEMENTATION STAGE.

(a) INITIAL DECISION STAGE—A referendum on Puerto Rico's political status is authorized to be held not later than December 31, 1998. The referendum shall be held pursuant to this Act and in accordance with the applicable provisions of Puerto Rico's electoral law and other relevant statutes consistent with this Act. Approval of a status option must be by a majority of the valid votes cast. The referendum shall be on the approval of one of the three options presented on the ballot as follows:

Instructions: Mark the status option you choose as each is defined below. Ballot with more than one option marked will not be counted.

A. COMMONWEALTH.—If you agree, mark here.

Puerto Rico should retain Commonwealth, in which—

(1) Puerto Rico is joined in a relationship with and under the national sovereignty of the United States. It is the responsibility of the United States Congress to determine the relationship should only be dissolved by mutual consent.

(2) Under this political relationship, Puerto Rico is a sovereign entity, sovereign over matters not ruled by the Constitution of the United States. In the exercise of this sovereignty, the laws of the Commonwealth shall govern in Puerto Rico to the extent that they are consistent with the Constitution, treaties, and laws of the United States. Congress retains its jurisdiction over matters of common interest to the United States and Puerto Rico.

(3) Persons born in Puerto Rico have the same rights and privileges as citizens of the United States as provided by the Constitution. The rights, privileges, and immunities provided by the United States Constitution shall be accorded to all persons born in Puerto Rico.

(4) Puerto Rico will continue to participate in Federal programs and may be entitled to participate equally with the States in the programs where Puerto Rico may be considered equally entitled to the benefits of the programs, contributions which may include payment of taxes, and other benefits.

B. SEPARATE SOVEREIGNTY.—If you agree, mark here.

The people of Puerto Rico should become a fully self-governing through separate sovereignty in the form of independence or free association, in which—

(1) Puerto Rico is a sovereign Republic which has full and independent sovereignty over its territory and population under a constitution which is the supreme law, providing for a Republic of Puerto Rico.

(2) The people of Puerto Rico have the right to participate in the government and the protection of human rights.

(3) The government of Puerto Rico is a member of the community of nations vested with full powers and responsibilities for its own fiscal and monetary policy, immigration, and defense, and the conduct in its own name and right of relations with other nations and international organizations, including the United Nations and other sovereign nations under the general principles of international law.

(4) The residents of Puerto Rico shall have allegiance to and the national and citizenship of the Republic of Puerto Rico.

(5) The Constitution of the United States no longer apply in Puerto Rico, and United States sovereignty in Puerto Rico is ended; there is no relationship of Puerto Rico or relationship to persons with statutory United States citizenship by birth in the former territory shall cease to be a basis for United States nationality or citizenship, except that persons who had such United States citizenship have a statutory right to retain United States nationality and citizenship for life, by entitlement or election as provided by the United States Congress, based on continued allegiance to the United States: Provided, That such persons will not have the statutory United States nationality and citizenship status upon having or maintaining allegiance, nationality, and citizenship rights in any sovereign nation, including the Republic of Puerto Rico, other than the United States.

(6) The previously vested rights of individuals in Puerto Rico to benefits based upon past services rendered or contributions made to the United States shall be honored by the United States as provided by Federal law.

(7) Puerto Rico and the United States shall enjoy friendly and cooperative relations, in matters of national interest as agreed in treaties approved pursuant to their
respective constitutional processes, and laws including economic and programmatic assistance and for a reasonable period as provided on a government-to-government basis, trade between customs territories, transportation in accordance with immigration and customs laws, and status of United States military forces; and

(2) A free association relationship may be established based on separate sovereign republic status as defined above, but with such delegations of government functions and other cooperative arrangements as may be agreed to by both parties under a bilateral pact that will be signed by the President of the United States or Puerto Rico.

C. STATEHOOD.—If you agree, mark here

"Puerto Rico should become freely self-governing through Statehood, which

The people of Puerto Rico are fully self-governing with their rights secured under the United States Constitution which shall be fully applicable in Puerto Rico and which, with the laws and treaties of the United States, is the supreme law and has the same force and effect as in the other States of the Union.

The State of Puerto Rico becomes a part of the permanent union of the United States of America, subject to the United States Constitution. All powers not prohibited by the Constitution to the States, are reserved to the State of Puerto Rico in its sovereign capacity.

(3) United States citizenship of those born in Puerto Rico is recognized, protected and secured in the same way it is for all United States citizens born in the other States.

(4) Rights, freedoms, and benefits as well as all powers and responsibilities of citizenship, including payment of Federal taxes, apply in the same manner as in the several States.

(5) Puerto Rico is represented by two members in the United States Senate and is represented in the House of Representatives proportionate to the population.

(6) United States citizens in Puerto Rico are disfranchised to vote in elections for the President and Vice President of the United States.

(7) English is the official language of the Government and administration in Federal courts and Federal agencies as made applicable by Federal law to every other State, and Puerto Rico will not be required to expand or build upon existing law establishing English as an official language of the State government.

B. TRANSITION STAGE.—(A) Within 180 days of the receipt of the referendum from the Government of Puerto Rico certifying approval of a ballot of full self-govern in a referendum held pursuant to subsection (a), the President shall develop and submit to Congress legislation for a transition plan of not more than 10 years which leads to full self-government for Puerto Rico consistent with the terms of this Act and the results of the referendum and in consultation with officials of the three branches of the Commonwealth, the principal political parties of Puerto Rico, and other interested persons as may be appropriate.

(B) Additionally, in the event of a vote in favor of separate sovereignty, the Legislature of Puerto Rico, if deemed appropriate, may submit to the people of Puerto Rico the law for the calling of a constituent convention to formulate, in accordance with procedures prescribed by law, the proposals and recommendations to implement the referendum results. If a convention is called for this purpose, any program or recommendations normally adopted by such convention within time limits of this Act shall be transmitted to Congress by the President with the transition plan required by this section, along with the views of the President regarding the compatibility of such proposals and recommendations with the United States Constitution and this Act, and identifying whether, if any, of such proposals and recommendations have been addressed in the President's proposed transition plan.

(C) In addition, in the event of a vote in favor of Statehood, the President shall include in the transition plan provided for in this Act—

(1) proposals and incentives to increase the opportunities of the people of Puerto Rico to learn to speak, read, write and understand English fully, including but not limited to, the teaching of English in public schools, facilities for learning of English, and financial assistance to the Commonwealth to carry out programs in support of these purposes;

(2) the promotion of efficiency to all people in the current federal and State government's official business; and

(3) the ability of all citizens to take full advantage of educational and occupational opportunities through full participation in the United States and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico as appropriate to the political development of the economy through fiscal incentives, alternative tax arrangements, and other measures.

D. CONGRESSIONAL CONSIDERATION.—The plan shall be presented to the Congress in accordance with section 5. (2) CONGRESSIONAL CONSIDERATION.—The joint resolution shall be considered by the Congress in accordance with section 6.

A. APPLICATION—(A) Within 180 days after enactment of the terms of implementation for full self-government for Puerto Rico, the President shall hold a referendum on the approval of the terms of implementation for full self-government for Puerto Rico.

(B) Approval shall be by a majority of the valid votes cast. The results of the referendum shall be certified to the President of the United States.

A. REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO REFERENDA, INCLUDING INCONCLUSIVE REFERENDA AND APPLICABLE LAWS.—(A) REFERENDUM UNDER PUERTO RICAN LAW.—The referendum held under this Act shall be conducted in accordance with the applicable laws of Puerto Rico, including laws of Puerto Rico under which voter eligibility is determined and which require United States citizenship and establish requirements applicable to referenda.

(C) CERTIFICATION OF REFERENDUM RESULTS.—The results of each referendum held under this Act shall be certified to the President of the United States by the Government of Puerto Rico.

A. CONSULTATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INCONCLUSIVE REFERENDUM.—(A) IN GENERAL.—If a referendum provided in section 4(b) or of this Act does not result in approval of a fully self-governing status, the President, in consultation with officials of the three branches of the Government of Puerto Rico, the principal political parties of Puerto Rico, and interested persons as may be appropriate, shall make recommendations to the Congress within 180 days after receipt of the referendum results regarding completion of the self-determination process for Puerto Rico under the authority of Congress.

A. ADDITIONAL REFERENDA.—To ensure that the Congress is able on a continuing basis to exercise its Terrestrial Procedures with due regard for the wishes of the people of Puerto Rico respecting resolution of Puerto Rico’s permanent future political status, in the event that a referendum conducted under section 4(a) does not result in a majority vote for separate sovereignty or statehood, there is authorized to be further referendum in accordance with this Act, but not less than once every 10 years.

A. CONGRESSIONAL PROCEDURES FOR CONSIDERATION OF LEGISLATION.—(A) IN GENERAL.—The majority leader of the House of Representatives (or his designee) and the majority leader of the Senate (or his designee) shall each introduce legislation (by request) providing for the transition plan under section 4(b) and the implementation recommendation required under section 4(c) no later than 5 legislative days after the date of receipt by Congress of the submission by the President under that section, as the case may be.

B. REFERRAL.—The legislation shall be referred on the date of introduction to the appropriate committee or committees in accordance with rules of the respective Houses.
The legislation shall be reported not later than the 120th calendar day after the date of its introduction. If any such committee fails to report the bill within that period, that committee shall be automatically discharged from further consideration of such legislation, and the legislation shall be placed on the appropriate calendar.

(2) Authorization—

(A) After the 11th legislative day after the date on which the House of Representatives or the Senate, as the case may be, has reported or been discharged from further consideration of such legislation, it is in order after the legislation has been on the calendar for 14 legislative days for any Member of that House in favor of the legislation to move to proceed to the consideration of the legislation (after consultation with the presiding officer of that House as to scheduling) to move to proceed to its consideration at any time after the third legislative day on which the Member announces to the respective House concerned the Member's intention to do so. All points of order against the motion to proceed and against consideration of that motion are waived. The motion is highly privileged in the House of Representatives and privileged in the Senate and is not debatable. The motion is not subject to amendment, or to a motion to reconsider it, or to a motion to proceed to the consideration of other business. A Motion to reconsider the vote by which the motion was defeated or disagreed to shall not be in order. If a motion to proceed to the consideration of the legislation is agreed to, the respective House shall immediately proceed to consideration of the legislation without intervening motion (except one motion to adjourn or to other business).

(B) In the House of Representatives, during consideration of the legislation in the Committee of the Whole, the first reading of the legislation shall be dispensed with. General debate shall be confined to the legislation, and shall not exceed 4 hours equally divided and controlled by a proponent and an opponent of the legislation. After general debate, the legislation shall be considered as read for amendment under the five-minute rule. Consideration of the legislation for amendment shall not exceed 4 hours excluding time for recorded votes and quorum calls. At the conclusion of the bill for amendments, the committee shall cease to act and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. The presiding officer shall be considered as ordered on the legislation and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion to reconsider with or without instructions. A motion to reconsider the vote on passage of the legislation shall not be in order.

(C) In the Senate, debate on the legislation, and all amendments thereto and debatable motions and appeals in connection therewith, shall be limited to not more than 25 hours. The time shall be equally divided between, and controlled by, the majority leader and the minority leader or their designees. No amendment that is not germane to the subject of such legislation shall be received. A motion to further limit debate is not debatable.

(3) Appeals from the decisions of the Chair relating to the application of the rules of the Senate or the House of Representatives, as the case may be, to the procedure relating to the legislation described in subsection (a) shall be decided without debate.

(4) RECOGNITION BY OTHER HOUSE.—(1) If, before the passage by one House of the legislation described in subsection (a) that was introduced in that House, that House receives from the other House the legislation described in subsection (a)—

(A) the legislation of the other House shall not be referred to a committee and may not be considered by that House until that House shall receive it otherwise than on final passage under subparagraph (B)(ii) or (iii), and

(B)(ii) if the House that receives such legislation with respect to such legislation that was introduced in that House shall have no legislation had been received from the other House; but

(iii) in the case of legislation received from the other House, shall be considered to the legislation as engrossed by the receiving House, the vote on final passage shall be on the legislation of the other House; or

(2) after passage of the legislation, the legislation of the other House shall be considered as amended by the text of the legislation just passed and shall be considered as passed, and that House shall be considered to have imposed on its amendment and requested a conference with the other House.

(3) Upon disposition of the legislation described in subsection (a) that is received by one House from the other House, it shall no longer be in order to consider such legislation that was introduced in the receiving House.

(4) Upon receiving from the other House a message in which the House of Representatives insists upon its amendment to the legislation and requests a conference with the House of Representatives or the Senate, as the case may be, on the disagreeing votes thereon, the House receiving the request shall be considered to have disagreed to the amendment of the other House and agreed to the conference requested by that House.

(F) Definition. As used in this section, the term "legislative day" means a day on which the House of Representatives or the Senate, as appropriate, is in session.

(G) Exercise of rulemaking power. The provisions of this section are enacted by the Congress—

(i) as an exercise of the rulemaking power of the Senate and the House of Representatives and, as such, shall be considered as part of the rules of each House and shall supersede other rules only to the extent that they are inconsistent therewith; and

(ii) with full recognition of the constitutional right of either House to change the rules (so far as they relate to the procedures of that House) at any time, in the same manner, and to the same extent as in the case of any other rule of that House.

SEC. 7. AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS FOR THE REFERENDA.

(A) In General.

(1) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS DERIVED FROM TAX ON FOREIGN FUM.—During the period beginning October 1, 1991, and ending on the date the President determines that all referenda required by this Act have been held, from the amounts covered into the treasury of Puerto Rico under section 7653(a)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, the Secretary of the Treasury—

(A) upon request and in the amounts identified from time to time by the President, shall make the amounts so identified available to the treasury of Puerto Rico for the purposes specified in subsection (b); and

(B) shall transfer the remaining amounts to the treasury of Puerto Rico, as under current law.

(B) REPORT OF REFERENDA EXPENDITURES.—Within 180 days after each referendum required by this Act, and after the end of the period specified in subparagraph (A), the President, in consultation with the Government of Puerto Rico, shall submit a report to the United States Senate and the United States House of Representatives on the amounts made available under paragraph (1)(A) and all other amounts expended by the State Elections Commission of Puerto Rico for referenda pursuant to this Act.

(C) COMMISSION ON COMPARATIVE REFERENDA AND VOTER EDUCATION.—From amounts made available under subsection (a)(ii), the Government of Puerto Rico shall make a grant to the State Elections Commission of Puerto Rico for referenda held pursuant to the terms of this Act, as follows:

(1) Fifty percent shall be available only for costs of conducting the referendum.

(2) Fifty percent shall be available only for voter education funds for the central ruling body of the political party, parties, or other qualifying entities advocating a particular ballot choice. The amount allocated for advocating a ballot choice under this paragraph shall be apportioned equally among the parties advocating that choice.

(D) ADDITIONAL RESOURCES.—In addition to amounts made available by this Act, the Puerto Rico Legislature may allocate additional resources for administrative and voter education costs to each party so long as the distribution of funds is consistent with the apportionment requirements of subsection (b).

The CHAIRMAN. Before consideration of any other amendment, it shall be in order to consider Amendment number 3 printed in the RECORD, which shall be preceded by an additional period of general debate on the subject of that amendment. That debate shall not exceed 1 hour, equally divided and controlled by the gentleman from New York (Mr. SERRANO) and a Member opposed.

Consideration of Amendment number 2 printed in the RECORD shall be preceded by an additional period of general debate confined to the subject of that amendment. That debate shall not exceed 30 minutes, equally divided and controlled by the gentleman from New York (Mr. SERRANO) and a Member opposed. Amendments specified in section 2(a) and 2(b) of House Resolution 378 shall be considered read and shall not be subject to a demur on the division of the question. Consideration of each of those amendments and any amendment thereto shall not exceed 1 hour.

During consideration of the Bill for amendment, the Chair may accord priority in recognition to a Member offering an amendment that he has printed in the designated place in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. Those amendments will be considered read.

The Chairman of the Committee of the Whole may postpone a request for any recorded vote on any amendment and may reduce to a minimum of 5 minutes the time for voting on any postponed question that immediately follows another vote, provided that the time for voting on the first question shall be a minimum of 15 minutes.

It is now in order to debate the subject matter of the amendment offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. SERRANO).

The gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLLON) and a Member opposed, each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLLON).