

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

APPENDIX V

June 28, 1996

Senator Charlie Rodriguez
Majority Leader, Puerto Rico Senate
The Capitol
San Juan, Puerto Rico 00901

Dear Senator Rodriguez,

As the senior Democrats on the House Resources and International Relations Committees we have always been concerned about the economic and political future of Puerto Rico. As the 104th Congress considers proposed legislation regarding the process of self-determination for Puerto Rico, we believe that it is time to reexamine the status issue in light of the 1993 plebiscite.

On December 14, 1994 the Legislature of Puerto Rico adopted Concurrent Resolution 62 which sought congressional guidance regarding the results of the 1993 status plebiscite. Recently, the Chairmen of the relevant committees and subcommittees that deal with Puerto Rico's political status responded to this important resolution. Although we agree with many portions of the letter, we would like to outline some of our views on the issue as well.

We believe that the definition of Commonwealth on the 1993 plebiscite ballot was difficult given Constitutional, and current fiscal and political limitations. Through numerous Supreme Court and other Federal Court decisions, it is clear that Puerto Rico remains an unincorporated territory and is subject to the authority of Congress under the territorial clause. Another aspect of this definition called for the granting of additional tax breaks to Section 936 companies and an increase in federal benefits in order to achieve parity with all the states without having to pay federal taxes. It is important that any judgement on the future of Puerto Rico be based on sound options that reflect the current budgetary context in the United States. This context should also reflect the bi-partisan agreement being worked on by Congress which reduces Section 936 benefits.

Since Congress has neither approved nor resolved the 1993 plebiscite results, we are in favor of legislation that will establish a future process of self-determination for the people of Puerto Rico. This legislation should include a requirement for status plebiscites to take place within a certain number of years and define various status options in a realistic manner.

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In two years, Puerto Rico will celebrate its 100th year as part of the united States. Congress has both a political and moral responsibility to ensure that the 3.5 million Americans living in Puerto Rico have a right to express their views on the important issue of political status on a regular basis .

We hope this additional response to Concurrent Resolution 62 is helpful.

Sincerely,


ROBERT TORRICELLI
Member of Congress


LEE HAMILTON
Member of Congress


BILL RICHARDSON
Member of Congress


DALE KILDEE
Member of Congress