

comes with transition rules and some degree of assurances to the people of Puerto Rico on what they are getting under each option.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, that is right.

Senator BUMPERS. That is what we are here for.

The CHAIRMAN. We have got to be sure that we do not criticize independence because if the people of Puerto Rico—

Senator BUMPERS. I am not criticizing independence. I want all the people of Puerto Rico to know I am not criticizing independence. If they want to vote that way, that is fine.

I do not think it would be very smart. [Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. Senator McClure.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES A. McCLURE, U.S. SENATOR FROM
IDAHO**

Senator McCLURE. I want to get involved in this particular discussion, because regardless of what our own opinions might be of the wisdom of one course of action or likelihood of one course of action or another, in order that that be a genuine choice, we have to spell out the details of each of the three options.

Now, you have indicated that it is a daunting task, and there is not any question that that is true. I think each of us realized that, as we started down this path, that it is hard enough to develop all of the detail with respect to one option, let alone spell out details with respect to three. But if we are to really give the people of Puerto Rico a choice, a genuine choice that we are ready to execute, then it seems to me that we have to spell out the details on all three options.

I guess you know and we know that our task is complicated because of the jurisdiction between committees. Somehow we have to bridge that gap. We have been down that road before. We dealt with all of these Compacts of Free Association in Micronesia, and we ran into some difficulty because we did not get it done before we got to the end of the process. And taxing policies proved to be one of the most difficult tasks we had in that instance.

Without plowing old ground or opening old arguments, one of the problems we had is we could not get either Treasury or the tax-writing committees to make the decision with respect to the tax options in a timely way. That is one of the things which I am committed to doing, getting those options in place before we ask the people of Puerto Rico to vote.

Now, recognizing it is a daunting task—and I do not question that at all; I think that is a very good understatement of the degree of the problem—you can do that.

Mr. GIDEON. With time.

Senator McCLURE. How much time?

Mr. GIDEON. I think that truly is dependent upon the degree of detail that the committee is going to ultimately consider necessary for this process.

Senator McCLURE. All right. Assuming a fair amount of detail, assuming that you are going to be asked to write—that we expect to write a tax code provision for each of the three options, that if, upon certification of the election results becomes effective, how much time does it take you to write those options?