Senate Memorial

A memorial to the Congress of the United States, urging Congress to grant without further delay Puerto Rico's pending petition for a federally sanctioned plebiscite to establish and define the political status and electoral rights of United States citizens of Puerto Rico.

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

WHEREAS, on March 2, 1917, President Woodrow Wilson signed the Puerto Rican Federal Relations Act, otherwise known as the Jones Act, extending United States citizenship to citizens of Puerto Rico, but not authorizing them to qualify as candidates for office in the United States Senate or in the United States House of Representatives, or for the office of President of the United States, and not authorizing them to vote for any such candidate, and

WHEREAS, since 1917, 200,000 people who are citizens of Puerto Rico have served valiantly as members of the United States Armed Services in every war and conflict in which the United States has been engaged in defense of democratic principles and the freedom of individuals to exercise their fundamental rights of self-determination, and

WHEREAS, four heroic Puerto Ricans, Hector Santiago-Colon, Euripides Rubio, Carlos James Lorada, and Luis Fernando Garcia, have been awarded the Congressional Medal of
Honor for their valor in defending American ideals and
freedoms, and
WHEREAS, the 3.8 million citizens of Puerto Rico have
made many invaluable social, economic, and public service
contributions to preserve, protect, and advance American
ideals and freedoms, and
WHEREAS, a significant number of the citizens of the
State of Florida originate from Puerto Rico and other Latin
American countries, and many such citizens serve as our
state's business, education, cultural, and public service
leaders, and
WHEREAS, Florida's great history, including its
ascension to statehood, is closely intertwined with a heritage
derived from the many invaluable contributions made by Puerto
Ricans and others of Latin American descent, and
WHEREAS, in 1997, the Legislature of Puerto Rico
submitted a formal petition to the Congress of the United
States asking that Congress respond to the many democratic
aspirations of citizens of Puerto Rico by authorizing a
federally sanctioned plebiscite to be held no later than 1998,
but Congress has not yet acted on the petition, and
WHEREAS, it is long overdue that citizens of Puerto
Rico be endowed with the political and electoral rights of
full representative government that are exercised by other
United States citizens, and
WHEREAS, the Florida Legislature urges all citizens of
Florida and of all the other states and territories of the
United States to support enactment of a federal law leading to
full self-government for Puerto Rico, NOW, THEREFORE,
Be It Resolved by the Legislature of the State of Florida:
That the Congress of the United States is urged to act
without further delay on Puerto Rico's pending petition by
promptly enacting legislation establishing and defining the
political status and electoral rights of citizens of Puerto
Rico, and authorizing a plebiscite to provide an opportunity
for such citizens to make an informed decision on the future
political status of Puerto Rico.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be
presented to the President of the United States, to the
President of the United States Senate, to the Speaker of the
United States House of Representatives, to each member of the
Florida delegation to the United States Congress, and to the
Governor of Puerto Rico.

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