

By: Gutierrez

H.C.R. No. 199

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, Puerto Rico became a territory of the United States
2 as a result of the treaty concluding the Spanish-American War in
3 1898; in 1917, the United States government extended U.S.
4 citizenship to Puerto Ricans but did not provide them with full
5 citizenship rights, including voting representation in the United
6 States Congress and the right to vote for the President of the
7 United States; and

8 WHEREAS, Since 1917 more than 200,000 United States citizens
9 from Puerto Rico have served valiantly in every war and armed
10 conflict in which our nation has fought--including our current war
11 against terrorism--in defense of democratic principles and
12 self-determination; four heroic Puerto Ricans--Hector
13 Santiago-Colón, Euripides Rubio, Carlos James Lozada, and Luis
14 Fernando Garcia--have been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor
15 for their valor in defending American democracy and freedoms; and

16 WHEREAS, The economic limitations resulting from the
17 unresolved political status of the island have resulted in 3.4
18 million Puerto Ricans maintaining residence on the United States
19 mainland; it is estimated that by 2010 more Puerto Ricans will
20 reside on the mainland than on the island of Puerto Rico; and

21 WHEREAS, We recognize the many social, economic, and
22 political contributions that the 3.8 million United States citizens
23 residing in Puerto Rico, as well as the 3.4 million citizens
24 residing in the United States, make to preserve and enhance this

1 nation's democratic values; and the State of Texas counts on a
2 growing Puerto Rican community and an ever-increasing Latino
3 population from which to draw many of our state's business,
4 cultural, and political leaders; and

5 WHEREAS, In 1997 the legislature of Puerto Rico formally
6 petitioned the United States Congress to respond to the democratic
7 aspirations of the United States citizens of Puerto Rico by means of
8 a federally sanctioned plebiscite to be held no later than 1998, but
9 Congress has yet to respond to said petition; and

10 WHEREAS, The Texas Legislature recognizes that the time has
11 come to enable Puerto Rico to exercise its right to
12 self-determination and urges all citizens of Texas and the United
13 States to support the enactment of a federal law leading to full
14 self-government for Puerto Rico within the context of a
15 congressionally sanctioned plebiscite; now, therefore, be it

16 RESOLVED, That the 78th Legislature of the State of Texas
17 request that the Congress and President of the United States enact
18 legislation that would define the political status options
19 available to the United States citizens of Puerto Rico and
20 authorize a plebiscite to provide an opportunity for Puerto Ricans
21 to make an informed decision regarding the island's future
22 political status; and, be it further

23 RESOLVED, That the 78th Legislature of the State of Texas
24 hereby respectfully request the Texas delegation to the Congress of
25 the United States to actively promote and support timely action on
26 this important issue; and, be it further

27 RESOLVED, That the Texas secretary of state forward official

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1 copies of this resolution to the president and vice president of the
2 United States, to the speaker of the house of representatives and
3 the president of the senate of the United States Congress, to the
4 chairman of the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural
5 Resources, to the chairman of the U.S. House of Representatives
6 Committee on Resources, and to all the members of the Texas
7 delegation to the Congress with the request that this resolution be
8 officially entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to the
9 Congress of the United States of America.