

Veterans of Foreign Wars

VFW Resolution No. 432

SUPPORT OF SELF-DETERMINATION FOR PUERTO RICO

WHEREAS, Puerto Rico became part of the United States as a consequence of the Spanish-American War of 1898; and

WHEREAS, in 1917, the people of Puerto Rico were bestowed with American citizenship; and

WHEREAS, since Puerto Rico became part of the United States, the American citizens of Puerto Rico have steadfastly pursued greater local self-governing rights and responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, Congress in its exercise of its responsibility under the Territorial Clause of the United States Constitution has responded by granting increased levels of internal self-government to Puerto Rico; and

WHEREAS, in spite of these advancements to achieve internal self-government, the federal government has never allowed the American citizens of Puerto Rico to determine their political future; and

WHEREAS, this situation is a clear contradiction to one of most fundamental principles of American Democracy: Government by Consent of All Citizens; and

WHEREAS, since 1917, 200,000 American citizens of Puerto Rico have joined their fellow American citizens, as members of the United States armed forces, defending and spreading the right to self-government all over the world; and

WHEREAS, we recognize the contributions of the American citizens of Puerto Rico to our nation's armed forces, and we believe that it is time to honor the memory of those who have died for our nation allowing them to exercise the same right they have fought and died for--Government by Consent; and

WHEREAS, the Congressional legislation is the proper mechanism to establish a fair and valid self-determination process for the American citizens of Puerto Rico; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the President of the United States and the Congress to enact legislation that supports self-determination for Puerto Rico by defining the political status options available to United States citizens of Puerto Rico and authorizing a plebiscite to provide an opportunity for Puerto Ricans to make an informed decision regarding the island's political future.

Adopted by the 103rd National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States held in Nashville, Tennessee, August 24-30, 2002