

**State of New Mexico**

**SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 34**

**46th legislature - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - second session, 2004**

**INTRODUCED BY**

**Richard M. Romero**

**A JOINT MEMORIAL**

REQUESTING LEGISLATION THAT WOULD DEFINE THE POLITICAL STATUS OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO UNITED STATES CITIZENS OF PUERTO RICO AND WOULD AUTHORIZE A PLEBISCITE TO PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR PUERTO RICANS TO MAKE AN INFORMED DECISION ABOUT THEIR FUTURE POLITICAL STATUS.

WHEREAS, the Treaty of Paris was signed by the United States on December 10, 1898 and was ratified on February 6, 1899, 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, popularly known as the Jones Act, which extended United States citizenship to the residents of Puerto Rico but did not provide them with representation in the United States congress or give them the right to vote for the president of the United States; and

WHEREAS, since 1917, more than two hundred thousand United States citizens from Puerto Rico have served valiantly in every war and armed conflict in which our nation has fought in defense of American democratic principles and self-determination; and

WHEREAS, four heroic Puerto Ricans, Hector Santiago-Colon, Euripides Rubio, Carlos James Lozada and Louis Fernando Garcia, have been awarded the congressional medal of honor for their valor in defending American democracy and freedoms; and

WHEREAS, the territory of New Mexico was also acquired by the United States as a result of armed conflict, and New Mexicans endured eighty-four years as a territory before realizing their aspirations for permanent political status; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico's great history, including its ascension to statehood, is intertwined with our state's Hispanic heritage; and

WHEREAS, in 1997, the legislature of Puerto Rico formally petitioned the United States congress to respond to the democratic aspirations of the United States citizens of Puerto Rico by means of a federally sanctioned plebiscite to be held no later than 1998, and congress has not yet responded to this petition; and

WHEREAS, as a new millennium begins, the time has come for Puerto Rico to exercise its right to self-determination regarding its desire to attain full self-government within the context of a congressionally authorized plebiscite; and

WHEREAS, the New Mexico senate and house of representatives urge all New Mexicans and citizens of the United States to support the 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 NEW MEXICO that congress be requested to enact and the president be requested to sign legislation that would define the political status options available to the United States citizens of Puerto Rico and authorize a plebiscite to provide an opportunity for Puerto Ricans to make an informed decision regarding their future political status; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the New Mexico congressional delegation be requested to actively promote and support timely action on this important national issue; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the president and vice-president of the United States, the speaker of the United States house of representatives, the majority leader of the United States senate, the chairman of the United States senate energy and natural resources committee, the chairman of the United States house of representatives resources committee and the members of the New Mexico congressional delegation.