

Congressman Raúl Labrador
Puerto Rican Journey for Equality
November 19, 2013
Time: 11am

Good morning!

I come from a state that has .25% Puerto Ricans, but they have embraced the people of Puerto Rico, they have embraced a young man who was born in Puerto Rico, and I'm going to be very brief today.

I'm not even going to read my words; I'm going to read the words of Ronald Reagan.

He said in 1982, "When I announced my candidacy for this office more than 2 years ago, I pledged to support statehood for the commonwealth of Puerto Rico, should the people of that island choose it in a free and democratic election. Today, I reaffirm that support, still confident in my belief that statehood would benefit both the people of Puerto Rico and their fellow American citizens in 50 states".

And then he goes on and he says "Puerto Ricans have borne the responsibilities of US citizenship with honor and courage at the time for more than 64 years. They have fought beside us for decades and have worked beside us for generations. In statehood, the language and culture of the island, rich in history and tradition would be respected for the United States that cultures of the world live together with pride. We recognize the right of the Puerto Rican people through self-determination. If they choose statehood, we will work together to devise a union of promise and opportunity in our Federal union of sovereign states."

I believe that it's the right thing for the American people to be behind, it's something that Reagan believed in, it's something that Bush believed in and it's something that I think Conservatives and Republicans should believe in: The right of self-determination.

Here you go, and I think that we need to stand together so we can all be equal citizens of the United States.