

(Mr. RANGEL asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RANGEL. Let me thank the chairlady from New York for allowing me this time, and let me share the great respect and admiration that I have for the gentleman from Puerto Rico, a hardworking man. There is no question in my mind that in his heart, he wants what is best for Puerto Rico and what is best for the United States of America. And I can say the same about his predecessor who has now moved on to become the Governor.

The only question that I have—since I have been a friend of Puerto Rico for 39 years, not just legislatively but in my heart, I have felt the unfairness it is to call people citizens and yet to have to acknowledge that when it comes to health care, education, jobs, the only time that you can really know that Puerto Ricans are treated as Americans are treated is when they are drafted or when they volunteer to serve this great country of ours and when it ends up, you will find, that per capita more people from Puerto Rico have died and been wounded defending our flag than from any State or any territory. So it just seems to me that something has to be done. It is so truly unfair to respect our flag and respect our citizens and to tell them that they can fight a war when they can't even vote for the President.

And, quite frankly, as far as the status is concerned, it has hurt me as an American that this has consumed the island. And for the first time in a couple of months, I have heard about free association. I have more Puerto Ricans in my district in New York than probably in San Juan. I have never heard anyone talk about free association. I don't even know whether Members of the Congress know what free association is. As a matter of fact, a couple of people have asked me, since I've been here, who is our Ambassador to Puerto Rico anyway and what is the exchange of currency.

And to see what was happening on the rule, it is clear to me on both sides of the aisle, they want to know, What is this all about? It's about the lives of 4 million people, that's what it's about. We should at least know what we are doing before we superimpose some ideas that we have on other people.

I had an amendment—the Rules Committee rejected it—and all it did was adopt everything except, what do the people have to choose from, statehood? You bet your life. They would be entitled to it. And no matter which way they work out the number of votes—even though Tom Foley once told me when I thought that statehood was really going to pass in Puerto Rico, I said, Mr. Chairman, how are we going to handle this question with the Members? How are we going to handle the question of what parties these people are going to belong to? He said, Forget it, CHARLIE. The only time we're going to have statehood is when there is a

mandate. We're not going to have a divided territory become a State. That was a guy who told me that from his background in history that he was an expert in this type of thing.

So it just seems to me that if we all accept anyone who's known, visited, read about Puerto Rico, that their biggest argument has been, majorly, those who want statehood, those who want a Commonwealth, and a smaller number who would like to have independence, which sounds great politically, but somehow internationally it doesn't make a lot of sense.

So what did my amendment do? It said, Go to the polls. Say if you want Commonwealth. Say if you want statehood. Say if you want independence. Or say, Not at this time. Let me breathe and try to figure this out. Because if we don't know what statehood is, how do we expect them to know?

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When I asked these questions, someone said: Oh, no, they would have already rejected Commonwealth.

Well, I think some of us on this floor, if asked if we like the status we have in the Congress, we might say, especially some of my friends on the other side, that they don't like the status. Well, if I was in the minority, I wouldn't like the status either. But the truth of the matter is it doesn't mean that you want to get rid of it all. It may mean I don't like the status as it is. I would like to change it. I would like to have it improved. I would like to improve education and I would like to make certain that the expenses that Mr. HASTINGS talks about in terms of programs that are designed to help American citizens, that they would get them.

What price does it take to give your life for your flag and then find out how much it is going to cost to give them the things that Americans would want. So my problem is that Commonwealth doesn't get a chance. They call the existing government, which I don't really think means rejection of status, because there is a lot of romance and emotion that is involved in Puerto Rico. So give them the opportunity to say Commonwealth, but we don't need free association when hardly anyone here knows, especially the people in Puerto Rico, what does it mean.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CHAFFETZ), and I understand that he also gets 1 minute from the chairlady from New York.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Chairman, that is correct.

The CHAIR. The gentleman from Utah is recognized for 2 minutes.

Mr. CHAFFETZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for the time.

Isn't it ironic that a bill about self-determination has got to have the heavy hand of the United States Congress dictating to the people of Puerto Rico about this vote. I find that terribly ironic.

There is no need for the United States Congress to pass this bill. No need. Four times, in 1952, in 1967, in 1993 and in 1998, the people of Puerto Rico were able to vote on this. They didn't need the approval of the United States Congress to do it; they don't need it today. But it is a manipulation of the process to try to get a desired outcome.

If you want to vote on statehood, take a straight vote. Do the people of Puerto Rico, yes or no, do the people of Puerto Rico want statehood? Simple, straightforward, to the point, and let's understand if that is truly what they want.

I am a conservative person. I do not believe that I should be trying to manipulate what is happening in Puerto Rico and what they want.

Finally, I will end with this. Please, as you consider this bill, understand that you are empowering people to vote in this election that have no business voting in this election. If you were born in Puerto Rico, you lived there 2 months and then you suddenly moved to the United States and you've lived here for the last 30, 40 years, you get to vote in this election. Why should a resident of Utah or Indiana vote in an election in Puerto Rico? That is fundamentally wrong and it is there because they want to manipulate the end result.

This is about Puerto Rico and the vote should be taken in Puerto Rico by the people of Puerto Rico if the people of Puerto Rico choose to do so, and not because of the heavy hand of the United States Congress. I urge my colleagues to vote "no."

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Chairman, I yield 10 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. GUTIERREZ).

Mr. GUTIERREZ. I thank the chairlady.

Look, this is the Puerto Rico 51st State bill. It is the only result you can possibly expect. The deck is stacked. We all know. I was talking to my friends on the other side, and you know what they keep saying to me: Why are you against statehood? Everywhere I go: Why are you against statehood? They don't say: Why are you against the people of Puerto Rico having a free vote in determining their future and in exercising their right to self-determination?

Why do we come here and try to like hoodwink one another, fool one another. I mean, you know what I would like to see on the House floor, the same depth of honesty, sincerity and clarity and transparency that exists when people come up to me and ask why I am against statehood for Puerto Rico.

That is not why I am up here. I am against a process that does not allow the people of Puerto Rico to exercise their sovereign right to determine their future in a free manner.

Now, what does that mean? Everybody says well, there are 4 million American citizens in Puerto Rico. Have you ever considered one thing, that the