



REPUBLICAN PARTY OF PUERTO RICO

MAI Center, Suite 403

2000 Kennedy Avenue

San Juan, PR 00920

Tel: (787) 957-9900

Email: republicanPR@gmail.com

Hon. Jenniffer González-Colón
State Chairman

Zoraida F. Fonalledas, Esq.
National Committeewoman

Hon. Luis G. Fortuño
National Committeeman

April 12, 2017

The Honorable Jeff Sessions
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear Attorney General Sessions,

As the heads of the Republican Party in Puerto Rico, we take great pride in the historic leadership of the Republican Party on Puerto Rico self-determination. We are writing to urge your continuation of this proud tradition by approving ballot definitions for the June 11th plebiscite without adding a “Commonwealth” option.

Puerto Rico is a U.S. territory, under the jurisdiction of the Constitution’s Territorial Clause. The territory is informally referred to as a “Commonwealth,” as is Virginia, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and Kentucky, but this term carries no legal meaning and has often been manipulated to offer an impossible package of goods to the U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico.

In 2005 and again in 2007, President George W. Bush’s Task Force on Puerto Rico’s Status recommended that Puerto Rico hold a plebiscite asking voters to either accept or reject Puerto Rico’s territorial status. In 2012, the U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico held this referendum and rejected the current territorial status by a vote of 54% to 46%.

The 2007 report stated explicitly that “if the people of Puerto Rico elect to pursue a permanent non-territorial status, Congress should provide for an additional plebiscite to allow the people of Puerto Rico to choose between one of the permanent non-territorial options permitted by the Constitution: statehood or independence.”

It is time to hold that vote.

The June 11 plebiscite ballot adheres to the Bush Task Force recommendation. It does not include “Commonwealth.” No Republican White House has ever endorsed “Commonwealth.” The President’s

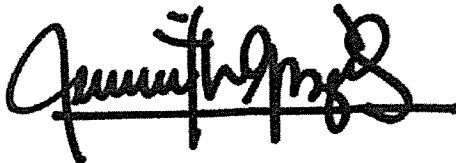
Task Force on Puerto Rico's Status explicitly rejected "Commonwealth" in both its 2007¹ and 2005² reports.

More recently, the 2016 Republican Party platform recognized "the historic significance of the 2012 local referendum in which a 54 percent majority voted to end Puerto Rico's current status as a U.S. territory," and supported "the federally sponsored political status referendum authorized and funded by an Act of Congress in 2014 to ascertain the aspirations of the people of Puerto Rico."

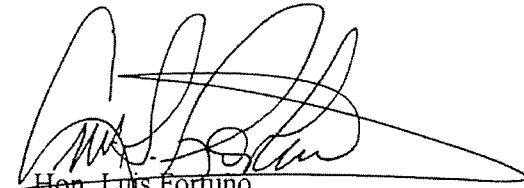
Please respond to Puerto Rico's ballot submission by April 16th to provide the parties with enough time for public education, and please respect for the thoughtful decision of the Puerto Rico legislature and the Puerto Rico State Elections Commission to leave "Commonwealth" off the ballot.

Thank you for your attention to this issue of historic importance to both Puerto Rico and the democratic tradition of the United States.

Sincerely,



Resident Commissioner Jenniffer González-Colón
Chairwoman



Hon. Luis Fortuño
National Committeeman
Former Governor (2009-2013)
Resident Commissioner (2005-2009)



Zoraida F. Fonalledas
National Committeewoman

Cc: Reince Priebus
White House Chief of Staff

¹The 2007 report stated: "The U.S. Constitution would not permit the "New Commonwealth" proposal because land under United States sovereignty must either be a State or a territory."

² The 2005 report noted: "Some have proposed a "New Commonwealth" status....The U.S. Constitution, however, does not allow for such an arrangement."