

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 24, 2018

The Honorable José F. Aponte-Hernández
Former Speaker
Representative at Large
The Capitol
PO Box 9022228
San Juan, Puerto Rico 00902-2228

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I received your letter dated January 19, 2018. I appreciate your kind words about my support for Puerto Rico. My commitment to Puerto Rico is not just a policy matter, it is personal.

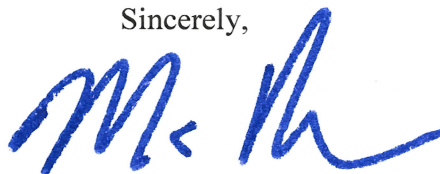
Your letter leads me to believe that you are under the false impression that I have called for an end to efforts to grant Puerto Rico the opportunity to achieve admission as a state. I feel the people of Puerto Rico deserve to know the truth about the current level of support for statehood; not to discourage them, but rather to clearly outline the challenging work that lies ahead.

As you know from your years of experience as a legislator, many important and historic legislative initiatives begin without the requisite number of votes needed. An effective and sustained effort can turn no votes into yes votes, and convert opponents into supporters and even advocates. On statehood, that is what I committed to do when I entered the Senate, and that is what I intend to continue to do in the days and months ahead.

I can think of nothing more damaging to the cause of statehood than an unnecessary and premature legislative defeat. As you know, once a legislator takes a position on an issue, circumstances can force them to harden those views before they have the benefit of hearing from both sides. Today, many of my colleagues oppose statehood because they do not yet fully understand the proposition. Our task is to change that.

I know the people of Puerto Rico have been "Citizens without a State" for far too long. And while the challenges before us may make it hard for some to see, I believe we have never been closer than we are today to giving the people of the island the opportunity to vote for admission to the union.

Sincerely,



Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator