



Congresswoman Stephanie Murphy
Remarks As Prepared for Delivery
Press Conference on Introduction of Puerto Rico Statehood Admission Act
Washington, DC
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Good morning. I'm Congresswoman Stephanie Murphy and my Orlando-area district is home to more Puerto Ricans than nearly any other congressional district.

I care deeply about Puerto Rico because my constituents care deeply about Puerto. But *every* Member of Congress should care about Puerto Rico because Puerto Ricans are our fellow citizens. We're part of the same American family and we should fight for each other.

I want to thank my friend Congresswoman González, who is wonderful advocate for the people of Puerto Rico. I'm proud to join her as one of the lead cosponsors of the bipartisan bill being unveiled today.

The bill will authorize the government of Puerto Rico to hold the first federally-sponsored status vote in the island's history, using funding Congress made available for this purpose back in 2014.

The ballot will be simple and fair, asking voters whether they want Puerto Rico to become a state, yes or no. Those who support statehood can vote "yes" and those who prefer another status can

vote “no.” That’s what Alaska did. That’s what Hawaii did. And that’s what Puerto Rico should do—and this bill requires Congress to respect their wishes.

I will support whatever choice the people of Puerto Rico make, but I personally hope they choose statehood. It’s the only way for Puerto Ricans to have full democratic rights and full equality within this nation, which they have contributed so much to.

I think men and women from Puerto Rico, who serve in the U.S. military with courage and patriotism, should be able to vote for their president and commander-in-chief.

I think they should have two senators and five representatives in Congress to defend their interests.

I think they should be treated equally under all federal health and economic development programs.

I support statehood for Puerto Rico because I support equality for the people of Puerto Rico. They deserve to have the same rights and responsibilities as their fellow citizens in Florida and every other state. Puerto Rico has *earned* its star on the American flag, and I’ll do everything within my power to make that happen.