

FIVE CENTURIES AS A COLONY IS ENOUGH! AFTER ALMOST 100 YEARS OF U.S. CITIZENSHIP & MILITARY SERVICE, IT IS TIME TO BRING DEMOCRACY TO **PUERTO RICO!**

- On November 19, 1493 Christopher Columbus became the first European to land on Puerto Rico. Since that time and for 520 years, we have been a colony – first of Spain and, then, since 1898, of the United States.
- We have been proud citizens of the United States since March of 1917. In May of 1917, President Wilson signed a compulsory military service act, and Puerto Ricans were drafted to fight in World War I. Approximately 20,000 Puerto Ricans ultimately served in the war.
- Since WWI, more than 200,000 of us have honorably served in the U.S. Armed Forces and have fought and died for American democracy. We have contributed greatly in the defense of our Nation at home and abroad in all major wars and foreign engagements of the U.S.
- Proportionately, we have experienced more war casualties in all U.S. wars than any State of the Union.
- Moreover, Puerto Ricans have immensely contributed to the arts, music, science, medicine, businesses, sports and many other economic, social and cultural aspects of our Nation.
- In other words, Puerto Rico is already an integral part of the United States. And yet we are deprived of the most basic rights of citizenship in a representative democracy: The right to vote and the right to be represented in the political body that enacts the laws by which we must abide.
- U.S. Presidents since Ronald Reagan have encouraged Puerto Rico to make a permanent decision about its political status. President Clinton established a President's Task Force on Puerto Rico's Status, and Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama followed with reports encouraging self-determination for Puerto Rico.
- On November 6th, 2012, the people of Puerto Rico held a plebiscite to make a decision on the island's status. The ballot consisted of two questions, and the results were as follows:

- Do you agree that Puerto Rico should continue to have its present form of territorial status?

Yes: 46%

No: 54%

- Irrespective of your answer to the first question, indicate which of the following non-territorial options you prefer.

Statehood: 61%

Independence: 5%

Sovereign Free Associated State: 33%

A MAJORITY OF VOTES REJECTED THE PRESENT COLONIAL STATUS. THERE IS NO CONSENT OF THE GOVERNED.

- Puerto Rico's Resident Commissioner, Pedro Pierluisi, has introduced a bill in Congress - HR 2000 - which puts Puerto Ricans on a path to resolve our status predicament of being the oldest colony in the world.
- It provides "for a federally authorized ratification vote in Puerto Rico on the admission of Puerto Rico into the Union as a State." If a majority of voters ratify Puerto Rico's desire for statehood, the bill describes steps that the President and Congress will take to admit Puerto Rico as a State of the Union.
- Puerto Rico deserves to become the 51st State of the Union with its citizens having the same rights and responsibilities as the rest of our fellow Americans. After all, we have been American citizens since 1917 and fought valiantly in every war since World War I.
- It would be a very unfair and undemocratic act of prejudice on the part of Congress to ignore the plea for equal rights of 3.7 million American citizens.

FIVE CENTURIES AS A COLONY IS ENOUGH!

www.igualdadpr.com

