



SR0165

LRB102 17651 MST 23464 r

1

SENATE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, Chicago is home to over 150,000 Puerto Rican
3 residents who are deeply concerned with and connected to
4 Puerto Rico, as demonstrated by the fact that Chicago's Puerto
5 Rican community was the first to send nongovernmental aid to
6 the island after Hurricane Maria in 2017; and

7 WHEREAS, This diasporic community has long voiced support
8 for Puerto Rico; today, it once again reaffirms this support,
9 in recognition of international law and human rights; and

10 WHEREAS, Puerto Rico enters the 123rd year of U.S.
11 colonization, which began with the U.S. invasion in 1898 and
12 the subsequent annexation of Puerto Rico through The Treaty of
13 Paris between the U.S. and Spain that year; and

14 WHEREAS, The U.S. Supreme Court declared, in the wake of
15 the Plessy vs. Ferguson decision, that Puerto Rico belongs to
16 but is not part of the United States, citing Puerto Ricans
17 supposed racial inferiority and unfitness for self-rule, which
18 would subsequently govern Puerto Rico through a doctrine of
19 separate and unequal; and

20 WHEREAS, The U.S. government and corporations have
21 benefited immensely from Puerto Rico's resources, labor, and

1 environment at the cost of Puerto Rican well-being and freedom
2 and, as a result, fueled mass migration from the island, to
3 such an extent that today the majority of Puerto Ricans live
4 outside of Puerto Rico; and

5 WHEREAS, While Puerto Rico was granted local autonomy
6 through the establishment of the Commonwealth constitution in
7 1952, this did not alter the colonial relationship between the
8 U.S. and Puerto Rico, as the U.S. Congress retained plenary
9 power over Puerto Rico; and

10 WHEREAS, U.S. authorities have long repressed movements
11 and efforts to self-determination and have allowed non-binding
12 plebiscites and referendums that have unresolved the status
13 issue; and

14 WHEREAS, The Puerto Rican New Progressive Party, which
15 advocates for Puerto Rico to become the 51st state of the
16 union, has imposed the two most recent referenda in 2017 and
17 2020; these have been marred by partisan control, voting
18 irregularities, and confusing ballot language; and

19 WHEREAS, Statehood proponents, such as the current
20 governor of Puerto Rico, Pedro Pierluisi, who did not win a
21 majority of the vote, argue that the November 3, 2020
22 referendum produced a mandate for statehood; there are

1 significant reasons to question this conclusion, including the
2 fact that the referendum suffered from historic lows in
3 participation, excluded non-statehood options, offered voters
4 no transition plan on the consequences of the vote, and was
5 widely opposed by much of Puerto Rico's civil society; and

6 WHEREAS, There is no mandate for statehood; there is
7 consensus in Puerto Rico and throughout its diaspora that
8 resolving Puerto Rico's colonial status requires a fair,
9 inclusive, transparent, democratic, and binding
10 self-determination process; and

11 WHEREAS, This type of process is outlined in the Puerto
12 Rico Self-Determination Act, soon to be reintroduced by Puerto
13 Rican Congresswomen Nydia Velazquez and Alexandria
14 Ocasio-Cortez; and

15 WHEREAS, The Puerto Rico Self-Determination Act affirms
16 that Puerto Ricans have the final determination on the destiny
17 of Puerto Rico and proposes the formation of a constitutional
18 convention of elected delegates that represent all of the
19 major political status positions, including statehood, free
20 association, and independence; and

21 WHEREAS, The Act further recommends that the Puerto Rican
22 people must be provided with extensive information and

1 engagement on all non-territorial options available and what
2 the real implications of those options would be, and that the
3 process be led and decided by the people who are impacted, not
4 by political parties or under the pressures of political
5 agendas; and

6 WHEREAS, The act most closely corresponds with President
7 Biden's pledge to "engage Puerto Ricans - including
8 representatives of every status option - in a process of
9 self-determination, listening and developing federal
10 legislation that outlines a fair path forward"; and

11 WHEREAS, Today, the Puerto Rican community in Chicago
12 joins with Puerto Ricans across the diaspora and in Puerto
13 Rico to support Congresswomen Nydia Velazquez and Alexandria
14 Ocasio-Cortez's Puerto Rico Self-Determination Act and calls
15 for an end to the shameful colonization of Puerto Rico;
16 therefore, be it

17 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL
18 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we urge all Illinois
19 legislators at all levels of government to endorse the Puerto
20 Rico Self-Determination Act; and be it further

21 RESOLVED, That we urge the U.S. Congress to respond to
22 will of Puerto Rico and to usher in a new relationship between

1 the United States and the people of Puerto Rico; and be it
2 further

3 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
4 delivered to the President of the United States, the U.S.
5 Senate Majority Leader, the U.S. Senate Minority Leader, the
6 U.S. Speaker of the House, the U.S. House of Representatives
7 Minority Leader, and all members of the Illinois Congressional
8 Delegation.