



AFTER HOUSE AMENDMENT, PASSAGE, WHAT NEXT FOR PUERTO RICO SELF-DETERMINATION?

With 223 votes in its favor, the United States House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed The Puerto Rico Democracy Act of 2010 on April 29. The bill, cosponsored by 182 Representatives, will authorize a two-part plebiscite on the island and is heralded as a substantial step towards ending the 112 years of inequality for the people of Puerto Rico. Authored by Resident Commissioner Pedro Pierluisi, the bill proposes the first congressionally sanctioned plebiscite concerning the island's unequal territorial status.

Pierluisi, Fortuño Joined by Bipartisan Supporters Herald Historic Vote

The Governor of Puerto Rico, Luis Fortuño, and numerous supporters joined Pierluisi to witness the historic vote. Pierluisi thanked all those present as well as a large number of bipartisan supporters of the bill. "Today, truth and democracy triumphed over fear, misinformation and paralysis. We have validated the principle that there is nothing more important than listening to the voices of four million men and women, American citizens, whose will has been ignored for years," said Pierluisi.

H.R. 2499 Moves to Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee

H.R. 2499 has now moved on to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, which held hearings on May 19. The bill must pass both the U.S. House and U.S. Senate before being sent to President Obama to be signed into law "Puerto Rico is a U.S territory. Whatever its merits, territorial status has severe and inherent shortcomings. The U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico, four million proud, serve in the U.S. military and their lives are governed by federal law. Yet they cannot vote for their president and commander-in-chief, are not represented in the Senate, and send a single non-voting member to the House," Pierluisi said in a statement to the committee, chaired by Senator Jeff Bingaman (D-NM). To date, the committee has not reached a decision on moving the bill.

In a letter dated May 27 following a convening of the President's Task Force on Puerto Rico's status, Senator Bingaman and Ranking Member Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) asked the White House to share the President's Task Force position on H.R. 2499 and constitutionally acceptable status options including those that will provide sovereignty for Puerto Rico's four million people.