



EQUALITY LEADERS CELEBRATE JULY FOURTH HOLIDAY IN SAN JUAN

Puerto Rico Governor Luis Fortuño joined Resident Commissioner Pedro Pierluisi and San Juan Mayor Jorge Santini on July 4th in San Juan to commemorate the 234th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The Statehood for Puerto Rico leaders used the occasion to deliver remarks on the issues of Puerto Rico's continued drive for political equality and the inalienable rights of Puerto Ricans to equal United States citizenship. Puerto Rico has been a territory of the United States since 1898 without equal proportionate representation in the United States Congress. The three leaders are members of the pro-Statehood New Progressive Party.

Fortuño recalled the brave acts of the Founding Fathers in 1776 that forced change and representative government, relating them to the loud call for change the people of Puerto Rico made in the 2008 elections. "The change asked for was 'to end the colony,'" he said. The pro-statehood New Progressive Party was swept into power in 2008 winning the governorship and overwhelming majorities in both chambers of the territorial legislature and the municipalities.

Governor Describes 112 Years of Political Inequality under Territorial Status

During the celebrations, the governor warned of a long road ahead. "For us in San Juan, the celebration of the democratic conquests of this nation... for more than they're worth... falls short... it is incomplete. As a territory of American citizens, we still lack the political equality to which we have a right." Puerto Rico has been a subordinate territory of the United States since 1898. Under the territorial status, Puerto Ricans cannot elect proportionate voting representation to the Congress or vote for President. The Democratic and Republican parties in Puerto Rico do participate in the presidential primaries.

Resident Commissioner Pierluisi Calls for Equality

Likewise, Resident Commissioner Pierluisi expressed appreciation for advances made in the past year and a half, also warning of a long road ahead. Although proud of his American citizenship, he lamented that his dreams of equal citizenship are still unfulfilled. "I have to admit that my dream... is of the dignity, equality and the progress that we will enjoy the day Puerto Rico becomes the 51st state of this great American nation" he said.