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COUNCIL URGES BIPARTISAN SUPPORT AND QUICK CONFIRMATION FOR JUDGE SONIA SOTOMAYOR

The following statement was issued by Orlando Llenza on behalf of the U.S. Council for Puerto Rico Statehood urging prompt confirmation of Judge Sonia Sotomayor:

“All Americans can be rightly proud of the nomination of Judge Sonia Sotomayor by President Obama to be the next U.S. Supreme Court Associate Justice. Her superior record on the federal bench demonstrates her outstanding qualifications and has led the American Bar Association to confer its highest rating of “well-qualified” on Judge Sotomayor. All members of the Senate should promptly cast their votes in favor of this most worthy nominee and public servant.

When President Obama announced his selection of Judge Sotomayor to the Supreme Court, he showed us that Puerto Rico is an important part of America’s identity and Hispanic Americans are an important part of the American fabric. This nomination must be seen as yet another great American advance towards acceptance of Puerto Ricans as equal Americans and another step in the long process of Puerto Rican integration into the Union and federation of the states.

Judge Sotomayor was born to Puerto Rican parents in New York and she has always identified with her family’s Puerto Rican heritage. Today she enjoys the full support of the Puerto Rican community in both the mainland states and the territory. Her nomination to be the first Hispanic in the highest court of the land is symbolic of the drive for equality for all Americans. Judge Sotomayor’s nomination, swift confirmation and service on the Supreme Court will soon be added to the long list of achievements of Puerto Ricans and their contributions to our country.

Judge Sotomayor’s nomination is remarkable and just, and it demonstrates that Hispanics and Puerto Ricans are not peripheral in mainland society. But it must also remind us that the just search for equality for all American citizens remains incomplete. Puerto Rico has been in a state of perpetual inequality for half the life of the Republic since our United States Constitution came into effect.

All of us who are proud to see a Hispanic achieve this highest honor must remember that four million Americans in Puerto Rico remain unequal second-class citizens themselves. They await the day when they will enjoy the rights of equality and parity with their fellow citizens on the mainland. The same warm welcome that Americans of all colors and creeds today dispense on Judge Sonia Sotomayor as she achieves this unprecedented milestone in American history should also be justly dispensed on these four million citizens.”

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Orlando Llenza".

Maj. Gen. Orlando Llenza, USAF (Ret.)

The U.S. Council for Puerto Rico Statehood is an education and advocacy organization dedicated to the education of all Americans about Puerto Rico, its current status within the union of the United States, and why Statehood is in the best interests of all Americans, in the 50 states and Puerto Rico, given the unequal effects of the current status on citizenship, sovereignty and civil rights.