



Presidents of the United States on Puerto Rico: *A Legacy of Support for Human Rights and Self-Determination*

Gerald Ford – “I believe that the appropriate status for Puerto Rico is statehood. I propose, therefore, that the people of Puerto Rico and the Congress of the United States begin now to take those steps which will result in statehood for Puerto Rico. I will recommend to the 95th Congress the enactment of legislation.”

Jimmy Carter – “My administration will respect the wishes of the people of Puerto Rico and your right to self-determination.”

Ronald Reagan – “I favor statehood for Puerto Rico and if the people of Puerto Rico vote for statehood in their coming referendum I would, as President, initiate the enabling legislation to make this a reality.”

Ronald Reagan – “Puerto Ricans have borne the responsibilities of U.S. citizenship with honor and courage... its strong tradition of democracy provides leadership and stability in that region.”

George H. W. Bush – “As long as Puerto Rico is a territory, the will of its people regarding their political status should be ascertained periodically by means of a general right of referendum”

George H. W. Bush – “Status as a territory was never intended to be permanent, either historically or constitutionally. It was a temporary transitional condition leading to statehood.”

George H. W. Bush – “Statehood has always struck me as the right and logical destination for Puerto Rico. I favored it as president and continue to support it today.”

William Jefferson Clinton – “It is our policy...to work with leaders of the Commonwealth and the Congress to clarify the options to enable Puerto Ricans to determine their preference among options for the island’s future status that are not incompatible with the Constitution and basic laws and policies of the United States; and to implement such an option if chosen by a majority.”

George W. Bush – “I do not care about politics. I care about what is right. For Puerto Rico to be a state would be good”

Barack Obama – “I understand and respect the aspiration of the U.S. citizens in Puerto Rico who, [like you,] believe that statehood is the best status option for Puerto Rico, as I understand and respect the aspirations of those who favor other status options for Puerto Rico”