

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 260

To enable the admission of the territory of Puerto Rico into the Union
as a State, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 4, 2017

Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico introduced the following bill; which
was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

A BILL

To enable the admission of the territory of Puerto Rico
into the Union as a State, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This legislation may be cited as the “Puerto Rico Ad-
5 mission Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 The Congress finds the following:

8 (1) The territory of Puerto Rico has a popu-
9 lation of more than 3.4 million, and United States

1 citizenship has been granted to individuals born in
2 the islands for one hundred years.

3 (2) The territory has an insular government
4 that, subject to Federal law, exercises authority
5 similar to that possessed by the governments of the
6 several States.

7 (3) The United States citizens of Puerto Rico
8 are not treated equally in Federal law with citizens
9 in the States and do not have representation in their
10 national government other than that provided by a
11 sole resident commissioner who can only vote in
12 committees of the House of Representatives to which
13 she or he is assigned.

14 (4) An overwhelming majority of the United
15 States citizens residing in Puerto Rico want to re-
16 place territory status with a permanent form of gov-
17 ernment that provides for equality and for demo-
18 cratic representation in the making of their national
19 laws.

20 (5) It has been the longstanding policy of the
21 United States that the American citizens of the ter-
22 ritory can determine whether it should eventually be-
23 come a State or a nation.

24 (6) In a plebiscite held in Puerto Rico under
25 local law, a majority of the vote rejected continu-

1 ation of the current territory status, with more than
2 61.1 percent petitioning the Congress and the Presi-
3 dent for statehood and a transition to equality and
4 permanence within the Union of States.

5 (7) Public Law 113–76 responded to the plebi-
6 scite under territorial law by providing for a plebi-
7 scite under Federal law on an option or options pro-
8 posed by the Elections Commission of Puerto Rico
9 that can resolve the question of the territory’s status
10 and are found by the Department of Justice to not
11 conflict with the Constitution, laws, and policies of
12 the United States.

13 (8) The Governor, two-thirds majorities of each
14 house of the Legislative Assembly, and the Resident
15 Commissioner of Puerto Rico elected in November
16 2016 were voted into office on a platform of seeking
17 equality and permanence for Puerto Rico within the
18 United States.

19 (9) Puerto Rico is treated as a State for the
20 purposes of most laws but is not treated equally with
21 the States under dozens of statutes, including some
22 providing for major health and other programs for
23 individuals with critical needs and in a number of
24 revenue measures.

1 (10) The limitations of, and treatment under,
2 territory status has left Puerto Rico under-developed
3 and substantially contributed to its economy being
4 weak for four decades and in depression for the last
5 one.

6 (11) Millions of the U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico
7 have moved to a State for the greater opportunity
8 and better way of life possible in a State.

9 (12) Equality within the Nation is required for
10 a healthy American economy and essential for Puer-
11 to Rico's social and economic health as well as for
12 basic reasons of democracy.

13 (13) Puerto Ricans have contributed greatly to
14 the Nation in all fields of endeavor both in war and
15 in peace.

16 (14) Puerto Rico should be transitioned into
17 equality within the Union.

18 **SEC. 3. PROCESS FOR REPLACING TERRITORY STATUS.**

19 (a) Consistent with Public Law 113–76, it is the pol-
20 icy of the United States that the U.S. citizens of Puerto
21 Rico may choose whether Puerto Rico will become a State
22 or a nation through a plebiscite under that law.

23 (b) If the U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico reaffirm the
24 territory's choice of statehood through a plebiscite under
25 Public Law 113–76, Federal laws that do not apply to

1 Puerto Rico or apply differently to the territory than to
2 the several States are amended or repealed to phase in
3 the equal treatment of Puerto Rico with the several States
4 by January 3, 2025, as shall be provided for in a plan
5 submitted to the Congress and the President not later
6 than 270 days after the enactment of this Act by the
7 President’s Task Force on Puerto Rico’s Status, and
8 Puerto Rico shall become a State on January 3, 2025.

9 **SEC. 4. FEDERAL OFFICES.**

10 (a) **PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT.**—With re-
11 spect to the election for the offices of President and Vice
12 President in November 2024—

13 (1) Puerto Rico shall be considered a State for
14 purposes of chapter 21 of title 3, United States
15 Code, and the electors of Puerto Rico shall be con-
16 sidered electors of a State for purposes of such
17 chapter; and

18 (2) for purposes of section 3 of such title, the
19 number of electors from Puerto Rico shall be equal
20 to the number of Senators and Representatives to
21 which Puerto Rico is entitled during the One Hun-
22 dred Nineteenth Congress, as determined in accord-
23 ance with subsection (b).

24 (b) **CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION.**—

1 (1) REPRESENTATIVES.—Effective on the first
2 day of the One Hundred Nineteenth Congress, the
3 number of Representatives of States in the House of
4 Representatives shall be increased by the number of
5 Representatives of the State with the population
6 closest to that of Puerto Rico in the 2020 decennial
7 census and the additional seats shall be occupied by
8 Representatives of Puerto Rico. The Clerk of the
9 House of Representatives shall transmit to the Gov-
10 ernor of Puerto Rico and the Speaker of the House
11 of Representatives a certificate of the number of
12 Representatives to which Puerto Rico will be entitled
13 not later than January 3, 2024.

14 (2) ELECTION.—The regularly scheduled gen-
15 eral elections for Federal office held in Puerto Rico
16 in November 2024 shall include the election of two
17 Senators and the number of Representatives of
18 Puerto Rico provided for in paragraph (1) of this
19 subsection, all of whom shall first take office on
20 January 3, 2025. The Senate shall determine the
21 class to which each of the Senators shall be as-
22 signed.

23 (3) RESIDENT COMMISSIONER.—Section 36 of
24 the Act of March 2, 1917, 39 Stat. 963, and section

1 1 of the Act of June 22, 1906, 34 Stat. 417, as
2 amended, are repealed effective January 3, 2025.

3 (4) PRIMARY ELECTIONS.—The Government of
4 Puerto Rico may hold primary elections for the of-
5 fices described in this section at such time and in
6 such manner as it may provide, so long as such elec-
7 tions are held in the manner required by the laws
8 applicable to elections for Federal office.

9 **SEC. 5. PROCLAMATION.**

10 Following the transition process set forth in section
11 3, the President shall issue a proclamation declaring that
12 Puerto Rico is admitted into the Union on an equal foot-
13 ing with the other States, effective January 3, 2025, and
14 Puerto Rico shall be so admitted.

15 **SEC. 6. STATE.**

16 Upon the admission of Puerto Rico into the Union
17 as a State—

18 (a) STATE CONSTITUTION.—The Constitution of the
19 Commonwealth of Puerto Rico shall be accepted as the
20 Constitution of the State.

21 (b) TERRITORY.—The State shall consist of all of the
22 territory, together with the waters included in the seaward
23 boundary, of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

24 (c) CONTINUITY OF GOVERNMENT.—The individuals
25 holding legislative, executive, and judicial offices of the

1 Commonwealth of Puerto Rico shall continue to discharge
2 the duties of their respective offices.

3 (d) CONTINUITY OF LAWS.—

4 (1) TERRITORY LAW.—All of the laws of Puerto
5 Rico shall continue in force and effect in the State,
6 except as may be modified consistent with this Act,
7 and shall be subject to repeal or amendment by the
8 Legislative Assembly and the Governor of the sov-
9 ereign State of Puerto Rico.

10 (2) FEDERAL LAW.—All of the laws of the
11 United States shall have the same force and effect
12 as on the date immediately prior to the date of ad-
13 mission of Puerto Rico into the Union as a State,
14 except for any provision of law that treats Puerto
15 Rico and its residents differently than the States of
16 the Union and their residents, which shall be amend-
17 ed as of the date of admission to treat the State of
18 Puerto Rico and its residents equally with the other
19 States of the Union and their residents.

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