



LEAGUE of UNITED
LATIN AMERICAN
CITIZENS

1133 19th Street, NW, Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 833-6130 • FAX (202) 833-6135

Press Release

For Immediate Release
May 21, 2021

Contact: David Cruz - (818) 689-9991 Mobile
DavidCruz@LULAC.org

LULAC RENEWS CALL FOR U.S. CONGRESS TO TAKE ACTION ON PUERTO RICO STATEHOOD

Nation's Oldest and Largest Latino Civil Rights Organization Supports Vote of Island's Majority in Seeking Recognition

Washington, DC - The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) is issuing a renewed call for Congress and the Biden Administration to take up the issue of statehood for Puerto Rico, and says resolution of the question is long overdue. Last November, 53% of Puerto Rico voters in [a non-binding referendum](#) said yes to statehood, 47% opposed it. Officials said 55% of the island's voters participated. There are 3.2 million people in Puerto Rico.

"We seek only the same democratic freedoms and rights of every other American citizen," says Elsie Valdes-Ramos, National Vice-President for Women and longtime Latino community advocate both in Puerto Rico and the U.S. mainland. "The people of Puerto Rico have earned the right to statehood, both through the electoral process and the decades of contributions and loyalty to the United States. We have done so in every sense of the word, up to and including serving in the armed forces and paying the highest price on behalf of our nation, the loss of our lives. We must no longer be denied and I trust that this Administration understands how important it is that Puerto Rico not be left behind," adds Valdes.

Also, Puerto Ricans on the island point out their positive economic impact on the U.S. For example, they pay payroll taxes, and support vital social services including Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income, and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) which is commonly referred to as food stamps. Yet, they cannot vote for president and do not have a vote in Congress. Opponents to statehood counter that Puerto Ricans on the island don't pay federal income taxes and that being a U.S. territory still affords them the status of citizens. LULAC says a more definitive solution is needed.

"LULAC strongly supports the wishes of the people of Puerto Rico," says Domingo Garcia, LULAC National President. "It's long overdue that Congress once and for all do the right thing and resolve this issue. Until we do, we will continue to see the inequality of treatment as we witnessed amid the devastation of Hurricane Maria in 2017, the earthquakes of 2019 and the COVID-19 pandemic since early 2020. Full recovery of Puerto Rico can only happen when it too has both the voice and the vote at the ballot box to be heard. The time is now," adds Garcia.

###

About LULAC

The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) is the nation's largest and oldest Hispanic civil rights volunteer-based organization that empowers Hispanic Americans and builds strong Latino communities. Headquartered in Washington, DC, with 1,000 councils around the United States and Puerto Rico, LULAC's programs, services, and advocacy address the most important issues for Latinos, meeting the critical needs of today and the future. For more information, visit <https://lulac.org/>