

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2499

To provide for a federally sanctioned self-determination process for the people of Puerto Rico.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 19, 2009

Mr. PIERLUISI (for himself, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Mr. ARCURI, Mr. BAIRD, Ms. BERKLEY, Mr. BERMAN, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. BOUSTANY, Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, Mr. BROWN of South Carolina, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. CARDOZA, Mr. CASTLE, Ms. CLARKE, Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. COSTA, Mr. CUELLAR, Mr. DELAHUNT, Mr. DENT, Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida, Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida, Mr. DOYLE, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA, Mr. FARR, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. FLAKE, Ms. FUDGE, Mr. GERLACH, Mr. GRAYSON, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. HARE, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. HINCHEY, Mr. HOYER, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. KILDEE, Ms. KILPATRICK of Michigan, Mr. KLEIN of Florida, Mr. KRATOVIL, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California, Mr. MACK, Mr. MAFFEI, Ms. MARKEY of Colorado, Mr. MASSA, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. MCCAUL, Mr. MICA, Mr. MOLLOHAN, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Ms. NORTON, Mr. OLVER, Mr. ORTIZ, Mr. PENCE, Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. POLIS of Colorado, Mr. PUTNAM, Mr. RAHALL, Mr. REYES, Mr. RODRIGUEZ, Ms. ROSLEHTINEN, Mr. SABLAN, Mr. SALAZAR, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, Mr. SHULER, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. STARK, Mr. TAYLOR, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. TONKO, Mr. WALZ, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Ms. WATSON, Mr. WATT, Mr. WAXMAN, Mr. WESTMORELAND, Mr. WEXLER, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. WU, Mr. YARMUTH, and Mr. YOUNG of Alaska) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

A BILL

To provide for a federally sanctioned self-determination process for the people of Puerto Rico.

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 Act may be cited as the “Puerto Rico Democ-
 5 racy Act of 2009”.

6 **SEC. 2. FEDERALLY SANCTIONED PROCESS FOR PUERTO**
 7 **RICO’S SELF-DETERMINATION.**

8 (a) **FIRST PLEBISCITE.**—The Government of Puerto
 9 Rico is authorized to conduct a plebiscite in Puerto Rico.
 10 The 2 options set forth on the ballot shall be preceded
 11 by the following statement: “Instructions: Mark one of the
 12 following 2 options:

13 “(1) Puerto Rico should continue to have its
 14 present form of political status. If you agree, mark
 15 here ____.

16 “(2) Puerto Rico should have a different polit-
 17 ical status. If you agree, mark here ____.”.

18 (b) **PROCEDURE IF MAJORITY IN FIRST PLEBISCITE**
 19 **FAVORS OPTION 1.**—If a majority of the ballots in the
 20 plebiscite are cast in favor of Option 1, the Government
 21 of Puerto Rico is authorized to conduct additional plebi-
 22 scites under subsection (a) at intervals of every 8 years

1 from the date that the results of the prior plebiscite are
2 certified under section 3(d).

3 (c) PROCEDURE IF MAJORITY IN FIRST PLEBISCITE
4 FAVORS OPTION 2.—If a majority of the ballots in a plebi-
5 scite conducted pursuant to subsection (a) or (b) are cast
6 in favor of Option 2, the Government of Puerto Rico is
7 authorized to conduct a plebiscite on the following 3 op-
8 tions:

9 (1) Independence: Puerto Rico should become
10 fully independent from the United States. If you
11 agree, mark here ____.

12 (2) Sovereignty in Association with the United
13 States: Puerto Rico and the United States should
14 form a political association between sovereign na-
15 tions that will not be subject to the Territorial
16 Clause of the United States Constitution. If you
17 agree, mark here ____.

18 (3) Statehood: Puerto Rico should be admitted
19 as a State of the Union. If you agree, mark here
20 ____.

21 **SEC. 3. APPLICABLE LAWS AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS.**

22 (a) APPLICABLE LAWS.—All Federal laws applicable
23 to the election of the Resident Commissioner shall, as ap-
24 propriate and consistent with this Act, also apply to any
25 plebiscites held pursuant to this Act. Any reference in

1 such Federal laws to elections shall be considered, as ap-
2 propriate, to be a reference to the plebiscites, unless it
3 would frustrate the purposes of this Act.

4 (b) RULES AND REGULATIONS.—The Puerto Rico
5 State Elections Commission shall issue all rules and regu-
6 lations necessary to carry out the plebiscites under this
7 Act.

8 (c) ELIGIBILITY TO VOTE.—Each of the following
9 shall be eligible to vote in any plebiscite held under this
10 Act:

11 (1) All eligible voters under the electoral laws in
12 effect in Puerto Rico at the time the plebiscite is
13 held.

14 (2) All United States citizens born in Puerto
15 Rico who comply, to the satisfaction of the Puerto
16 Rico State Elections Commission, with all Commis-
17 sion requirements (other than the residency require-
18 ment) applicable to eligibility to vote in a general
19 election in Puerto Rico. Persons eligible to vote
20 under this subsection shall, upon timely request sub-
21 mitted to the Commission in compliance with any
22 terms imposed by the Electoral Law of Puerto Rico,
23 be entitled to receive an absentee ballot for the plebi-
24 scite.

1 (d) CERTIFICATION OF PLEBISCITE RESULTS.—The
2 Puerto Rico State Elections Commission shall certify the
3 results of any plebiscite held under this Act to the Presi-
4 dent of the United States and to the Members of the Sen-
5 ate and House of Representatives of the United States.

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