

111TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 2499

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 30, 2010

Received; read twice and referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural
Resources

AN ACT

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,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Puerto Rico Democ-
3 racy Act of 2010”.

4 **SEC. 2. FEDERALLY SANCTIONED PROCESS FOR PUERTO**
5 **RICO’S SELF-DETERMINATION.**

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

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

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

16 (b) **PROCEDURE IF MAJORITY IN FIRST PLEBISCITE**
17 **FAVORS OPTION 1.**—If a majority of the ballots in the
18 plebiscite are cast in favor of Option 1, the Government
19 of Puerto Rico is authorized to conduct additional plebi-
20 scites under subsection (a) at intervals of every 8 years
21 from the date that the results of the prior plebiscite are
22 certified under section 3(d).

23 (c) **PROCEDURE IF MAJORITY IN FIRST PLEBISCITE**
24 **FAVORS OPTION 2.**—If a majority of the ballots in a plebi-
25 scite conducted pursuant to subsection (a) or (b) are cast
26 in favor of Option 2, the Government of Puerto Rico is

1 authorized to conduct a plebiscite on the following 4 op-
2 tions:

3 (1) Independence: Puerto Rico should become
4 fully independent from the United States. If you
5 agree, mark here ____.

6 (2) Sovereignty in Association with the United
7 States: Puerto Rico and the United States should
8 form a political association between sovereign na-
9 tions that will not be subject to the Territorial
10 Clause of the United States Constitution. If you
11 agree, mark here ____.

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

15 (4) Commonwealth: Puerto Rico should con-
16 tinue to have its present form of political status. If
17 you agree, mark here _____.

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

19 (a) APPLICABLE LAWS.—All Federal laws applicable
20 to the election of the Resident Commissioner shall, as ap-
21 propriate and consistent with this Act, also apply to any
22 plebiscites held pursuant to this Act. Any reference in
23 such Federal laws to elections shall be considered, as ap-
24 propriate, to be a reference to the plebiscites, unless it
25 would frustrate the purposes of this Act.

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

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

8 (1) All eligible voters under the electoral laws in
9 effect in Puerto Rico at the time the plebiscite is
10 held.

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

22 (d) CERTIFICATION OF PLEBISCITE RESULTS.—The
23 Puerto Rico State Elections Commission shall certify the
24 results of any plebiscite held under this Act to the Presi-

1 dent of the United States and to the Members of the Sen-
2 ate and House of Representatives of the United States.

3 (e) ENGLISH LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS.—The
4 Puerto Rico State Elections Commission shall—

5 (1) ensure that all ballots used for any plebi-
6 scite held under this Act include the full content of
7 the ballot printed in English;

8 (2) inform persons voting in any plebiscite held
9 under this Act that, if Puerto Rico retains its cur-
10 rent political status or is admitted as a State of the
11 United States, the official language requirements of
12 the Federal Government shall apply to Puerto Rico
13 in the same manner and to the same extent as
14 throughout the United States; and

15 (3) inform persons voting in any plebiscite held
16 under this Act that, if Puerto Rico retains its cur-
17 rent political status or is admitted as a State of the
18 United States, it is the Sense of Congress that it is
19 in the best interest of the United States for the
20 teaching of English to be promoted in Puerto Rico
21 as the language of opportunity and empowerment in
22 the United States in order to enable students in
23 public schools to achieve English language pro-
24 ficiency.

1 (f) PLEBISCITE COSTS.—All costs associated with
2 any plebiscite held under this Act (including the printing,
3 distribution, transportation, collection, and counting of all
4 ballots) shall be paid for by the Commonwealth of Puerto
5 Rico.

Passed the House of Representatives April 29, 2010.

Attest: LORRAINE C. MILLER,
Clerk.