

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1965

To set forth the terms for the admission of the territory of Puerto Rico
as a State of the Union.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 28, 2019

Mr. SOTO (for himself and Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico) introduced
the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

A BILL

To set forth the terms for the admission of the territory
of Puerto Rico as a State of the Union.

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 Admission
5 Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds that—

8 (1) the duly elected legislature of Puerto Rico
9 passed legislation to hold a plebiscite on the status

1 of Puerto Rico, which was enacted on June 11,
2 2017;

3 (2) in that plebiscite, voters were given choices:
4 Statehood, Free Association/Independence, Current
5 Territorial Status;

6 (3) that plebiscite was duly noticed and held on
7 June 11, 2017 in accordance with all Puerto Rico
8 and Federal laws;

9 (4) that plebiscite was satisfactorily observed by
10 a bipartisan Congressional Delegation of Represent-
11 ative Don Young and Representative Darren Soto;
12 and

13 (5) 97.2 percent of votes favored Statehood.

14 **SEC. 3. PURPOSE.**

15 The purpose of the Act is to set forth the terms for
16 the admission of the territory of Puerto Rico as a State
17 of the Union.

18 **SEC. 4. ADMISSION INTO THE UNION.**

19 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the provisions of this
20 Act, upon issuance of the proclamation required by section
21 5, the State of Puerto Rico is declared to be a State of
22 the United States of America, and is declared admitted
23 into the Union on an equal footing with the other States
24 in all respects whatever.

1 (b) CONSTITUTION OF STATE.—The State Constitu-
 2 tion shall always be republican in form and shall not be
 3 repugnant to the United States Constitution and the prin-
 4 ciples of the Declaration of Independence. The current
 5 Puerto Rico Constitution is deemed to be republican in
 6 form and in conformity with the United States Constitu-
 7 tion and is hereby accepted as the constitution of the State
 8 of Puerto Rico.

9 **SEC. 5. ISSUANCE OF PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATION.**

10 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after en-
 11 actment of this Act, the President shall issue a proclama-
 12 tion announcing that Puerto Rico is admitted into the
 13 Union on equal footing with other States in all respects.

14 (b) ADMISSION OF STATE UPON ISSUANCE OF PROC-
 15 LAMATION.—Upon the issuance of the proclamation under
 16 subsection (a), the State shall be deemed admitted into
 17 the Union as provided in section 4.

18 **SEC. 6. STATE OF PUERTO RICO.**

19 Upon the admission of Puerto Rico into the Union
 20 as a State, the following apply:

21 (1) TERRITORY.—The newly admitted State of
 22 Puerto Rico shall consist of all its islands, together
 23 with the appurtenant reefs and territorial waters in
 24 the seaward boundary, presently under the jurisdic-
 25 tion of the territory of Puerto Rico.

1 (2) CONTINUITY OF GOVERNMENT.—Persons
2 holding executive, legislative, and judicial offices in
3 the Government of Puerto Rico shall continue to dis-
4 charge the duties of their respective offices con-
5 sistent with the United States Constitution, Federal
6 laws applicable to Puerto Rico, the Puerto Rico Con-
7 stitution, and the laws of the State of Puerto Rico.

8 (3) CONTINUITY OF LAWS.—

9 (A) TERRITORY LAW.—All of the territory
10 laws in force in Puerto Rico on the date of the
11 enactment of this Act shall—

12 (i) continue in force and effect in the
13 State, except as modified by this Act; and

14 (ii) be subject to repeal or amendment
15 by the legislature and the Governor of
16 Puerto Rico.

17 (B) FEDERAL LAW.—All of the laws of the
18 United States shall have the same force and ef-
19 fect as on the date immediately prior to the
20 date of admission of Puerto Rico into the Union
21 as a State, except for any provision of law that
22 treats Puerto Rico and its residents differently
23 than the States of the Union and their resi-
24 dents, which shall be amended as of the date of
25 admission to treat the State of Puerto Rico and

1 its residents equally with the other States of the
2 Union and their residents.

3 (4) UNITED STATES CITIZENSHIP.—No provi-
4 sion of this Act shall operate to confer United States
5 citizenship, nor terminate citizenship hereto lawfully
6 acquired, nor restore citizenship terminated or lost
7 under any law of the United States or under any
8 treaty to which the United States is or was a party.

9 **SEC. 7. SEVERABILITY.**

10 If any provision of this Act, or any section, sub-
11 section, sentence, clause, phrase, or individual word, or the
12 application thereof to any person or circumstance is held
13 invalid, the validity of the remainder of the Act and of
14 the application of any such provision, section, subsection,
15 sentence, clause, phrase, or individual word to other per-
16 sons and circumstances shall not be affected thereby.

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