

tempore (Mr. LARSEN of Washington) at 12 o'clock and 15 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on questions previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

Ordering the previous question on House Resolution 1305, by the yeas and nays;

Agreeing to House Resolution 1305, if ordered.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. The second electronic vote will be conducted as a 5-minute vote.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2499, PUERTO RICO DEMOCRACY ACT OF 2009

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on ordering the previous question on House Resolution 1305, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 218, nays 188, not voting 24, as follows:

[Roll No. 231] YEAS—218

- Ackerman, Crowley, Hirono, Adler (NJ), Cuellar, Hodes, Altmire, Cummings, Holden, Andrews, Dahlkemper, Holt, Arcuri, Davis (CA), Hoyer, Baca, Davis (IL), Inslee, Baird, Davis (TN), Israel, Baldwin, DeFazio, Jackson (IL), Barrow, Delahunt, Jackson Lee, Bean, DeLauro, (TX), Becerra, Deutch, Johnson, E. B., Berkley, Dicks, Kagen, Berman, Dingell, Kanjorski, Berry, Doggett, Kaptur, Bishop (GA), Doyle, Kennedy, Bishop (NY), Driehaus, Kildee, Blumenaucr, Edwards (MD), Kilpatrick (MI), Bocciare, Edwards (TX), Kind, Boswell, Ellsworth, Kissell, Boucher, Engel, Klein (FL), Boyd, Eshoo, Kosmas, Brady (PA), Etheridge, Kucinich, Braley (IA), Farr, Larsen (WA), Bright, Fattah, Larson (CT), Brown, Corrine, Filner, Lee (CA), Butterfield, Foster, Levin, Capps, Frank (MA), Lewis (GA), Capuano, Fudge, Lipinski, Cardoza, Garamendi, Loeb sack, Carnahan, Gonzalez, Lofgren, Zoe, Carney, Grayson, Lowey, Carson (IN), Green, Al, Lujan, Castor (FL), Green, Gene, Lynch, Chandler, Grijalva, Maffei, Chu, Hall (NY), Clarke, Halvorson, Markey (CO), Clay, Hare, Markey (MA), Cleaver, Harman, Marshall, Clyburn, Hastings (FL), Matheson, Cohen, Heinrich, Matsui, Connolly (VA), Herse th Sandi in, McCarthy (NY), Cooper, Higgins, McCollum, Costa, Himes, McDermott, Costello, Hinchey, McGovern, Courtney, Hinojosa, McIntyre

- McMahon, McNeerney, Meek (FL), Michaud, Miller (NC), Reyes, Miller, George, Richardson, Moore (KS), Rodriguez, Moran (VA), Ross, Murphy (CT), Murphy (NY), Murphy, Patrick, Rush, Nadler (NY), Ryan (OH), Napolitano, Salazar, Neal (MA), Sanchez, Linda T., Sanchez, Loretta, Oberstar, Obey, Sarbanes, Ortiz, Schakowsky, Owens, Schauer, Pallone, Schiff, Pascrell, Schrader, Pastor (AZ), Payne, Perlmutter, Scott (VA), Perriello, Serrano, Peters, Sestak, Peterson, Shea-Porter, Polis (CO), Sherman, Pomeroy, Sires

NAYS—188

- Aderholt, Gerlach, Moran (KS), Akin, Giffords, Murphy, Tim, Alexander, Gingrey (GA), Myrick, Austria, Gohmert, Neugebauer, Bachmann, Goodlatte, Nunes, Bachus, Granger, Nye, Bartlett, Graves, Olson, Barton (TX), Griffith, Paul, Biggert, Guthrie, Paulsen, Bilbray, Gutierrez, Pence, Bilirakis, Hall (TX), Petri, Bishop (UT), Harper, Pitts, Blackburn, Hastings (WA), Poe (TX), Blunt, Heller, Posey, Boehner, Hensarling, Price (GA), Bonner, Herger, Putnam, Bono Mack, Hill, Radanovich, Boozman, Honda, Rehberg, Boren, Hunter, Reichert, Boustany, Inglis, Roe (TN), Brady (TX), Issa, Rogers (AL), Broun (GA), Jenkins, Rogers (KY), Brown (SC), Johnson (IL), Rogers (MI), Brown-Waite, Johnson, Sam, Rohrabacher, Jones, Rooney, Burgess, Jordan (OH), King (IA), Burton (IN), King (NY), Royce, Calvert, Kingston, Ryan (WI), Camp, Kirk, Scalise, Campbell, Kirkpatrick (AZ), Schmidt, Cantor, Kline (MN), Schock, Cao, Kratovil, Sensenbrenner, Lamborn, Sessions, Carter, Lance, Shadegg, Cassidy, Latham, Shimkus, Castle, LaTourette, Shuster, Chaffetz, Latta, Simpson, Lee (NY), Simpson, Lee (CA), Smith (NE), Linder, LoBiondo, Smith (NJ), Cole, Lucas, Smith (TX), Conaway, Lummis, Souder, Crenshaw, Luetkemeyer, Stearns, Culberson, Lummis, Sullivan, Davis (KY), Lungren, Daniel E., Taylor, Dent, Mack, Terry, Diaz-Balart, L., Manzullo, Thornberry, Diaz-Balart, M., Marchant, Tiahrt, Dreier, McCauly, Tiberi, McCauly, Towns, Duncan, McClintock, Turner, Ehlert, McCotter, Upton, Ellison, McCotter, Velazquez, Emerson, McHenry, Walden, Flake, McKeon, Weiner, Fleming, McMorris, Westmoreland, Forbes, Rodgers, Whitfield, Fortenberry, Mica, Wilson (SC), Miller (FL), Miller (MI), Wittman, Franks (AZ), Miller, Gary, Wolf, Frelinghuysen, Minnick, Young (AK), Gallegly, Minnick, Young (FL), Garrett (NJ), Mitchell

NOT VOTING—24

- Barrett (SC), Conyers, DeGette, Buchanan, Davis (AL), Fallon

- Gordon (TN), Melancon, Shuler, Hoekstra, Mollohan, Sutton, Johnson (GA), Moore (WI), Teague, Kilroy, Pingree (ME), Wamp, Langevin, Platts, Waters, Meeks (NY), Roybal-Allard, Wilson (OH)

□ 1247

Messrs. MCCLINTOCK, BONNER, TOWNS, YOUNG of Alaska, HONDA and Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida changed their vote from "yea" to "nay."

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi and Ms. MARKEY of Colorado changed their vote from "nay" to "yea."

So the previous question was ordered.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Statement for:

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained and was not present for the vote on Ordering the Previous Question on H. Res. 1305 (rollcall vote 231). Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

Statement against:

Mr. PLATTS. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 231. I was inadvertently detained and missed said vote. Had I been present, I would have voted "no."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 222, nays 190, not voting 18, as follows:

[Roll No. 232] YEAS—222

- Ackerman, Cooper, Hastings (FL), Adler (NJ), Costa, Heinrich, Andrews, Costello, Higgins, Arcuri, Courtney, Himes, Baca, Crowley, Hinchey, Baird, Cuellar, Hinojosa, Baldwin, Cummings, Hirono, Barrow, Dahlkemper, Hodes, Bean, Davis (CA), Holden, Becerra, Davis (TN), Holt, Berkley, DeFazio, Hoyer, Berman, Delahunt, Inslee, Berry, DeLauro, Israel, Bishop (GA), Deutch, Jackson (IL), Bishop (NY), Dicks, Jackson Lee, Blumenaucr, Dingell, (TX), Bocciare, Doggett, Johnson (GA), Boren, Donnelly (IN), Johnson, E. B., Boswell, Doyle, Kagen, Boucher, Driehaus, Kanjorski, Boyd, Edwards (MD), Kennedy, Brady (PA), Edwards (TX), Kildee, Braley (IA), Ellsworth, Kilpatrick (MI), Bright, Engel, Kind, Brown, Corrine, Eshoo, Kissell, Butterfield, Etheridge, Klein (FL), Cao, Farr, Kosmas, Capps, Fattah, Langevin, Capuano, Filner, Larsen (WA), Cardoza, Foster, Larson (CT), Carnahan, Frank (MA), Lee (CA), Carney, Fudge, Levin, Carson (IN), Garamendi, Lewis (GA), Castor (FL), Gonzalez, Lipinski, Chandler, Grayson, Loeb sack, Chu, Green, Al, Lofgren, Zoe, Clarke, Green, Gene, Lowey, Clay, Grijalva, Lujan, Cleaver, Gutierrez, Lynch, Clyburn, Hall (NY), Maffei, Cohen, Halvorson, Maloney, Connolly (VA), Hare, Markey (CO), Conyers, Harman, Markey (MA)

Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (NY)
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McIntyre
McMahon
McNerney
Meek (FL)
Michaud
Miller (NC)
Miller, George
Moore (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy (NY)
Murphy, Patrick
Nadler (NY)
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Payne
Perlmutter

Perriello
Peters
Peterson
Polis (CO)
Pomeroy
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Rangel
Reyes
Richardson
Rodriguez
Ross
Rothman (NJ)
Roybal-Allard
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Salazar
Sánchez, Linda
T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schauer
Schiff
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Sestak

Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Speier
Spratt
Stupak
Sutton
Tanner
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman
Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Waxman
Weiner
Welch
Woolsey
Wu
Yarmuth

NAYS—190

Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Altmire
Austria
Bachmann
Bachus
Bartlett
Barton (TX)
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blunt
Boehner
Bonner
Bono Mack
Boozman
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Broun (GA)
Brown (SC)
Brown-Waite,
Ginny
Buchanan
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Buyer
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Cassidy
Castle
Chaffetz
Childers
Coble
Coffman (CO)
Cole
Conaway
Crenshaw
Culberson
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dreier
Duncan
Ehlers
Ellison
Emerson
Flake
Fleming
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach

Giffords
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Granger
Graves
Griffith
Guthrie
Hall (TX)
Harper
Hastings (WA)
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Herseth Sandlin
Hill
Honda
Hunter
Inglis
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan (OH)
Kaptur
Kilroy
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Kirkpatrick (AZ)
Kline (MN)
Kraus
Kucinich
Sessions
Lamborn
Lance
Latham
LaTourette
Latta
Lee (NY)
Lewis (CA)
Linder
LoBiondo
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Lungren, Daniel
E.
Mack
Manzullo
Marchant
McCarthy (CA)
McClintock
McCotter
McHenry
McKeon
McMorris
Rodgers
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Minnick
Mitchell

Moran (KS)
Murphy, Tim
Myrick
Neugebauer
Nunes
Nye
Olson
Paul
Paulsen
Pence
Petri
Pitts
Platts
Posey
Price (GA)
Putnam
Radanovich
Rehberg
Reichert
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Royce
Ryan (WI)
Scalise
Schmidt
Schock
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shadegg
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Souder
Stearns
Sullivan
Taylor
Terry
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Towns
Turner
Upton
Velázquez
Walden
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—18

Barrett (SC)
Davis (AL)
DeGette
Fallin
Gordon (TN)
Hoekstra

McCaul
Meeks (NY)
Melancon
Mollohan
Moore (WI)
Pingree (ME)

Poe (TX)
Shuler
Stark
Teague
Wamp
Wilson (OH)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining on the vote.

□ 1301

Mr. GUTIERREZ changed his vote from “nay” to “yea.”

So the resolution was agreed to. The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, I move to reconsider the vote.

MOTION TO TABLE

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I move to table the motion to reconsider.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to table.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 199, noes 186, not voting 45, as follows:

[Roll No. 233]

AYES—199

Ackerman
Adler (NJ)
Andrews
Arcuri
Baca
Baird
Baldwin
Barrow
Becerra
Berkley
Berman
Berry
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Boccheri
Boren
Boyd
Brady (PA)
Brady (IA)
Bright
Brown, Corrine
Cao
Capps
Capuano
Cardoza
Carnahan
Carney
Carson (IN)
Chandler
Chu
Clarke
Clyburn
Connolly (VA)
Conyers
Costa
Costello
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Kaptur
Davis (CA)
Davis (TN)
DeFazio
DeLaunt
DeLauro
Deutsch
Doggett
Donnelly (IN)
Doyle

Driehaus
Edwards (MD)
Edwards (TX)
Engel
Eshoo
Etheridge
Fattah
Filner
Foster
Frank (MA)
Fudge
Garamendi
Gonzalez
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Hall (NY)
Halvorson
Hare
Harman
Heinrich
Herseth Sandlin
Hill
Himes
Hinchev
Hinojosa
Hirono
Hodes
Holden
Holt
Hoyer
Inslae
Israel
Jackson (IL)
Jackson Lee
(TX)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilroy
Kissell
Klein (FL)
Kosmas
Kratovil
Langevin
Larsen (WA)

Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lipinski
Loeback
Lofgren, Zoe
Lowey
Lujan
Lynch
Maffei
Markey (CO)
Markey (MA)
Marshall
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (NY)
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McIntyre
McMahon
McNerney
Michaud
Miller (NC)
Miller, George
Moore (KS)
Moran (VA)
Murphy (CT)
Murphy (NY)
Murphy, Patrick
Nadler (NY)
Napolitano
Neal (MA)
Nye
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Owens
Pallone
Pastor (AZ)
Payne
Perlmutter
Perriello
Peters
Peterson
Polis (CO)
Pomeroy
Price (NC)

Quigley
Rahall
Rangel
Reyes
Richardson
Rodriguez
Ross
Rothman (NJ)
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Salazar
Sanchez, Loretta
Schakowsky
Schauer
Schiff

Scott (GA)
Scott (VA)
Serrano
Sestak
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sires
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Snyder
Speier
Spratt
Stupak
Sutton
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)

Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Towns
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman
Schultz
Waters
Watson
Watt
Weiner
Welch
Woolsey
Young (AK)

NOES—186

Aderholt
Akin
Alexander
Altmire
Austria
Bachmann
Bachus
Bartlett
Barton (TX)
Biggert
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Blunt
Boehner
Bonner
Bono Mack
Boozman
Boucher
Boustany
Broun (GA)
Brown (SC)
Brown-Waite,
Ginny
Buchanan
Burgess
Burton (IN)
Buyer
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Cassidy
Castle
Chaffetz
Childers
Clay
Coble
Coffman (CO)
Cole
Conaway
Cooper
Crenshaw
Culberson
Davis (IL)
Davis (KY)
Dent
Diaz-Balart, L.
Diaz-Balart, M.
Dicks
Dreier
Duncan
Ehlers
Farr
Flake
Fleming
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx

Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallegly
Garrett (NJ)
Gerlach
Giffords
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Granger
Graves
Griffith
Guthrie
Gutierrez
Hall (TX)
Harper
Hastings (WA)
Heller
Hensarling
Herger
Honda
Hunter
Inglis
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (IL)
Johnson, Sam
Jordan (OH)
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kirk
Kirkpatrick (AZ)
Kline (MN)
Kucinich
Lamborn
Lance
Latham
LaTourette
Latta
Lee (NY)
LoBiondo
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Lungren, Daniel
E.
Mack
Maloney
Manzullo
Marchant
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McCotter
McHenry
McKeon
McMorris
Rodgers
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary

Minnick
Mitchell
Moran (KS)
Murphy, Tim
Myrick
Neugebauer
Nunes
Olson
Paul
Paulsen
Pence
Petri
Pitts
Platts
Poe (TX)
Posey
Price (GA)
Putnam
Radanovich
Rehberg
Reichert
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Royce
Ryan (WI)
Scalise
Schmidt
Schock
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shadegg
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Souder
Space
Stearns
Sullivan
Taylor
Terry
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Tiberi
Towns
Turner
Upton
Walden
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Wu
Young (FL)

NOT VOTING—45

Barrett (SC)
Bean
Boswell
Brady (TX)
Butterfield
Castor (FL)
Cleaver
Cohen
Davis (AL)
DeGette
Dingell
Ellison
Ellsworth
Emerson

Fallin
Gingrey (GA)
Gordon (TN)
Hastings (FL)
Higgins
Hoekstra
Johnson (GA)
Kagen
Kilpatrick (MI)
Lewis (CA)
Linder
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Melancon

Mollohan
Moore (WI)
Pascrell
Pingree (ME)
Sánchez, Linda
T.
Sarbanes
Schrader
Schwartz
Shuler
Stark
Tanner

Teague Wamp Wilson (OH)
Tsongas Waxman Yarmuth

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining in this vote.

□ 1332

Messrs. DAVIS of Illinois, CLAY, and BUYER changed their vote from “aye” to “no.”

Messrs. GARAMENDI, DELAHUNT, ROTHMAN of New Jersey, RANGEL, CUELLAR, ENGEL, COSTELLO, ACKERMAN, NYE, FATTAH, STUPAK and Ms. SPEIER, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Ms. BALDWIN, and Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD changed their vote from “no” to “aye.”

So the motion to table was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REQUEST TO REDUCE TIME FOR ELECTRONIC VOTING

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that votes for the remainder of the day be limited to 5 minutes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will not entertain that request without proper consultation.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 2499.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from West Virginia?

There was no objection.

PUERTO RICO DEMOCRACY ACT OF 2009

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 1305 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 2499.

□ 1334

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 2499) to provide for a federally sanctioned self-determination process for the people of Puerto Rico, with Mr. SCHIFF in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

General debate shall not exceed 1 hour and 30 minutes, with 1 hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Natural Resources and 30 minutes controlled by the gentleman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) or her designee.

The gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL) and the gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS) each will control 30 minutes. The gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from West Virginia.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I have the privilege of representing the great State of West Virginia in this body, a State that was born amidst civil conflict in the middle of a war. It is said that West Virginia is the only State to be formed by seceding from a Confederate State during the Civil War. In fact, the western counties stayed loyal to the Union, while Tidewater seceded from it.

Puerto Rico also joined the American family as a result of war. In 1898, during the Spanish-American War, the island was invaded by the United States and was ceded by Spain to our country under the Treaty of Paris. The island's century-long history within the American family has been significant. Puerto Rico was one of the first areas outside the continental United States where the American flag was raised.

To the United States, it marked a milestone in our own political development. When once our Union of States was comprised of renegade English colonies, we then stepped into a role that we previously had fought against. Given our own experience, would anyone have imagined that our new colony would be disenfranchised and kept unequal in our own political framework? Our commitment to Puerto Rico's advancement under the 1898 Treaty of Paris should be our judge.

If our measure of success is today's Puerto Rico, then I state Puerto Rico has done well by the United States. It is a showcase of democracy in the Caribbean. Having some of the highest voter turnout rates in our Nation, Puerto Rico shames many of our own States with its energy and enthusiasm in electing its leaders. Economically, it is a powerhouse in the Caribbean and considered a home away from home for many mainland Fortune 500 companies.

Equal in importance to Puerto Rico's political and economic prowess is the island's contributions to our own social fabric. Every aspect of American art, music, theater, and sport has been influenced by Puerto Rico's own culture and its people. And beyond such contributions, there remains Puerto Rico's patriotism, beginning in World War I when thousands of Puerto Ricans served in the U.S. military. There is no doubt that many more thousands are currently serving in our Armed Forces, fighting our wars, and dying for our country.

To the families who have lost a husband, a father, a daughter or son in our wars, I take this moment, as we all do, to salute you. We can debate political status, but what is not subject of debate is the patriotism of the people of Puerto Rico.

We are here today on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives because, in spite of what we have gained from each other, there has been no ultimate achievement in Puerto Rico's political status, which really is the greatest commitment the U.S. has to all of our territories.

Since the establishment of the current Commonwealth status in 1952, four popular votes have been held on the status of Puerto Rico in three plebiscites and one referendum, but none of them were sanctioned by this body, the Congress of the United States.

Going back just to the 1970s, at least 40 separate measures have been introduced in Congress to resolve or clarify Puerto Rico political status. In addition, Congress has held at least 12 hearings, and four measures have received either House or Senate action.

During the last Congress, the Bush administration issued the President's Task Force Report on Puerto Rico's Status which served as the basis for the legislation before us today; a task force, I would point out, that was initiated by the Clinton administration and concluded by the Bush administration.

Indeed, the entire exercise has been bipartisan. The measure before us today is sponsored by the Resident Commissioner from Puerto Rico, PEDRO PIERLUISI, a Democrat. It is strongly supported by a former colleague and current Governor of Puerto Rico, the Honorable Luis Fortuno, a Republican. And it was reported out of our Natural Resources Committee by a vote of 30-8.

With this history before us, I join those who say it is time for Congress to provide the people of Puerto Rico with an unambiguous path toward permanently resolving its political status that is consistent with the U.S. Constitution.

When our Committee on Natural Resources considered similar legislation in the last Congress, we exhaustively examined the question of the constitutionality of the various status options available under the Constitution. And we continued that process during the current Congress. What emerged from that process was a clear consensus that settled on the permanent status options that are reflected in the bill before this body today.

The Resident Commissioner from Puerto Rico is to be congratulated for carefully crafting a bill which seeks to authorize a fair, impartial, and democratic process for self-determination for the people of Puerto Rico. The pending measure is straightforward. It authorizes a plebiscite in which the two voting options are presented: number one, present political status; or number two, a different political status. If option two prevails, then a second plebiscite would be conducted in which three options are presented: independence, free association with the United States, or statehood. Puerto Rico would then certify the results to the President and the Congress.