

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



José F. Aponte-Hernández
Former Speaker
Representative at Large

November 6, 2013

President Barack H. Obama
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW,
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Today, the American citizens living in Puerto Rico celebrate the first anniversary of an historic electoral event. For the first time in our history, Puerto Ricans overwhelmingly voted to end more than a century of territorial rule and enter our Nation as its fifty first State. Despite this historic event, the Congress and the White House has failed to act on our, free and democratically expressed desire to join the Union.

The Island's status referendum was conducted accordingly to the guidelines set forward by the White House Task Force on Puerto Rico in their report issued in 2011.

On May 15, 2013, our sole member of Congress, Resident Commissioner Pedro Pierluisi, filed House Resolution (HR) 2000, an admission bill in accordance with the results of the 2012 referendum.

I know how slow the legislative process can be in Congress. As a former speaker and current member of the Puerto Rico House of Representative, I have been engaged in it's the day-to-day operations for more than a decade, yet there's certain issues that can't wait and the case of the political status of our Island is one of those.

Enough is enough. We have played by the rules and now it is time to see concrete action. The White House and the Congress should and need to make the issue of Puerto Rico one of its heights priorities during the next few weeks.

When visiting our Island in 2008, as part of the Democratic Party Presidential Primaries, you stated that the matter of the political status of Puerto Rico would be resolved during your first term as President. That did not occur.

Most recently, during your 2011 visit, you clearly stated that once the Puerto Ricans decide their future, the White House will act on that request. Its have been a year since the referendum and nothing have happen.

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Now you have the will of the 3.7 American citizens living in Puerto Rico in your hands. As the leader of the Democratic Party and as a person who pledged his word on solving this affair, is your duty to push forward the HR 2000 to its ultimate conclusion: its approval by the two houses of Congress.

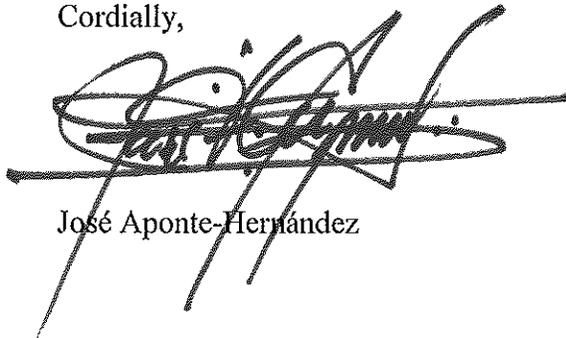
What transpired on that first Tuesday of November of 2012 was nothing short of historic. For the first time Puerto Ricans expressed a strong distain for the current political situation with the U.S. According to data provided by our State Electoral Commission, 54 percent of the people voted in opposition to the current territorial condition.

Most significant was the 61.4 percent of the vote gathered by the option of statehood. The will of the people was more than clear: we want to become an equal partner with the United States through the full incorporation of this territory into the Union.

Exactly 78.19 percent of the register voters participated in Puerto Rico's status referendum. That's, on an average, 25.1 percent higher than in any U.S. Presidential election since 1930. I'm attaching a copy of the official results of the status referendum for you review.

Mr. President, as you can now see, the matter of the political status of Puerto Rico had been neglected for more than a 100 years. We can't wait more. You have at your disposal the means, in the form of the HR 2000, and the leadership to see this matter to its ultimate conclusion; we don't expect anything less than this.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'José Aponte-Hernández', written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and somewhat illegible due to the cursive style.

José Aponte-Hernández