



COUNCIL URGES SENATE ACTION ON PUERTO RICO SELF-DETERMINATION

U.S. Council for Puerto Rico Statehood Chairman Major General Orlando Llenza, USAF (Ret.) called on the Senate to act on *The Puerto Rico Democracy Act of 2010* (H.R. 2499) and pass the legislation to give congressional sanction to self-determination for four million Puerto Ricans for the first time since the island became a U.S. territory in 1898. In the letter, dated June 29th, General Llenza stated the significance of the legislation, "as it would impartially ensure that Puerto Ricans understand the sense of Congress that Puerto Ricans should, of a right, voice their will and express their positions on self-determination."

Puerto Ricans are Proud Americans

Gen. Llenza reminded the Senators that Puerto Ricans are American citizens who have fought in every major U.S. engagement with many making the ultimate sacrifice in defense of the ideals of freedom, democracy and equality that are cornerstones of the American nation. More than 150,000 American veterans currently rest in the U.S. national cemetery in Bayamon, Puerto Rico. Despite these sacrifices during 112 years of territorial status and more than a century of service to their country, the people of Puerto Rico continue to be subjected to the territorial status, which does not afford the four million residents of Puerto Rico the sovereignty of representative government. Under the current unequal territorial status, Puerto Ricans, while U.S. citizens; do not have proportionate representation in the U.S. House of Representatives with the power to vote. Puerto Ricans have no representation in the United States Senate and they are not permitted to vote in presidential elections.

Ending Puerto Rico's Unequal Territorial Status

For the 112 years Puerto Rico has been a territory of the United States, Congress has never acted to advance an end to the inequality that results from the unequal territorial status of the island. General Llenza's letter voiced the opinion of the Council that the Americans of Puerto Rico, our fellow U.S. citizens deserve the right to voice their opinion on the matter. Recalling the 2008 elections, the letter calls on the fact that Puerto Ricans have clearly spoken, electing a government whose platform promotes fair and neutral permanent resolution of the status issue.

The letter concluded stating with the clear message that with decisive action from the Senate, the ongoing issue of Puerto Ricans' equality as citizens and Puerto Rico's unequal territorial status can be resolved.

Read the full text of General Llenza's letter.