

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Colleagues:

We write to respectfully ask that you join us in supporting H.R. 2499, the Puerto Rico Democracy Act of 2009. Through this bill, Congress would formally consult the U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico about their preferences regarding the Island's political status for the first time since Puerto Rico came under U.S. sovereignty in 1898.

Home to nearly 4 million Americans, Puerto Rico has been a U.S. territory for 111 years and its residents have been U.S. citizens since 1917. Puerto Rico has contributed much to the life of this nation in times of peace and war. Residents of Puerto Rico serve as U.S. government officials, ambassadors, federal judges and military officers. The Island has long played an outsized role in our nation's defense, and Puerto Rico currently sends a greater percentage of its sons and daughters into the U.S. military than all but one state.

Although residents of Puerto Rico have waged war and laid down their lives in defense of American democratic values for over nine decades, in that time they have never been given the chance to express their views about their political relationship with the United States in the context of a fair, neutral and democratic process sponsored by the Congress. This bill will, at long last, give them that opportunity.

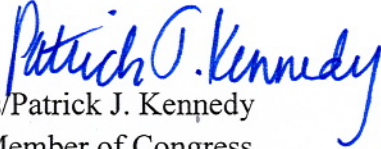
H.R. 2499 would expressly authorize the government of Puerto Rico to conduct a plebiscite. Voters would be asked whether they wish to maintain Puerto Rico's present form of political status or whether they wish to have a different political status. If a majority of voters cast their ballots in favor of pursuing a different political status, the government of Puerto Rico would be authorized to conduct a second plebiscite among three options: (1) independence, (2) statehood, and (3) sovereignty in association with the United States. The results of these plebiscites would be certified to the President and to Congress.

This bill provides for a just and impartial process of self-determination in Puerto Rico. The legislation does not exclude or favor any status option. It enables the people of Puerto Rico to express their wishes regarding the Island's political status in a series of democratic votes. It will thus ensure that the views of all the people are heard on this fundamental question.

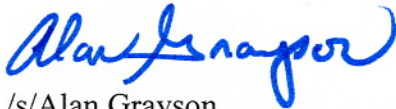
We hope you will become a co-sponsor of H.R. 2499. To do so, or if you would like more information, please contact John Laufer (5-2615 or john.laufer@mail.house.gov) with Mr. Pierluisi or Bethany Eyre with Mr. Burton (5-2276 or bethany.eyre@mail.house.gov).



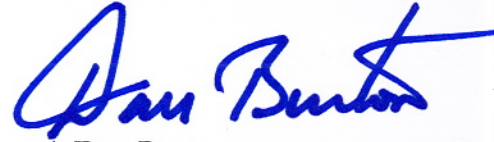
/s/Pedro R. Pierluisi
Member of Congress



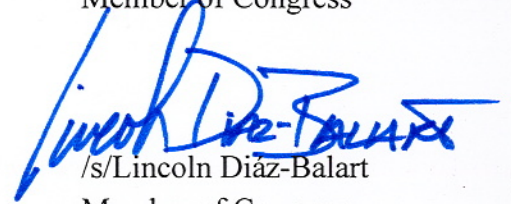
/s/Patrick J. Kennedy
Member of Congress



/s/Alan Grayson
Member of Congress



/s/Dan Burton
Member of Congress



/s/Lincoln Díaz-Balart
Member of Congress