

QUEST FOR A STATE

Puerto Rico, officially known as the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico [Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico], is an unincorporated territory of the United States, located in the northeastern Caribbean, east of the Dominican Republic and west of both the U.S. Virgin Islands and the British Virgin Islands.

Puerto Ricans are, by law, citizens of the United States and may move freely between the island and the mainland. They otherwise enjoy a different status from the citizens in the mainland. As it is not a state, Puerto Rico does not have a vote in the United States Congress, which governs the territory with full jurisdiction under the Puerto Rico Federal Relations Act of 1950. However, it does have one non-voting member of the House called a Resident Commissioner. As residents of a U.S. territory, American citizens in Puerto Rico are disenfranchised at the national level and do not vote for president and vice president of the United States, and do not pay federal income tax on Puerto Rican income. Like other territories and the District of Columbia, it does not have U.S. senators. Congress approved a local constitution in 1952, allowing U.S. citizens on the territory to elect a governor.

In a referendum that took place in 2012, a majority [54% of those who voted] disagreed with "the present form of territorial status". A second question asking about a new model had full statehood as the preferred option among those who voted for a change of status.

A fifth referendum was held on June 11, 2017, with "Statehood" and "Independence/Free Association" initially as the only available choices. At the recommendation of the Department of Justice, an option for the "current territorial status" was added. The referendum showed an overwhelming support for statehood, with 97.18% voting for it, although the voter turnout had a historically low figure of only 22.99% of the registered voters casting their ballots. This low turnout

The growing demand for statehood has been visible with the elected political party favoring the status for a statehood. However, at the same time the poor voter turnout is raising questions regarding the accurate depiction of the overall sentiment in the country. This indecisive referendum has given out a third option, that is, the option to form an independent nation.

TASK AT HAND:

Your task at hand as the planning member under Mr. Ricardo Rosello, the Governor of Puerto Rico, is to determine if Puerto Rico should move towards forming a separate nation or a state under the United States of America. Also, you are required to give the transition plan of Puerto Rico - from being an unincorporated territory to a state of the United States of America or an independent nation.

Your presentation should include the following but not remain restricted to:

- Selected plan of action.
- Strategies to convince the Congress for accepting the plan.
- Risk Mitigation Plan.
- Transition Plan from an Unincorporated Territory to a state of United States of America or an independent nation.

DELIVERABLES:

- A report, in the form of a PDF document, not exceeding 10 pages.
 - A PowerPoint presentation not exceeding 8 slides.
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