

August 29, 2012 **EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY** 

Contact James Davis or Kyle Downey (813) 252-5888

## The Hon. Luis Fortuño

Governor of Puerto Rico (Remarks as Prepared for Delivery) August 29, 2012

Thank you.

Buenas noches Puerto Rico!

Buenas noches America!

As a proud American serving the nearly 4 million American citizens of Puerto Rico, I am honored to be with you tonight.

We gather to celebrate the hopes and dreams of every American. We all believe in the greatness of this nation, and this greatness lies within each of us.

Hard-working Americans are fighting every day to provide for themselves and their families, and to leave a more prosperous country for the next generation.

That's true here in Florida, it's true in Puerto Rico, and it's true throughout this great land of ours.

But, as families have tightened their budgets, Washington continues its wasteful spending.

Unless we elect leaders who take responsibility now, our children and theirs will pay for it later.

You and I know there is a better way, and like many conservative governors around the country, we are proving it.

When I took office, I inherited a \$3.3 billion budget deficit, per person the largest anywhere in the nation.

We couldn't even meet our payroll. We were on the brink of bankruptcy.

But we did not shy away from our responsibility to lead.

We cut government expenses by almost 20 percent, starting with my own salary.

We reduced our deficit 90 percent, while continuing to invest in our schools, hospitals, and highways.

At the same time, we slashed taxes 50 percent on individuals and 30 percent on businesses, the largest tax cuts in Puerto Rico's history.

And our private sector – the real economy – began to create jobs again. Imagine if we had national policies that support rather than prevent growth! We'd then be able to truly unleash the engine of prosperity that our country and our people deserve.

That's what Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan will do for America. They understand that each community's challenges are unique, but the answers are the same.

Our families cannot grow their budgets if politicians keep growing Washington's budget.

Get government out of our way, and let freedom and the spirit of the American people shine through.

We can out-think, out-dream, out-work, and out-produce anybody in the world.

I know it, you know it, and Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan know it.

They have a plan and a vision that places our faith in you, the American people, not in Washington.

Ask any small-business owner in America today — from the dairy farmer in Appleton, Wisconsin, to the bodega owner in Kissimmee, Florida: they want to grow, to produce and to hire.

But they're concerned, worried that Washington will continue to punish them with more taxes, more red tape, and more government control.

Give them the freedom to grow, and you'll see how many jobs they create!

I like to talk a lot about freedom, because freedom is the essence of who we are as Americans.

Over 200,000 Puerto Ricans have served in uniform to defend our nation and the freedom we hold so dear.

Like in your home states, we raise and salute the American flag.

Just like our fellow citizens in Florida or Virginia, we share the same undying spirit that all Americans have.

Allow me to share an example of that spirit.

I visited a soldier from Puerto Rico at Walter Reed Army Medical Center several years ago.

This young man had bravely served in combat and was given little chance to live.

Without knowing if he could hear me, in every visit, I would whisper into his ear.

I would tell him how proud and thankful we were for his dedication and sacrifice, adding, no te rindas: don't give up.

Months later, after his miraculous recovery, I had the honor of awarding him the Purple Heart.

He never gave up.

For him, and for every American in uniform, we will never give up.

For every mother who struggles, saves, and sacrifices so her children will have greater opportunities, we will never give up.

For every small-business owner who builds it to make a better life, we will never give up.

For Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan, who know what it takes to put America back to work and back on track, we will never give up.

And for the values that make America great: the justice that is our right, the freedom to unleash the greatness within each of us, and the liberty that God endowed every American.

For that, I will never give up, you will never give up, we will never give up!

God Bless you, and God bless the United States of America!

And muchas gracias, thank you, Puerto Rico – I'll be home tomorrow!

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