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February 9, 2010

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
United States House of Representatives  
235 Cannon HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi,

**Without any real discussion in Congress about its implications and a strong opposition in Puerto Rico, H.R. 2499, the so called "Puerto Rico Democracy Act" might go to a vote in the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives in the near future. As a former Governor of Puerto Rico and former member of Congress I write you again to strongly oppose H.R. 2499, and urge you to join the majority of Puerto Ricans in rejecting this unfair and biased bill. H.R. real title should be "THE IMPOSITION OF STATEHOOD FOR PUERTO RICO ACT OF 2010."**

This bill is not the product of consensus among the many ideological factions in Puerto Rico. It is divisive, exclusionary, biased and does not represent a true process of self determination. It is therefore of little surprise that after a year of been introduced in Congress, two of the three main political parties in Puerto Rico -the Popular Democratic Party (PDP) and the Puerto Rico Independence Party (PIP)- are still opposed to H.R. 2499. It is also telling that the bill lacks the support of key Puerto Rican Members of Congress. Moreover, there is no real support to this bill on the Island, especially when we are currently confronting a high unemployment record rate and record high levels of crime and violence. The majority of Puerto Ricans see H.R. 2499 as a way for the current pro-statehood governor to distract the attention of the people from the real problems and his lack of leadership to move us forward.

H.R. 2499 is unfairly structured to produce an artificial majority for making Puerto Rico the 51st state of the Union, a political status option that has lost every single plebiscite held in Puerto Rico on this issue. Since the Statehood option has lost all other plebiscites when pitted against Commonwealth and Independence, this time around the Statehood advocates behind this bill a referendum process that first asks voters to choose between "continuing the current status" or rejecting it. That unfairly pits all the opponents of Commonwealth against this status. And it intentionally obviates the fact that Commonwealth supporters aspire for an enhancement of Commonwealth status based on the sovereignty and will of the People of Puerto Rico to sustain the relationship, with U.S. citizenship as a continuous bond between both countries.

Once the current Commonwealth option is eliminated through this rigged process, the bill provides for a second vote between Independence, Statehood and an ill-defined option of "sovereignty in association with the United States", an option without U.S. citizenship. In this second ballot, Commonwealth supporters, the majority of Puerto Ricans, are denied an option to vote for what they want. All this makes it even more obvious that the ultimate goal is to create an artificial majority in favor of Statehood. At the end of these biased process, and with a vote in favor of statehood, you, as a member of Congress will confront before 2012 the issue of a petition to grant statehood to Puerto Rico. At that point or sooner, when the Island begins to be pushed into Statehood, the issue will split the Puerto Rican community living in the mainland and become divisive in those communities political processes. And it will also become controversial to all citizens of the United States. This is what a vote for H.R. 2499 really means.

All these flaws are the reason why H.R. 2499 lacks the most basic consensus in Puerto Rico. Puerto Ricans want and deserve a real and fair process of self-determination. I therefore urge you to join me and the majority of Puerto Ricans in rejecting the Puerto Rico Democracy Act (H.R. 2499), an unfair bill that severely lacks consensus.

Sincerely,



Aníbal Acevedo Vilá  
Governor of Puerto Rico (2005-2008)  
Member of Congress (2001-2004)