

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-5400

January 21, 2025

Dear Colleague:

As the newly elected Resident Commissioner of Puerto Rico, I am focused on fostering economic development, the reconstruction of our electric grid, and equitable access to federal programs for people on the island. However, last week, the Puerto Rico legislature adopted a resolution, and the Governor of Puerto Rico signed an executive order, to advocate for statehood before the U.S. Congress based on the results of a local, nonbinding referendum held on November 5, 2024.

This vote, held on November 5, 2024 does not accurately reflect the true will of the Puerto Rican people, as it was neither fair nor inclusive. The ballot did not give voters the option to retain and improve Puerto Rico’s Commonwealth status—a choice I and many others support—and instead limited the options to statehood, independence, and free association.

The results of the referendum reflect this disenfranchisement of commonwealth voters. Many commonwealth supporters cast their votes for their second preference among the options, others left their ballots blank, and some marked their ballots in protest. The results, as they appear on the State Election Commission’s [website](#), were as follows:

	Votes	Excluding “Other” Ballots	Including “Other” Ballots
Statehood	620,782	58.6%	49.1%
Sovereignty in Free Association with the United States	313,259	29.6%	24.8%
Independence	125,171	11.8%	9.9%
Other (blank, etc.)	204,853		16.2%
Total votes counted	1,264,065		

The official certification from the State Elections Commission claims that statehood won with 58% of the vote, but this percentage excludes blank and protested ballots from the calculation. When all ballots are accounted for, support for statehood drops to 49.1%. The reality is that Puerto Rico remains deeply divided on the issue, and, when the commonwealth option is excluded, it is impossible to accurately measure its support.

Rather than focusing on the divisive issue of political status, I look forward to working in a bipartisan way to advance Puerto Rico's economic development, tackle the energy crisis, and ensure better treatment of federal benefits for Puerto Ricans.

I look forward to collaborating with you on these critical goals and building a brighter future for the people of Puerto Rico.

Sincerely,

Pablo José Hernández
Member of Congress