

CHRONOLOGY: The Status of Puerto Rico

1897

Spain, after treating Puerto Rico for almost 400 years as a Spanish colony, grants autonomy to Puerto Rico.

1898

On July 25, 1898, three months after the start of the Spanish American War, 16,000 U.S. troops began landing on Puerto Rico's south coast. In 17 days, the island is captured, and the U.S. imposes a military government.

1900

President McKinley urges Governor Allen, the first civilian Governor appointed by the U.S., to prepare the people of Puerto Rico for statehood as soon as possible.

1900

Congress enacts the Foraker Act making Puerto Rico a U.S. territory. The Act also provides that the U.S. will appoint the Governor and major officials for Puerto Rico. The people of Puerto Rico are to have a Resident Commissioner to represent them in the House of Representatives, but he will have no vote.

1904

A new Union Party takes power in Puerto Rico on a political platform that proposes Puerto Rico either be a state, independent, or home self rule under the U.S. flag.

1909

President Taft says that the U.S. has moved "too fast in the extension of political power to (the Puerto Ricans) for their own good."

1910

The House of Representatives passes a bill to grant U.S. citizenship to individual Puerto Ricans who apply for it. The Senate fails to act.

1912

President Taft proposes that the U.S. grant American citizenship to the people of Puerto Rico. He rejects the idea of statehood.

1913

President Wilson announces he favors citizenship and home rule for Puerto Rico.

1917

Congress passes the Jones Act granting citizenship to the people of Puerto Rico. The leading political party, the Unionists, drop statehood as an objective and call for independence.

1919

The legislature of Puerto Rico asks Congress to permit a referendum on status. Congress takes no action. Representative Joe Cannon tells the Puerto Rico legislature to stop worrying about statehood or independence: "You will get either or both just as soon as you are ready."

1920

Warren Harding opposes independence for Puerto Rico.

1922

The Union Party proposes a new status, the Free Associated State, imitative of the Irish free state.

1928

Puerto Rico sends a petition, through Charles Lindbergh, to President Coolidge, asking for greater freedom. President Coolidge replies that Puerto Rico is not prepared to exercise greater power of government.

1931

President Hoover says Puerto Rican independence movement has collapsed.

1934

President Roosevelt, in a visit to the island, promises economic "reconstruction at the earliest possible moment."

1935

Senator Tydings proposes that Puerto Rico be given independence "if the people seriously desire it." The majority political party, a pro statehood coalition, renews its demands for statehood.

1943

President Roosevelt recommends that Congress permit the people of Puerto Rico to elect their own Governor. Congress does not act.

1945

President Truman asks Congress to permit a referendum in Puerto Rico on the status question. Congress does not act.

1947

President Truman signs into law the Crawford-Butler Act permitting Puerto Rico to become the first territory in the U.S. history to elect its own governor.

1948

President Truman urges, in a message to Congress, that the people of Puerto Rico be allowed to choose their own form of government in a referendum.

1950

Congress enacts Public Law 600, granting Puerto Rico the right to adopt its own constitution.

1952

Puerto Rico becomes a Commonwealth.

1953

In response to a United Nations debate on Puerto Rican status, Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge said that President Eisenhower had authorized him to say that if Puerto Rico wants independence, the President would recommend it to the Congress.

1962

President Kennedy agrees to Governor Munoz' request for a new referendum on status.

1964

Congress creates a Commission to study the Status of Puerto Rico.

1966

The Status Commission concludes that the people of Puerto Rico should choose either Commonwealth, statehood, or independence.

1967

The people of Puerto Rico vote 60% for Commonwealth, 39% for statehood, and .6% for independence.

1967

HR 9691, proposing statehood for Puerto Rico is introduced in Congress.

1969

HR 499 and HR 2699, both proposing statehood for Puerto Rico, are introduced in Congress.

1973

President Nixon and Governor Hernandez Colon create the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Puerto Rico.

1975

On October 9, 1975, the Ad Hoc Advisory group proposes the "Compact of Permanent Union between Puerto Rico and the U.S."

1976

On December 31, 1976, President Ford proposes statehood for Puerto Rico.

PUERTO RICO
GUBERNATORIAL ELECTIONS

	<u>COMMONWEALTH</u>		<u>STATEHOOD</u>	<u>INDEPENDENCE</u>
1952	64.8	Luis Munoz Marin	12.9	19.0
1956	62.5	Luis Munoz Marin	25.0	12.5
1960	58.2	Luis Munoz Marin	32.1	3.1
1964	59.3	Roberto Sanchez-Vilella	34.7	2.8
1968	42.0		44.6	Luis Ferre 2.8
1972	51.2	Rafael Hernandez-Colon	44.0	4.8
1976	45.0		48.0	Carlos Romero- Barcelo 6.0

Sources: Figures from 1952 to 1964 Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Board of Elections: "Statistics of the General Elections: 1960" San Juan, Puerto Rico, 1962 and "Totales; Total de Electores en Listas y El Voto Para Gobernador: 1964." Quoted in Status of Puerto Rico, Report of the United States - Puerto Rico Commission of the Status of Puerto Rico. August 1966, p. 186.

Figures for 1968 are from The Statesman's Yearbook, 1969-1970, New York, p. 703 and the figures for 1972 are from The Statesman's Yearbook, 1973-1974, New York, p. 722.

Figure for 1976 is from El Mundo, San Juan, Puerto Rico, December 31, 1976.

