

Section-by-Section Summary of the Puerto Rico  
Statehood Act of 1977

Statement of Purposes

- Enables the people of Puerto Rico to achieve the status of Statehood for the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, if they so desire;
- Establishes a sequence of steps by which the complex issues associated with Puerto Rico's admission to the Union may be addressed in an orderly way; and
- Insures that the people of Puerto Rico would be fully aware of the merits and responsibilities of Statehood before deciding whether their Commonwealth should become a State.

Title I. Puerto Rico Statehood Commission

Sec. 101.

- Establishes the Puerto Rico Statehood Commission to develop a broad understanding throughout Puerto Rico of the implications of Statehood so that the people of Puerto Rico can be fully knowledgeable of the merits and responsibilities of Statehood.

Sec. 102.

- Sets forth the duties of the Commission and lists some of the issues the Commission should study.

Sec. 103.

- Authorizes the Commission to hold hearings, establish facts, conduct studies, and secure information from Federal agencies;

Sec. 104.

- Describes the composition of the Commission: five members appointed by the President of the United States and five members appointed by the Governor of Puerto Rico;
- Sets forth the method of selecting a Chairman, filling vacancies, selecting a quorum and determining the composition of the Commission.

Sec. 105.

- Provides for a staff and its compensation;
- Authorizes the Commission to use the facilities of the Executive Branch of the Federal government.

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Sec. 106.

- Requires the Commission to submit a final report to the President, the Governor of Puerto Rico (who would make the report available to the people of Puerto Rico), the Congress and the Legislative Assembly of Puerto Rico;
- Provides an opportunity for additional Congressional or Presidential action concerning the terms of Puerto Rico's admission into the Union, to be made in light of the nature or content of the final report.

Sec. 107.

- Exempts the Commission from the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

Sec. 108.

- Authorizes the Commission to purchase or rent property.

Sec. 109.

- Authorizes the appropriation of sums of money for the Commission.

Title II. Puerto Rico and StatehoodSec. 201.

- Provides for an island-wide referendum for the people of Puerto Rico on the proposition whether Puerto Rico should become a State;
- Provides, if the referendum passes, for a convention of delegates, duly elected by the people of Puerto Rico, for the purpose of adopting the United States Constitution and framing a constitution for the State government of Puerto Rico.

Sec. 202.

- Provides for the submission of the proposed State constitution to the people of Puerto Rico for ratification;
- Provides, if the constitution is ratified, for a certified copy of the proposed constitution of Puerto Rico to be submitted to the President and the Congress for approval;
- Provides for a proclamation for the elections of two Senators and five Representatives for the new State of Puerto Rico.

Sec. 203.

- Provides for the proclamation of the Governor of Puerto Rico for election of two Senators and five Representatives;

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- Provides for the certification of the results of the election to the President;
- Provides for the President's proclamation announcing the results of the election and upon the issuance of this proclamation, the Commonwealth would be deemed admitted by Congress into the Union;
- Provides that until the Commonwealth is admitted into the Union the laws of the Commonwealth and the officers of the Commonwealth would continue to discharge their duties;
- Provides that upon admission of Puerto Rico into the Union all of the Commonwealth laws shall remain effective except as changed by Congress, the new State constitution or the State legislature.

Sec. 204.

- Entitles Puerto Rico to five members in the House of Representatives until the taking effect of the next reapportionment.

Sec. 205.

- Authorizes appropriations for expenses of the elections required by this Act.

Sec. 206.

- States that the United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico is a court of the United States with judicial power derived from Article III, Section I of the United States Constitution.

Secs. 207 - 214.

- Provides certain housekeeping and other actions necessary to coordinate the Act with other statutes of the United States and the United States Constitution.

The time frame for this Act proceeds along the general outline (on the attached page) which could require 40-70 months.

Act signed into law by the President

Puerto Rico Statehood Commission appointed

Commission submits final report

The President and Congress determine if, in light of the report, any additional action is necessary concerning the terms of Puerto Rico's admission as a State

6 months      18-30 months      3 months

Governor of Puerto Rico orders a referendum on proposition of Statehood and election of delegates for a State constitution

Referendum and election held

State constitutional convention

State constitution voted on by people of Puerto Rico and certified to the President and Congress for approval

9 months      2-3 months      2 months      2-6 months

Congress and President approve State constitution

Governor of Puerto Rico issues proclamation for election of two Senators and five Representatives

Election of two Senators and five Representatives — Governor certifies results of election to President, who announces results and Puerto Rico is then deemed admitted by Congress into the Union

3 months      1 month      3-6 months

TOTAL:  
40-70 months