

78TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2989

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IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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GOVT. SOURCE

JUNE 17, 1943

Mr. MARCANTONIO introduced the following bill; which was referred to the
Committee on Insular Affairs

A BILL

To provide for the recognition of self-determination and independence of Puerto Rico, and to provide for good neighborly relations with the proposed Government of Puerto Rico.

Whereas the people of Puerto Rico, after four centuries of common economic, cultural, social, and political experience, developed into a distinct nation of people, who as a result of more than one hundred years of constant struggle against Spain had attained in 1897 an irrevocable autonomous status, which permitted them essential sovereignty and self-government, including the right to enter into foreign treaties, impose tariffs, and completely control Puerto Rico's internal affairs; and

Whereas in 1898 as a result of the Spanish-American War, in which Puerto Rico was not a part, the island of Puerto Rico was taken over without the consent of its people, who have

since been denied the right of self-determination and forced to live under an executive government, deprived of democratic rights and powers, and powerless to regulate their political, economic, and social life in accordance with their own interests and wishes; and

Whereas in the present global war of survival of the United Nations against the Axis enemy, the leadership of the United States is impaired by her failure in the case of Puerto Rico to give living content to the principles embodied in the Atlantic Charter, the Declaration of Havana, and other pronouncements of American conferences and leaders guaranteeing the rights of small nations in the Western Hemisphere; and

Whereas there lies before the United States the rich opportunity both during this crucial war and in the years after the war to cement the ties of mutual friendship between the more than one hundred million Latin-American peoples and the people of the United States by freely recognizing the right of the people of Puerto Rico to self-determination; and

Whereas genuine independence for Puerto Rico furnishes the surest guaranty of effective naval and military defense of the Western Hemisphere against aggression by releasing the full energies of the Puerto Rican people for the struggle for victory of the United Nations; and

Whereas the people of Puerto Rico of all political parties, acting concurrently, have petitioned the United States for immediate application of the principle of self-determination:
Therefore

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 That ninety days after the enactment of this Act the Presi-
2 dent of the United States shall by proclamation withdraw
3 and surrender all rights of possession, supervision, jurisdic-
4 tion, control, and sovereignty now existing and exercised by
5 the United States in and over the Territory and people of
6 Puerto Rico, excepting all military and naval reservations,
7 which shall remain in the possession and control of the United
8 States until such time as a treaty of mutual defense shall have
9 been entered into between the United States and the Gov-
10 ernment of Puerto Rico, but in no case for a period longer
11 than six months after the hostilities ~~in~~ which the United
12 States is now engaged shall have ceased; and the President
13 of the United States shall also, on behalf of the United States,
14 recognize the independence of Puerto Rico as a separate and
15 self-governing nation and acknowledge the authority and
16 control over the same of any government which the people
17 thereof may constitute and the right of the Government of
18 Puerto Rico to decide all internal questions, including those
19 relating to American property and citizens and diplomatic
20 relations, without interference or intervention.

21 SEC. 2. All problems arising between the United States
22 and Puerto Rico out of the occupation of Puerto Rico by
23 the United States shall be submitted for arbitration to a
24 joint commission appointed by the Government of the United
25 States and the Government of Puerto Rico.

1 SEC. 3. In proclaiming the independence of Puerto Rico,
2 the President of the United States shall recognize the
3 responsibility of the United States toward the disastrous
4 state of Puerto Rican economy and the poverty of its people
5 and to strive for friendly relations with the new Government
6 of Puerto Rico, shall declare free entry of Puerto Rican
7 products into the United States, and no immigration restric-
8 tions on Puerto Rican citizens shall be made. These prin-
9 ciples are to be recognized in a treaty between the two
10 nations and said treaty shall be made with the best inten-
11 tions of developing Puerto Rican economy and the well-
12 being of its people. The discussion of this treaty shall
13 begin within ninety days after the new Government of
14 Puerto Rico expresses its desire to begin. In the interim
15 between the proclamation of Puerto Rican independence and
16 the signing of this treaty, the present status quo in the matter
17 of trade relations shall be maintained.

18 SEC. 4. By virtue of its responsibility for the present
19 disastrous state of Puerto Rican economy and the poverty
20 of the people of Puerto Rico, it is hereby declared to be
21 the policy of the United States that the United States shall
22 be responsible to the Government of Puerto Rico for any
23 claims of indemnity established by said Government.

24 SEC. 5. Upon the proclamation and recognition of the
25 independence of Puerto Rico, the President of the United

1 States shall give notice of such action to the governments
2 with which the United States is in diplomatic correspondence
3 and invite said governments to recognize the independence of
4 Puerto Rico.

5 SEC. 6. At the time of the issuance of the proclamation
6 under section 1 hereof, the President shall appoint a com-
7 mission of five to carry out the provisions of sections 1,
8 2, 3, and 4 of this Act.

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