

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center

H.C.R. 199  
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Engrossed

### **DIGEST**

Puerto Rico became a territory of the United States as a result of the treaty concluding the Spanish-American War in 1898. In 1917, the United States government extended U.S. citizenship to Puerto Ricans but did not provide them with full citizenship rights, including voting representation in the United States Congress and the right to vote for the President of the United States. Since 1917, more than 200,000 United States citizens from Puerto Rico have served valiantly in every war and armed conflict in which our nation has fought--including our current war against terrorism--in defense of democratic principles and self-determination; four heroic Puerto Ricans--Hector Santiago-Colon, Euripides Rubio, Carlos James Lozada, and Luis Fernando Garcia--have been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for their valor in defending American democracy and freedoms.

The economic limitations resulting from the unresolved political status of the island have resulted in 3.4 million Puerto Ricans maintaining residence on the United States mainland; it is estimated that by 2010, more Puerto Ricans will reside on the mainland than on the island of Puerto Rico. We recognize the many social, economic, and political contributions that the 3.8 million United States citizens residing in Puerto Rico, as well as the 3.4 million citizens residing in the United States, make to preserve and enhance this nation's democratic values. The State of Texas counts on a growing Puerto Rican community and an ever-increasing Latino population from which to draw many of our state's business, cultural, and political leaders. In 1997 the legislature of Puerto Rico formally petitioned the United States Congress to respond to the democratic aspirations of the United States citizens of Puerto Rico by means of a federally sanctioned plebiscite to be held no later than 1998, but Congress has yet to respond to said petition. The Texas Legislature recognizes that the time has come to enable Puerto Rico to exercise its right to self-determination and urges all citizens of Texas and the United States to support the enactment of a federal law leading to full self-government for Puerto Rico within the context of a congressionally sanctioned plebiscite.

### **PURPOSE**

Sets forth the following resolutions:

That the 78th Legislature of the State of Texas request that the Congress and President of the United States enact legislation that would define the political status options available to the United States citizens of Puerto Rico and authorize a plebiscite to provide an opportunity for Puerto Ricans to make an informed decision regarding the island's future political status.

That the 78th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby respectfully request the Texas delegation to the Congress of the United States to actively promote and support timely action on this important issue.

That the Texas secretary of state forward official copies of this resolution to the president and vice president of the United States, to the speaker of the house of representatives and the president of the senate of the United States Congress, to the chairman of the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, to the chairman of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Resources, and to all the members of the Texas delegation to the Congress with the request that this resolution be officially entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.