



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0626-2011, **Version:** A

Res. No. 626-A

Resolution calling upon the United States Congress to reinstate the privileges, formerly held by the Puerto Rican Resident Commissioner and other delegates, allowing them to vote on amendments and procedures in the Committee of the Whole.

By Council Members Mark-Viverito, Arroyo, Brewer, Cabrera, Dromm, James, Koppell, Lander, Mendez, Palma, Rose, Sanders Jr., Seabrook, Williams, Levin, Gonzalez, Foster, Van Bramer, Rivera, Rodriguez, Gennaro, Recchia Jr., Dilan, Dickens, Jackson, Garodnick and Chin

Whereas, Puerto Rico is a commonwealth of the United States and became a United States sovereignty in 1898; and

Whereas, Puerto Ricans have been United States citizens since 1917; and

Whereas, According to the most recent data released by the U.S. Census Bureau for 2007, there are nearly four million people of Puerto Rican descent living in the United States, which represents nine percent of the entire U.S. Hispanic population; and

Whereas, Over one million people of Puerto Rican descent live in New York State, of whom approximately 786,000 live in New York City; and

Whereas, People of Puerto Rican descent comprise thirty-five percent of all Hispanics living in New York State, as well as thirty-five percent of all Hispanics living in New York City, representing the largest group of Hispanics living in both the City and State; and

Whereas; Puerto Ricans living in Puerto Rico serve in the United States armed forces, use the United States postal service and United States currency; and

Whereas, Puerto Ricans who live in Puerto Rico cannot vote for the President of the United States; and

Whereas, Unlike residents of the fifty states, Puerto Ricans lack any representation in Congress, other

than through the honorary position of Resident Commissioner in the House of Representatives; and

Whereas, On January 5, 2011, the one hundred and twelfth United States Congress passed House Resolution number five, a package of proposed rules; and

Whereas, House Resolution number five includes a provision to prevent six house delegates from presiding over, or voting as part of the Committee of the Whole; and

Whereas, The Committee of the Whole is used to expedite the adoption of legislation by turning the entire House of Representatives chamber into one large committee; and

Whereas, This action affects the voting rights of delegates from the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands and the Resident Commissioner of Puerto Rico; and

Whereas, Delegates first received these voting rights in 1993; and

Whereas, In 1994, a federal Court of Appeals upheld the decision that Congress has the constitutional authority to allow delegate voting in the Committee of the Whole; and

Whereas, The District of Columbia alone is the twenty-seventh most populous incorporated city in the United States, and has served as one of the cornerstones of the Civil Rights Movement; and

Whereas, The denial of such vote to the Resident Commissioner and the delegates leads to a lack of representation of an estimated 4,879,576 constituents; and

Whereas, The action by Congress silences many blacks, Latinos, Carribeans, and Pacific Islanders who have historically been underrepresented and denied equal rights in our political system; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the United States Congress to reinstate the privileges, formerly held by the Puerto Rican Resident Commissioner and other delegates, allowing them to vote on amendments and procedures in the Committee of the Whole.

2/11/11