

## 2001 ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 46

1     **Relating to:** petitioning the President of the United States and the U.S. Congress  
2           to enact legislation that would define the political status options available to  
3           the U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico and authorize a plebiscite to provide an  
4           opportunity for Puerto Ricans to make an informed decision regarding the  
5           island’s future political status.

6           Whereas, in 1898, the United States, aided by a significant number of Puerto  
7     Rican citizens, defeated the Spanish in the Spanish–American War; and

8           Whereas, the Treaty of Paris signed by the United States on December 10, 1898,  
9     and ratified by the United States on February 6, 1899, formally ended the  
10    Spanish–American War and established Puerto Rico as a territory of the United  
11    States; and

12           Whereas, persons born in Puerto Rico have been and are U.S. citizens since  
13    1917 but do not possess full citizenship rights and the people of Puerto Rico do not  
14    enjoy representative democracy as a state of the Union or as an independent

1 republic; and, although U.S. citizens, they are not permitted to vote in U.S.  
2 presidential elections and have no voting representation in the U.S. Congress; and

3       Whereas, despite the fact that over 200,000 Puerto Ricans have fought in all  
4 wars participated in by the United States since World War I, including our current  
5 war against terrorism, and nearly 2,000 have sacrificed their lives for democratic  
6 principles and self-determination, and 4 of them have received the Congressional  
7 Medal of Honor, yet they are not allowed to vote for their Commander-in-Chief; and

8       Whereas, Puerto Ricans pay all federal taxes except income and estate taxes,  
9 but they receive lower levels of federal benefits than residents of the States, and are  
10 excluded from or have limited participation in certain federal programs; and

11       Whereas, the current status is not helping the economy of Puerto Rico and  
12 federal economic policy has fostered dependence, caused massive capital flight, and  
13 a tremendous brain drain; and the subsidizing of the present colonial relationship  
14 costs U.S. taxpayers approximately \$15 billion per year; and

15       Whereas, a resolution of the status issue would bring stability and economic  
16 development to the island that would sharply reduce or eliminate this burden on our  
17 taxpayers; and

18       Whereas, ever since the transition to commonwealth status in 1952, the  
19 majority of the people of Puerto Rico have sought an end to their status as a  
20 “territory”; and

21       Whereas, in over 100 years of U.S. sovereignty, the U.S. government has never  
22 formally consulted the American citizens of Puerto Rico on their political status  
23 preference, and in 1997 the legislature of Puerto Rico formally petitioned the U.S.  
24 Congress to respond to the democratic aspirations of the U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico

1 by means of a federally sanctioned plebiscite to be held no later than 1998, and  
2 Congress has not yet responded to this petition; and

3 Whereas, Puerto Rico has held 2 nonbinding referendums since 1993, and the  
4 most recent one indicated that only 0.06% of the population are satisfied with the  
5 status quo of being a territorial commonwealth, confirming that there is no longer  
6 the consent of the governed for the existing territorial status; and

7 Whereas, self-determination means presenting the U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico  
8 with an informed choice among valid, noncolonial status alternatives outlined in a  
9 clear, unambiguous plebiscite consistent with the U.S. Constitution; and

10 Whereas, the state of Wisconsin has a significant Puerto Rican community and  
11 an ever-increasing Hispanic population which has and continues to contribute to the  
12 state's economy and well-being; and

13 Whereas, the experience of the people of Wisconsin in resolving their own  
14 territorial status in 1848, after 65 years as a territory, makes them sympathetic to  
15 the aspirations of the people of Puerto Rico to resolve their own political status; now,  
16 therefore, be it

17 ***Resolved by the assembly, That*** the members of the Wisconsin assembly  
18 request that the U.S. Congress and the President of the United States enact  
19 legislation that would define the political status options available to the U.S. citizens  
20 of Puerto Rico and authorize a plebiscite to provide for Puerto Ricans to make an  
21 informed decision regarding the island's future political status; and, be it further

22 ***Resolved, That*** the members of the Wisconsin assembly request the Wisconsin  
23 congressional delegation to actively promote and support timely action on this  
24 important national issue; and, be it further

