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An Appeal From  
PORTO RICO  
To the Committee on Resolutions  
of the  
Republican National Convention  
at Chicago  
June 8, 1920

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## Suggested Plank for the Platform Incorporating Porto Rico as a Territory.

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“We recognize the industrial, commercial and political growth of Porto Rico, as well as her patriotic participation in the raising of troops, and in her responses to the call of the Government for financial support. We recognize her ambition to be annexed into the Nation as an integral part thereof, and we also recognize the justice of such a request. We therefore favor the incorporation of Porto Rico as a territory under the Constitution of the United States and believe that such action is but a fair reward for the patriotism, loyalty and just aspirations of her people.”

*In support of the above suggested Plank for the incorporation of the Territory of Porto Rico, the attention of the Committee is respectfully invited to the following memorandum:*

1. By virtue of the Organic Act of Porto Rico, Section 5, approved by Congress on March 2, 1917 (Jones Act):

*“All citizens of Porto Rico, as defined by section seven of the Act of April Twelfth, nineteen hundred, ‘temporarily to provide revenues and a civil government for Porto Rico and for other purposes’ and all natives of Porto Rico who were temporarily absent from that island*

on April eleventh, eighteen hundred and ninety-nine, and have since returned and are permanently residing in that island, and are not citizens of any foreign country, are hereby declared, and *shall be deemed and held to be, citizens of the United States.*”

2. Section 7 of the Act of April 12, 1900 (Foraker Act), provided as follows:

“Section 7: That all inhabitants continuing to reside therein who were Spanish subjects on the eleventh day of April, eighteen hundred and ninety-nine, and then resided in Porto Rico, *and their children born subsequent thereto*, shall be deemed and held to be *citizens of Porto Rico*, and as such entitled to the protection of the United States, except such as shall have elected to preserve their allegiance to the Crown of Spain on or before the eleventh day of April, nineteen hundred, in accordance with the provisions of the treaty of peace between the United States and Spain entered into on the eleventh day of April, eighteen hundred and ninety-nine; and they, together with such citizens of the United States as may reside in Porto Rico, *shall constitute a body politic under the name of The People of Porto Rico*, with governmental powers as hereinafter conferred, and with power to sue and be sued as such.”

3. Therefore, Porto Rico is an American Community under the jurisdiction of the United States.

4. Previous to the organic Act of March 2, 1917, above quoted, the Supreme Court of the United States declared that Porto Rico was an *organized* but unincorporated Territory. That “incorporation” did not follow by operation of the treaty of Paris, and that a positive enactment on the part of Congress was necessary in order to operate the *incorporation* of the Territory.

5. The clear intent of the Congress in granting collective citizenship to the citizens of Porto Rico was to incorporate the Territory; but the Supreme Court of the United States, reversing the Supreme Court of Porto Rico and the United States District Court for Porto Rico, held that the granting of citizenship was not sufficient for the incorporation. That in order to incorporate the Island, Congress must do it in express terms.

6. The consequence of that decision is that the inhabitants of Porto Rico and their children subsequently born in the Island *are citizens of the United States, subject to the jurisdiction of the United States*, the soil is a possession of the United States, but the political community formed by citizens of the United States on American soil is not incorporated into the United States. This situation from a political standpoint is disturbing and chaotic.

7. The Porto Rican Republican Party became affiliated with the National Republican Party in 1904 for the purpose of securing American citizenship and incorporation for Porto Rico. Now that the former aspiration has crystalized by the action of a *Democratic Congress*, we demand from *our Party* the recognition of the natural consequence of American citizenship, that is to say: the pledge to incorporate, by Act of Congress, the Political Community composed of citizens of the United States, created in the Island by said Act of Congress of March 2, 1917.

8. If the will of the Nation is that the Island should remain severed from the United States, we demand from our national statesmen, that with all candor and frankness they make clear their position in the premises in order to conform our aspirations and conduct to our political future, and to develop and educate the coming generations with a view to our final status.



9. We Porto Rican Republicans firmly maintain that our Island and people should forever remain a part and parcel of the United States, for the mutual convenience of both peoples; and we shall never submit to a Colonial condition or regard. The history of the birth of the Union should not be overlooked and you should not impose upon us the ominous ties you severed from Great Britain with the sword.

10. The independence propaganda in the Island is the outgrowth of the delay and hesitation of the Congress in granting American citizenship to the Porto Ricans, and of the undetermined status of the Island up to this time. An Act of Congress incorporating the Island would kill the independence propaganda, in the same manner that the granting of collective citizenship stopped the same for a time, that is to say, until the decision of the Supreme Court above referred to was made.

11. Porto Rico is a self supporting community. Real and personal property existing in the island was assessed, for purposes of taxation, in the sum of \$254,000,000, for the year 1918-19. This is \$154,000,000 more than the first assessment since the American occupation, made in 1900. The total revenues of the island for the fiscal year 1919-20 are estimated at \$7,000,000, of which \$1,030,000 came from raw and manufactured tobacco shipped to the Continent and \$370,000 from Customs duties. The remainder of these revenues is obtained from property, inheritance and income taxes, government telegraph and telephone lines, excise taxes and miscellaneous receipts. The expenses of the Insular Government for the same period are laid at the sum of \$6,998,000, including herein over \$2,700,000 appropriated for educational purposes, for which public service we receive federal aid in the sum of \$50,000 yearly only under the provision of the Nelson-Morrill fund Act. Outside of this item and the customs duties and excise taxes aforementioned, we are receiving no federal financial assistance in running our local government.

Our import and export trade with Continental United States exceeded \$1,300,000,000 during the twenty year period from 1899 to 1919, \$753,000,000 being the exports and the remainder the imports from the mainland. The same items for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1919, were as follows:

Exports \$71,015,351 and imports \$57,898,085.

12. During the war just closed we contributed a net quota of 15,734 men to the National Army, and this was about equal to the quota of the States of Oregon and North Dakota, and larger than that of Arizona, Connecticut, Delaware, Idaho, Maine, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, Wyoming, Alaska, Hawaii and the District of Columbia.

The Territory further took a very active part in helping win the war in other activities. We bought \$10,093,100 worth of Liberty Bonds. Thirty-five thousand of the people became members of the Porto Rico Chapter of the American Red Cross, and contributed \$205,775 for Red Cross work. In addition, the Junior Red Cross secured a membership of 68,020 with a contribution of \$21,511.22. At the time the White House wool was sold, Porto Rico bought its quota for \$4,000, which was an amount higher than that obtained in any State of the Union. The activities of the Committee of Public Information, Division of Four Minute Men, also found echo in the Territory, and 42 local organizations were promptly completed in an equal number of municipalities out of 76 in the island with a membership exceeding 400. The National Defense League, the League to Enforce Peace, the United War Work Campaign, and all other patriotic organizations were largely supported by the people.

Prosecution for evasion of military duty, or under the Espionage Act and other Federal Laws enacted for the prosecution of the war,

have been practically negligible, and it is a matter of particular pride to the people of the Territory generally that, as shown by the previous figures and activities, we were the equal of any State in the Union in the crisis which so brilliantly came to an end under the pressure of our nation.

Respectfully submitted,

R. H. TODD,

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Delegates from Porto Rico.

LEE NIXON,

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Alternates.