

The following Resolution is recommended for adoption by the Democratic National Committee at its meeting on Saturday, August 15, 2026.

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Resolution Reaffirming the Democratic Party's Commitment to Protecting Constitutional Rights and Citizenship for the U.S. Territories

WHEREAS, the Democratic Party has long championed equal citizenship, equal voting rights, representative democracy, civil rights, and the principle that no American should enjoy fewer constitutional rights solely because of where he or she resides; and

WHEREAS, the 2024 Democratic Party Platform specifically endorses enactment of the Puerto Rico Status Act (H.R. 2757/S.3231), recognizing that "the people of Puerto Rico have earned and deserve to resolve the political status question" and expressly supporting enactment of the Puerto Rico Status Act to achieve that objective; and

WHEREAS, the people of Puerto Rico have repeatedly rejected continuation of territorial status and have voted in favor of statehood in four successive plebiscites held in 2012, 2017, 2020, and 2024, the latter using the same status definitions adopted by Congress in the Puerto Rico Status Act and resulting in 58.61 percent of voters selecting statehood; and

WHEREAS, although each United States territory possesses its own unique history, constitutional relationship, and democratic aspirations, the people of Puerto Rico, Guam, the United States Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa continue to live under territorial arrangements in which Congress exercises extraordinary authority over fundamental aspects of their political and constitutional relationship with the United States; and

WHEREAS, the recent introduction of the End Birthright Citizenship for Territories Act demonstrates that Congress continues to assert authority to legislate differently with respect to citizenship in the United States territories than it may for citizens residing in the fifty States, relying upon Congress' powers under Article IV of the Constitution and the continuing vitality of the infamous Insular cases' doctrine of territorial incorporation; and

WHEREAS, constitutional scholars have observed that because United States citizenship in Puerto Rico derives from federal statute rather than statehood, Congress has historically claimed authority to amend, limit, or redefine aspects of that statutory framework in ways unavailable with respect to citizens residing in the States, underscoring the continuing constitutional uncertainty created by territorial status; and

WHEREAS, the continued existence of second-class US citizenship is not merely a territorial issue but an unfinished civil rights issue, demanding renewed national leadership consistent with the Democratic Party's historic commitment to equality, democracy, and justice for all Americans;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Democratic National Committee unequivocally opposes the End Birthright Citizenship for Territories Act, and any legislation that seeks to diminish, restrict, redefine, or place into question the citizenship or constitutional rights of persons born in Puerto Rico or the United States territories; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Democratic National Committee recognizes that the recent introduction of legislation seeking to redefine birthright citizenship in the territories is not merely an isolated legislative proposal, but a reminder that territorial status itself leaves fundamental rights vulnerable to future congressional action, thereby reinforcing the urgent necessity of permanently resolving the political status of Puerto Rico; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Democratic National Committee reaffirms its commitment to working alongside the Democratic leadership of Puerto Rico, Guam, the United States Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa to advance equal citizenship, democratic self-government, and the full protection of constitutional rights for all Americans residing in the United States territories; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Democratic National Committee reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the promises contained in the 2024 Democratic Party Platform and supports renewed congressional consideration and enactment of the Puerto Rico Status Act, recognizing that the Democratic Party has already declared that the people of Puerto Rico have earned and deserve the opportunity to permanently resolve their political status through federally enacted legislation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that upon returning to governing majorities in the United States House of Representatives, the United States Senate, and the White House, enactment of legislation permanently resolving Puerto Rico's political status shall be a legislative priority consistent with the commitments contained in the Democratic Party Platform and the longstanding principles of equal citizenship, equal representation, and democratic self-government; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that because the people of Puerto Rico have repeatedly and democratically expressed their support for admission as a State of the Union, the Democratic National Committee recognizes that statehood remains the only political status that permanently secures equal constitutional rights, equal representation in the federal government, and the permanence of United States citizenship on equal footing with every other American citizen.