

DOCS 4 : GROUPWORK – Doc E

Prepare an oral presentation of the document you have been assigned

Rep. Ritchie Torres takes a stand on statehood and the status quo

1 “The people of Puerto Rico have consistently voted for statehood, only to have their express will ignored by Congress, which cannot be bothered to care about the disenfranchisement of more than 3 million American citizens
5 on the island,” Congressman Ritchie Torres (D-NY) wrote yesterday on X. [...]

Rep. Torres, who represents a congressional district in the Bronx that is home to more Puerto Ricans than almost any other member of Congress [...] concluded the conversation
10 by saying, “If you think it is morally acceptable to deprive 3 million American citizens of equal representation in Congress, equal funding from the federal budget, and an equal right to vote in presidential elections, then you and I simply have a different set of values.”

15 Torres’s reference to disenfranchisement is poignant. The residents of Puerto Rico are literally disenfranchised because they cannot vote in presidential elections, they have no senators, and they are represented by only one, non-voting Member in the House of Representatives. Puerto Ricans
20 cannot vote for the congressional representatives who make their laws, as other US citizens can. [...]

Although a commenter makes the case that “taking away one of the most popular options from the vote, which is the status quo”, is colonialism, the facts tell a different story.
25 The “status quo,” which is Puerto Rico’s current status as a US territory, is deeply unpopular in Puerto Rico. [...]

A “commonwealth” option had received more votes back in 1967 (60.4%) and 1993 (48.6%), but this “commonwealth” ballot option did not represent the status quo. It was, instead,
30 an aspirational concept to give Puerto Rico more rights while still remaining a US territory, an idea that has been soundly rejected over the years. [...]

This unpopularity, combined with the increased recognition that Puerto Rico’s current status is colonial and inconsistent
35 with US democratic values, underpins the decision to leave the status quo—sometimes referred to as “commonwealth”—off the ballot in the last two referendum votes.

Puerto Rico Report, 2024



Ritchie Torres, congressman of Puerto Rican descent, at a demonstration, 2022

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