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A Call to Action – Open letter to US Congress

Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission, State of Connecticut

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For immediate Release

Hartford, CT – The Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission (LPRAC) of the State of Connecticut, in view of the rapidly deteriorating and potentially devastating financial crisis in Puerto Rico, and the ramifications for residents of Puerto Rico and families living there and in the State of Connecticut, urges members of Congress to respond expeditiously and effectively to support and assist Puerto Rico in navigating this crisis in a manner that protects residents from unwarranted harm and provides a durable foundation from which to achieve sustainable financial stability.

Connecticut, with the largest concentration of people of Puerto Rican ancestry in the United States, is acutely aware of the shattering human crisis that would reverberate well beyond Puerto Rico to our state and states across the country were the current crisis left unresolved in the face of looming deadlines with serious and substantial financial consequences.

The status quo is untenable and unmanageable, and threatens to undermine or destroy the economic prospects not only of the Puerto Rican economy and the businesses that are fighting for survival, but of the lives of individual families seeking merely to make ends meet and provide a decent quality of life.

Solutions of varying severity and breadth are actively under consideration in legal, legislative and financial venues, but it is imperative that deliberations not extend beyond the moment when their execution has the capacity to make a positive and enduring difference. We must turn the tide before people are drowned by the failures of the past, precluding any opportunity to build, or re-build, a meaningful and productive future.

A comprehensive result that places people above political posturing and tangible progress above recrimination must be paramount in the deliberations that must proceed to conclusion without hesitation or delay. An equitable solution, which provides for a thoughtful and discernable way forward, is vital. Such a resolution would necessarily permit Puerto Rico the practical prospect of rebuilding the economy in the short-term and long-term and providing confidence and realistic hope to a population that has sustained economic hardship and unrelenting adversity.

Consideration of a law allowing Puerto Rico to restructure its debt, of a moratorium on lawsuits, of amending federal laws that affect the flow of money to Puerto Rico, of a financial review board, of emergency financial assistance, of clarifications to the existing status of Puerto Rico in regards to legislation and jurisprudence, and review of the ability of the Puerto Rican government to adequately address the needs of the local citizenry, to varying degrees merit attention and consideration as Congress grapples with how best to proceed in these extraordinary circumstances. But proceed Congress must.

Time is very short and the situation could not be more severe. Unyielding deadlines must be met, and a definitive response cannot be deferred, lest a burgeoning financial crisis become a



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deepening humanitarian crisis with the injury extending to many more people in Puerto Rico and to families and taxpayers throughout the United States.

Government of the people, by the people, for the people is at the heart of our representative democracy, and serves as a cogent reminder of the singular importance of our shared aspiration to provide every individual, wherever they reside, with the ability to enjoy life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. It is as true today as when first declared, and underscores the imperative to act now in this extraordinary circumstance.

LPRAC is a nonpartisan policy agency within the legislative branch of government created in 1994 by an act of the Connecticut Legislature.

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