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JUST NOW: Puerto Ricans, Diaspora and allies demand to Chair Raul Grijalva national sovereignty

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Puerto Ricans, Diaspora and Allies Demand to Chair Raul Grijalva National Sovereignty

Over 20 organizations representing thousands of people, and dozens of concerned citizens and activists signed a letter calling for Raul Grijalva, Chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee, to work towards the total decolonization and sovereignty of Puerto Rico.

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Over 20 organizations led by [Boricuas Unidos en la Diáspora \(BUDPR\)](#), and including the [National Lawyers Guild](#), [VAMOS Puerto Rico](#), [Diáspora en Resistencia](#), [Chicago Boricua Resistance](#), [Democratic Socialists of America \(DSA\)](#), [Our Revolution Puerto Rico](#), [Youth Climate Strike Puerto Rico](#), [Movimiento Unión Soberanista \(MUS\)](#), Alianza pro Libre Asociación Soberana (ALAS), and [Movimiento Diálogo Soberanista \(MDS\)](#), along with dozens of concerned Puerto Ricans, signed a [letter](#) demanding that the House Committee on Natural Resources, chaired by Representative Raul Grijalva, act to end colonial domination by Congress over Puerto Rico by revoking the Puerto Rico Oversight, Management, and Economic Stability Act (PROMESA), dismantling the Financial Oversight and Management Board (FOMB) and enabling an independent audit of the [island's debt](#). The collective also urged the Committee to adopt the necessary policies to facilitate Puerto Rico's path towards sustainable economic development and self-sufficiency, direct democratic accountability and national sovereignty.

“Without sovereignty there is no autonomy and without autonomy there is no accountability. This is where Puerto Rico finds itself, fundamentally disempowered through its colonial status. The ‘Summer of 2019’ highlighted how Puerto Ricans are reclaiming their rights and powers over their institutions, socioeconomic development and collective well-being, all of which have been historically jeopardized by the island’s lack of national sovereignty. This was long overdue. It is time that Puerto Rico starts enjoying full political autonomy to democratically legislate -holding those who exercise power over it to account, thereby giving it back to its people,” stated Diana Isabel Sotomayor, spokeswoman of Boricuas Unidos en la Diáspora, and based in Brussels, Belgium.

Boricuas Unidos en la Diáspora is a network of Puerto Rican professionals ready to activate other boricuas in the Diaspora to directly fund community-led organizations in Puerto Rico. Since 2017, its members have worked together towards: building bridges between Puerto Rican community leaders and federal lawmakers, educating for structural change and long-term economic development, and educating and activating the Diaspora through an anticolonial and social justice lens.

The signatories, which include Puerto Ricans living throughout the United States, Europe, Australia and South America, as well as Puerto Ricans living in the Archipelago, demand that Congress stops enacting last-minute legislation whenever urgent public policy is needed for Puerto Rico. This “legislating from afar” model, the letter reads, **“has not worked in the past, is not working under PROMESA, and even under an amended or repealed PROMESA, Puerto Rico will continue to be hostage to the whims of Congress to solve its immediate problems. This ‘policy’ of never-ending legislative patches must end.”**

“From the diaspora, we will always be the vehicle by which Puerto Ricans in our native country deliver their ideas, aspirations, and demands to be heard in the halls of Congress. The time for colonization is over and the issue of Puerto Rico must be addressed head-on!” said María J. Torres-López, founder and president of Diáspora en Resistencia.

Members of the National Political Committee of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) also supported the letter. On August 27, 2019, DSA’s National Political Committee approved a Statement on Decolonization, which stated that **“DSA is committed to the full decolonization of all the occupied lands of United States.”** Margaret Wooten, DSA member and director of engagement and strategic partnerships of Boricuas Unidos en la Diáspora, emphasized that **“we, progressive Americans, stand firmly in solidarity with the decolonization of and full sovereignty for Puerto Rico. The values of self-determination, social justice, and fierce anti-colonialism should be at the core of any elected official that identifies with progressive politics. And on the Puerto Rican question, the only truly progressive and decolonizing option is political sovereignty.”**

Signatories encouraged Chair Grijalva to **“support and welcome any steps this Committee can take to finally solve Puerto Rico’s colonial problem towards an organized transition for a sovereign and independent future for Puerto Rico, in close friendship with the United States.”**

“Hurricane Maria’s tragedy brought all Puerto Ricans together and underscored the lack of urgency by the U.S. government in assisting its forgotten colony. The trauma of Maria has actually been a valuable lesson that led to the events of the Summer of 2019 and has led me and the rest of the signatories of this letter to raise our voices for the justice that our nation, Puerto Rico, finally deserves: its national emancipation,” concluded María de Lourdes Guzmán, President of Movimiento Unión Soberanista and San Juan Senate Candidate for Movimiento Victoria Ciudadana.

This is an ongoing initiative; Puerto Ricans living in the Archipelago, Diaspora and allies alike are encouraged to [sign the letter and share the link](#) with their friends and community members.