

the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

#### CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provision of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the pending campaign finance reform amendment:

Trent Lott, Connie Mack, Ben Nighthorse Campbell, Thad Cochran, Wayne Allard, Rod Grams, Larry E. Craig, Kay Bailey Hutchison, James M. Inhofe, Richard G. Lugar, Mitch McConnell, Jeff Sessions, Rick Santorum, Don Nickles, Dan Coats, and Lauch Faircloth.

#### CALL OF THE ROLL

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call under the rule has been waived.

#### VOTE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on amendment No. 3554 to S. 2237, the Interior appropriations bill, shall be brought to a close? The yeas and nays are required under the rule. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 52, nays 48, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 264 Leg.]

#### YEAS—52

Akaka	Feinstein	McCain
Baucus	Ford	Mikulski
Biden	Glenn	Moseley-Braun
Bingaman	Graham	Moynihan
Boxer	Harkin	Murray
Breaux	Hollings	Reed
Bryan	Inouye	Reid
Bumpers	Jeffords	Robb
Byrd	Johnson	Rockefeller
Chafee	Kennedy	Sarbanes
Cleland	Kerrey	Snowe
Collins	Kerry	Specter
Conrad	Kohl	Thompson
Daschle	Landrieu	Torricelli
Dodd	Lautenberg	Wellstone
Dorgan	Leahy	Wyden
Durbin	Levin	
Feingold	Lieberman	

#### NAYS—48

Abraham	Faircloth	Lugar
Allard	Frist	Mack
Aschcroft	Gorton	McConnell
Bennett	Gramm	Murkowski
Bond	Grams	Nickles
Brownback	Grassley	Roberts
Burns	Gregg	Roth
Campbell	Hagel	Santorum
Coats	Hatch	Sessions
Cochran	Helms	Shelby
Coverdell	Hutchinson	Smith (NH)
Craig	Hutchison	Smith (OR)
D'Amato	Inhofe	Stevens
DeWine	Kempthorne	Thomas
Domenici	Kyl	Thurmond
Enzi	Lott	Warner

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROBERTS). On this vote, the yeas are 52, the nays are 48.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

Under the previous order, the Senator from Florida, Mr. GRAHAM, is recognized in morning business for 1 hour.

The Senator from Florida is recognized.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, parliamentary inquiry.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator will state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, upon the conclusion of the time of the Senator from Florida, what is the regular order?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The pending business will be the Interior appropriations bill.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Will the current amendment, the Feingold amendment, be the pending business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That will be the pending question.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The distinguished Senator from Florida is recognized.

#### PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Mr. GRAHAM. Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Delia Lasanta, a congressional fellow, Mary Jo Catalano, and Luis Rivera, interns in my office, be allowed floor privileges for the duration of this 1 hour of morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### NATIONAL HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, today I rise to honor Hispanic Americans.

National Hispanic Heritage Month is celebrated every year from September 15 to October 15.

This month-long observation, established in 1968, is now a celebration of the history and achievements of Hispanic Americans.

During the August recess, among the many visits I made throughout my state, I had the opportunity to once again visit the historic city of St. Augustine.

A visit to St. Augustine is always very special but this time it was more so because accompanying me on this trip were my triplet granddaughters. I took advantage of this occasion to teach my granddaughters about the rich and wonderful history of St. Augustine, of Florida and of our Nation. And they taught me something about the thrill of seeing castles and historic sites for the first time through the fresh eyes of a 3-year old.

Hispanic presence in what is now the United States began long before our Nation existed.

In 1513, Juan Ponce de Leon sailed from Puerto Rico to the east coast of Florida.

A Spanish explorer, Ponce de Leon is best remembered as the discoverer of Florida and for his early attempts to colonize in 1521.

He was also the first Governor of Puerto Rico which today is home to 3.8 million U.S. citizens.

In 1565, Pedro Menendez de Aviles, another Spanish explorer, established St. Augustine, the first permanent Eu-

ropean settlement in what is now the United States. This settlement predated the Jamestown colony in Virginia by more than 40 years.

When he reached the shores of La Florida, Menendez de Aviles and his crew celebrated with a feast with the Native American Indians of the region, by bringing red wine, roast pig and garbanzo beans. Thus began another part of our rich Hispanic heritage.

Nearly 300 years later, the United States was rapidly developing and experiencing its first 50 years of democracy. Hispanic Americans played their role in that development.

The first Hispanic American to serve in the Congress was Joseph Marion Hernandez, who was elected in 1822 as a Delegate to the U.S. Congress from the territory of Florida. Today there are 5,170 Hispanic elected officials nationwide, 81 of them proudly serving in my State of Florida.

Of the 18 Hispanic Members of the 105th Congress, two are from Florida, Congresswoman ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, who in 1989 became the first Hispanic woman Member of Congress and her fellow Cuban-American Congressman LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART.

Today Florida is an example of the rich diversity of this country, as we have residents from all the Spanish speaking countries of the world.

Sadly, many of these residents came to this country from countries such as Cuba and Nicaragua seeking refuge from persecution and denial of basic human rights which they were denied in their homeland.

These residents hold a strong patriotic fervor for their new land in the United States equally with their hopes of restoring liberty and democracy to their former home in Cuba. They will return to a democratic Cuba with their experience in the United States being a significant contribution, whether they are there on a permanent or a temporary basis, to the restoration of that island nation, which has suffered so long under autocratic rule.

The latest Census Bureau figures now estimate that the U.S. Hispanic population nears 30 million, representing 11 percent of the total population of the United States.

The Bureau also estimates that by the year 2005 Hispanics will be the single largest minority group in this country.

Hispanic Americans have achieved notable success in every aspect of our society.

It is important to highlight the level of entrepreneurial spirit that Hispanic Americans bring to the work force, leading to economic growth for all Americans. According to the Small Business Administration, the largest growing sector of small businesses are owned by Hispanic women.

Hispanic owned businesses have grown three times faster than the average of all business growth in the United States.

Hispanic Americans have played, and will continue to play, a key role in our country's future.

The commitment of Hispanic Americans to this country's ideal of freedom and democracy have never faltered.

Hispanic Americans have volunteered and served this country with distinction in every branch of our nation's armed services and their sacrifices on the field of combat are ample evidence of their patriotic commitment.

The fact that there are forty-two Hispanic Congressional Medal of Honor winners is a most eloquent testimony of this commitment to freedom and democracy.

In March 1997 Senator LARRY CRAIG and I, along with a bi-partisan coalition of our colleagues introduced S. 472 to provide the nearly 4 million U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico with a congressionally sanctioned plebiscite to democratically vote on their future political status.

On more than one occasion I have spoken of our moral commitment to answer the legitimate request for self-determination by our fellow citizens who are residents of Puerto Rico.

On July 25 of this year, Puerto Rico commemorated the 100th anniversary of the arrival of U.S. Major General Nelson Miles and his troops on Puerto Rico's shores. On that historic occasion 100 years ago, General Miles declared that the United States came, to use his words, "bearing the banner of freedom \* \* \* the fostering arm of a nation of free people, whose greatest power is in justice and humanity to all those living within its fold."

One hundred years after those valiant actions and eloquent words, the U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico continue to wait for the fulfillment of that promise of justice and humanity. For the last century, they have been denied the most fundamental right of a free people, the right to choose their own political destiny.

One of the most fundamental principles of our nationhood was expressed in the Declaration of Independence when our forefathers wrote:

We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness—That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed.

That, Mr. President, is what our Founding Fathers wrote over 200 years ago. Now the challenge we face in 1998 is whether we are prepared to live by those principles of consent of the governed.

Today I am here to ask, what better way to honor all Hispanic Americans, to commemorate their sacrifices and contributions to our great Nation, than to provide the U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico with their long frustrated dream of political self-determination?

Earlier this year, our colleagues in the House passed a bill authorizing a plebiscite, a plebiscite to initiate self-determination. The Senate has closely examined this issue through a series of

hearings and workshops conducted by Energy Committee Chairman MURKOWSKI. After careful and exhaustive deliberations, Senator MURKOWSKI has drafted a bill which simply authorizes a self-determination process for Puerto Rico. Senator MURKOWSKI's bill is straightforward; it is fair; it recognizes and respects Puerto Rico's local political dynamics and delivers the much-needed congressional endorsement of this process.

We have before us a rare opportunity, an opportunity to support democracy in action. Senator MURKOWSKI's bill should be given full consideration before the adjournment of this Congress. This is an issue that will not go away. The historic significance of the U.S. Congress acting to give the people of Puerto Rico the reality of what General Miles spoke in his eloquent words of justice and humanity 100 years ago is an opportunity that we should not let pass. It is our historic opportunity and responsibility to our fellow citizens to honor Hispanic-Americans by providing self-determination to the U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico. Let us make 1998 memorable not because it is the 100th anniversary of U.S. troops landing in Puerto Rico but, rather, because this is the year and this is the Congress which commemorated Hispanic Heritage Month and honored all Hispanic-Americans by keeping its promise of democracy to the U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a series of newspaper editorials in support of self-determination for the U.S. citizens who are residents of Puerto Rico.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

#### IT'S UNDEMOCRATIC TO DENY AMERICAN CITIZENS A VOICE

One hundred years ago, during the Spanish-American war, the U.S. troops who took over the Spanish colony of Puerto Rico were enthusiastically greeted by most of the islanders. After all, the United States of America represented liberty and democracy to the world; the future of Puerto Rico looked bright, indeed.

A century later, Puerto Rico are American citizens, but they are not allowed to vote in presidential elections or to elect voting representatives to Congress.

Puerto Ricans have fought and died under the American flag in every war since 1917 and are eligible for the military draft, yet they have no voice in selecting the president or the Congress that could send them to war.

Under a government of the people, by the people and for the people, it seems unfitting that the United States has never formally consulted the 3.8 million American citizens of Puerto Rico on their future. Oh, a few elections have been held within the commonwealth, but the voting process, the wording of the ballots and the results have never been recognized by Congress.

For years, Puerto Rico has requested that Congress at least sanction a vote to officially gauge the opinion of the people: Do they wish to remain a commonwealth, become a state, or achieve separate sovereignty? For years Congress has given no answer.

This year, such legislation has been approved in the House of Representatives, and its life or death resides in the Senate, specifically in the hands of Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott.

If the majority of Puerto Ricans wish to continue their island's status as a commonwealth, with limited rights and limited responsibilities, so be it.

But, if a majority selects statehood as a goal—after weighing the positives against the negatives of federal income taxes and stiffer industrial regulation and taxation—then Congress should also weigh the positives and negatives and make a decision. Only Congress can decide; a territory cannot make itself a state.

Under the bill, if most Puerto Ricans favor statehood, a lengthy period of negotiations—spanning a period of up to 10 years—on possible statehood would begin. Only after all terms are agreed upon could Congress even consider legislation to admit Puerto Rico as a state.

Lott has shown little interest in bringing the bill to the Senate floor. He seems to think that Americans have little interest in it. But 3.8 million American citizens are vitally interested. After 100 years, they deserve to have their voices heard.

#### LITERACY UNLOCKS THE WORLD OF WORDS

Tucked inside The Sun Herald today is a Newspaper in Education publication celebrating International Literacy Day. To that end, the special section contains tips for teachers and parents.

Among the tips for teachers, we would like to stress the second one: Teach children where they can find readily available reading materials. That goes hand-in-hand with the second tip for parents: Get a library card and use it with your child.

For a child to think that reading is worth the effort—and in the beginning, reading can be an effort—that child should have something he or she thinks is worth reading. Since preferences will vary from child to child, a library is the best place to take a child to unlock the world of words.

When a child picks out what he or she wants to read, the odds are considerably greater that it will get read.

Certainly a parent can and should build on a child's selections by reading to the child. But if a child isn't curling up with a book, it may be because he or she doesn't have a book of his or her own choosing.

[From the Clarion-Ledger, Sept. 7, 1998]

#### PUERTO RICO SHOULD BE ALLOWED SELF-DETERMINATION

Proposals to allow Puerto Rico to pursue statehood may not be a high priority with most Americans, but it should be.

There is no more American an issue than that of allowing a group of American citizens—yes, Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens—the right of self-determination to pursue statehood or whatever they may wish.

Bills soon will be before Congress to do just that. The bills are "process" bills, not statehood bills. The bills would provide a process to ask Puerto Rican voters their preferences. They could choose to be a commonwealth, a process that would lead to statehood or independence.

If statehood is selected, there would be lengthy period of negotiations, up to 10 years, when terms and conditions would be decided.

There are many reasons why it would be good for Puerto Rico to enter the union. As for economics, Puerto Rico's economy is about \$42 billion, slightly ahead of New Mexico. The U.S. spends some \$10 billion a year in economic subsidies there. That would be reduced some \$3 billion. But the potential growth is there, too.

If admitted, there would be no reason for other states to lose representation. Seats in Congress could be expanded.

But the reasons transcend economies and politics.

Puerto Ricans have fought in every U.S. war this century, and have died in greater percentage according to population. The "blood tax" has been paid.

As many as 80 percent participate in elections there (compare that to American's lazy attitude about their ballot rights), but cannot vote for the commander and chief who may send their sons and daughters to war.

Americans should cheer at the prospect of a new state because it reminds everyone of the importance of the American ideals of freedom and self-determination.

Puerto Rico has earned that precious right.

[From the New York Times, Mar. 9, 1998]

#### A CHOICE FOR PUERTO RICO

In a historic move, the House narrowly passed a bill last week to give 3.8 million Puerto Ricans the right to vote on whether the island should retain its current commonwealth status, seek statehood or become independent. The United States-Puerto Rico Political Status Act, sponsored by Representative Don Young of Alaska, requires that a vote be held on the three options by the end of this year. If either statehood or independence receives a majority, the President and Congress would be asked to develop a transition plan, and give final approval to a status change within 10 years. If none of the options receive a majority vote, the current status would be unchanged and another referendum would be held within 10 years.

Both the Republican and Democratic platforms have long supported Puerto Rican self-determination. Yet Congress has repeatedly failed to give islanders a say on their political status. With House passage of the bill, its future now depends on Trent Lott, the Senate majority leader, who has been unenthusiastic about the issue. The Senate would dishonor democratic values by shelving this bill.

Puerto Rico was acquired by the United States 100 years ago as part of the spoils from the Spanish-American War. Its residents are American citizens who have been subject to the draft and Federal laws. But they do not pay Federal income taxes, do not elect members of Congress and cannot vote for President. This diminished status does have support among islanders who worry that statehood would jeopardize the island's distinctive heritage.

But language issues and other important questions can be addressed when Puerto Ricans debate their choices. The proposed bill would allow them to decide their future with the assurance that Congress would not ignore the result. In a 1993 nonbinding plebiscite, 48 percent of Puerto Ricans voted for commonwealth status, 46 percent for statehood and 4 percent for independence. A majority may still prefer commonwealth status, and even if islanders vote for statehood or independence, Congress would be able to manage the transition. In any case, the Senate would be wrong to prevent political self-determination for American citizens when it supports that right for people elsewhere in the world.

[From the Washington Post, Feb. 23, 1998]

#### AMERICANS WITHOUT FULL RIGHTS

Congress is getting serious about Puerto Rico's political future for the first time since the United States picked up the island territory in an imperial war with Spain 100 years ago. By a carefully launched bill that may reach the floor early in March, the

House would set up a process to let Puerto Ricans choose their future status from among the current "commonwealth" statehood and independence options. This would not be no straw poll. The bill would define the details—financial, political, linguistic—of the statehood option favored in Puerto Rico. It would lock the United States into a 10-year transition to put statehood, or another choice, into effect.

The bill, sponsored by House Resources Chairman Don Young (R-Alaska), cleared his committee 44 to 1. He anticipates serious debate and substantial approval. It could be a great day for democracy. But it also could be a difficult day. There is concern over the political lineup of the two senators and six congressmen who would go to a new state and over which states would have to forfeit six seats in the House. There is argument over whether new tax revenues would, as sponsors claim, wash out new social-program costs.

But the hot issue is language. There is support among Puerto Ricans to retain their Spanish-language heritage. Some in Congress, however, would make Puerto Rico the battleground for an attempt to legislate English as the official language of the United States. The Young bill undertakes to deal with this question chiefly by providing for use of English in the courts and other official venues, while increasing and improving English-language training in the schools. This seems sensible. A strict official-English policy ignores that Washington never asked Puerto Rico to embrace English when it took over the island and when it sent its sons to fight in American wars. Such a policy also ignores the extent to which the United States by practice and culture is already a considerably bilingual nation. Alarms of creating an "American Quebec" are a spillover from the official English debate.

Puerto Ricans always could get the language of their preference by independence. But that option has never risen above a few percentage points. This makes Congress's definition of statehood crucial. To put statehood on the three successive referendums the bill calls for but then to burden the option with a provocative English requirement is unfair. It thrusts upon the island's 3.8 million residents a choice between political empowerment and cultural identity. For decades American political leaders have held out Puerto Rican statehood as an option. It would be a mockery to load it up with unneeded political accessories the first time it began to look real.

A commitment to common rights, responsibilities and ideals—not a dominant language—bonds Americans. A commitment to democracy should drive Americans to ensure Puerto Ricans full and equal rights as American citizens. It has been, after all, 100 years.

[From the Orlando Sentinel, July 19, 1998]

CLARIFY PUERTO RICO'S STATUS; CITIZENS OF THE ISLAND DESERVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A CHOICE, WHETHER THEY DECIDE TO REMAIN A COMMONWEALTH, EMBRACE STATEHOOD OR SEEK INDEPENDENCE.

U.S. Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott says there's not enough time to consider the issue of Puerto Rico's status before senators head home in October.

That's not persuasive. After all, the U.S. House of Representatives managed to do that in a matter of days, approving it in March.

But even more important would be the symbolism of giving Puerto Ricans a voice in determining their own form of government. One hundred years ago this month, the United States occupied that island during the Spanish-American War.

Puerto Rico now holds U.S. commonwealth status, which allows it self-government but

with obligations to the United States. That means, for instance, that Puerto Ricans pay taxes to their government but not to the U.S. Treasury. At the same time, they hold U.S. citizenship.

It's time that Puerto Rico's status is clarified definitively, whether the choice is to remain a commonwealth, embrace statehood or seek independence.

Thus the Clinton administration was right last week to push for swift action in the Senate.

Self-determination stands as one of this nation's most important ideals, stemming from the America people's struggle to chart their own political course more than 200 years ago.

Puerto Ricans also deserve that right.

A plebiscite in Puerto Rico five years ago merely whetted the appetite of people for a substantive vote. The plebiscite—a glorified opinion poll—underscored the intensity of the debate over Puerto Rico's future. Voters mostly sided with two options—commonwealth and statehood—with commonwealth receiving slightly more support.

The House bill would allow an official plebiscite, presenting Puerto Ricans with the three choices mentioned above.

If the option of commonwealth were chosen, of course, it would be automatic because it would mean keeping things as they are now.

Much more work would be required if voters were to choose independence or statehood. Statehood would be the most complicated, with the United States having the final say.

The job of working out the details of transition plan would fall to President Bill Clinton and the Congress. That plan then would be presented to Puerto Rican voters. The series of negotiations and votes could take years to unfold.

The process will take even longer, though, if the Senate doesn't get off the dime. Florida Sen. Bob Graham, who supports the plebiscite, argues that the votes are there, that it's just a matter of getting the Senate to vote.

But that means overcoming a big obstacle—Mr. Lott. He appears not terribly interested in Puerto Rico, which is probably the real reason it is being crowded off the Senate's agenda.

Mr. Lott should reconsider. His position, which places him between Puerto Ricans and self-determination, creates ill will and delays an overdue decision.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I yield such time as is to be utilized by the Senator from New Jersey.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey is recognized.

Mr. TORRICELLI. Mr. President, I thank my colleague and friend, the Senator from Florida, Senator GRAHAM.

I, too, rise in observance of Hispanic Heritage Month, noting that there could be no better way to note the importance of our Hispanic heritage and this month of observance than to deal with the reality of the political status of Puerto Rico.

In 1841, President Harrison said, "The only legitimate right to govern is an express grant of power from the governed."

Those words were deemed so important to our Republic, so basic to our system of government, they became a part of the architecture of the Capitol itself. The history of our country is about the expansion of democracy and

the enfranchisement of people. The very purpose for founding this Nation was to ensure that our people would have control over their own destiny and choose their own Government. Through the generations, this maturation process has included the enfranchisement of women, African-Americans, and eventually to all people over the age of 18.

The democratic process was probably never better exercised or no firmer commitment made than when this Congress established an orderly procedure to admit new States. That process committed to the people of our country that the process of enfranchisement and of self-government was not simply for themselves but other people who share our ideals, culture, and our geography.

Ever since 1898, the end of the Spanish-American War, we have shared a culture, a history, and a geography with the people of Puerto Rico. The people of the island of Puerto Rico have been subject to our laws and regulations, but they have been unable to vote for the very legislators who would govern them through their actions.

Puerto Rico is the unfinished business of American democracy. Having long since enfranchised all of our population, having extended our sovereignty into the Pacific Ocean and the Northwest, all that remains is the people of these few islands including Puerto Rico, the first and most important case that remains to be dealt with.

This is important not only to the 29 million Hispanic-Americans, it is important to all of our people, because it involves justice and fairness.

Earlier this year, Senators CRAIG and GRAHAM introduced the Puerto Rican Political Status Act. I was very proud to follow their leadership and be part of its drafting and its introduction. That legislation in similar form passed the House of Representatives in March. It would fully and clearly allow the people of Puerto Rico to follow the path of full democracy if they so chose. Unfortunately, the legislation remains in the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. While we are all grateful that the chairman has scheduled consideration of the legislation, in truth it is very late in the life of the 105th Congress. Each day that passes, every week that goes by, we increase the chance that the people of Puerto Rico will not have an expression from this Congress about the chance they may possess to enfranchise themselves and be heard through a recognized plebiscite this year.

Regardless of individual opinion of Members of this body as to what the judgment of the people of Puerto Rico might or should be, whether Members of the Senate support statehood or commonwealth or independence, the one thing I believe upon which we can all agree is that we have a responsibility, consistent with our own ideas, our ideals, our culture—a mandate of history to ensure that the people of Puerto Rico are heard.

What decision the people of Puerto Rico might make is their choice. Whether or not they have a choice is our obligation. There are 3.8 million people on Puerto Rico, with too long an association with our country to pretend this is not a historic problem. They are too many in number to conclude that it does not really matter. I urge the leadership of this Senate to ensure that this legislation dealing with the political status of Puerto Rico and its opportunity for a plebiscite come before this Senate before it expires.

I urge the people of Puerto Rico to proceed with their plebiscite and make a final and lasting judgment about their political status. The United States cannot allow itself to enter the 21st century in a great irony of history—that the product of the world's most important democratic revolution, the first people on the face of this Earth to rise up against colonialism and demand the right of the governed to express themselves, be a party to what is by any measure a postcolonialist political arrangement.

It is not simply that it is unfair to the people of Puerto Rico, it is wrong for the people of the United States. It is inconsistent with our history and it cannot endure.

I compliment Senator CRAIG and Senator GRAHAM for their leadership, and say how grateful I am to be a part of this truly historic effort.

I thank the Senator from Florida for yielding time.

Mr. GRAHAM. I thank Senator TORRICELLI. The Senator from Louisiana.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana is recognized.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, let me join my distinguished colleague from New Jersey in thanking our distinguished colleague from Florida, Senator GRAHAM, for bringing this issue to the floor today for comments. In addition, let me thank Senator CRAIG and Senator GRAHAM for their sponsorship of this bill. I wanted to add a few words, because this has been said so eloquently by these two Senators before me, but I would only add just a few thoughts.

We celebrate many things in America. We have many special days to commemorate many special individuals and events. We have many months that we set aside to celebrate all sorts of things that are important. This particular 30-day period from September 15 to October 15 is important because it recognizes the Hispanic community and allows us to celebrate together the great contributions that Hispanic-Americans have made to our country as a group and as individuals. They have made valuable contributions decade after decade and century after century, from explorers to pioneers to inventors to entrepreneurs to statesmen and stateswomen who have served our country so admirably. It would take me all day—all year—to stand up and

enumerate all the many contributions. But that is what this month is about, to take a moment to recognize the great strengths that the Hispanic community brings to America. It's also to recognize that is in fact what makes our country so different, what makes it uniquely admirable, what makes it the strongest country in the world. It is our diversity and our respect for diversity that makes us so different.

In that light, we could give many emotional and moving speeches about these individuals and communities. But I frankly think, as one Senator, that actions speak louder than words.

One thing that we could do to take specific action that could express in no uncertain terms our acknowledgment of these contributions, our gratitude toward the Hispanic community, our acknowledgment that we all share responsibilities, obligations and duties equally to make this country strong and also to equally enjoy the protections of our Constitution and what our flag represents than to let Puerto Rico decide its own political future. There would be no greater, or better, or more appropriate action than to pass the Craig-Graham bill for the status of Puerto Rico, to allow the people to make a choice between either commonwealth or statehood or independence; but, Mr. President, to allow them, when they make that choice, to know the details of what each of those choices will actually mean, to not be unclear.

So this is something we have to do together. The people of Puerto Rico have to vote. But this Congress—and the House has already recognized this by a vote of only one, but still a decisive victory, a victory in the House—must recognize that only those efforts are not enough for the people of Puerto Rico, but we have to act to have a bill with the definitions of commonwealth and statehood and independence, so the consequences of their choices would be clear to them and to us and to all the people that we represent. That is why it is important for this bill to pass, regardless of individual Members' feelings about what the outcome should be. Passing this bill would be the best action we could take.

I know my constituents are well aware that the 4 million citizens in Puerto Rico do not enjoy the right to vote in Presidential elections, although they do share the obligation of military service and the draft. They do not pay income tax, but they do pay other obligations. The situation needs to be clarified. We can do that by passing this bill and giving them a chance to vote so their responsibilities and duties and protections can become more equal in their alignment.

Finally, I reiterate that this group of patriots from Puerto Rico have fought and died for the United States in wars beginning, not just a few years ago, but since the Revolutionary War. For Louisiana it is especially significant, for our first Governor, Bernardo de Galvez,

led soldiers that included men from Puerto Rico in an effort to thwart the British in the territory of Florida, which extended from the State of my distinguished colleague, Senator GRAHAM of Florida, all the way to what is now Louisiana and the territory and State which we know in present day as Louisiana. So for our State there is a particular, emotional, long-standing attachment to this issue.

With all of what my colleagues have said—and I reiterate, we can give all the great speeches we want, but actions speak louder than words—in light of that, the truth of that, in the light of fairness and what is appropriate, I urge my colleagues to take this month to do something meaningful and real, something more than words, that could have a lasting effect on millions of Puerto Ricans and Americans, and the strength of our country.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I am pleased to join my colleagues in calling attention to the celebration of National Hispanic Heritage Month.

The Hispanic community in my home state of Washington is the youngest and fastest growing of any ethnic minority group, yet its history is a long one. Indeed, Washington was a part of Mexico until 1819. The many Spanish place names that dot the landscape are only part of the legacy of the early Hispanic explorers and settlers. Early Hispanic pioneers helped lay the economic infrastructure of the region, bringing commodities such as wheat and apples and livestock.

Today Hispanic Americans continue to play a pivotal role in our state's economy. The contributions of Mexican immigrants has been vital in the growth and continued success of our state's agricultural industry. Hispanic-owned businesses range from the mom-and-pop small business to large corporate concerns. Hispanic citizens, taking advantage of their many ties to Mexico and other Latin American nations, have helped to expand trade, our state's economic lifeblood.

The contributions of Hispanic Americans are not limited to economic ones. Hispanic Americans have risen to positions of leadership throughout the state. They occupy elected offices at all levels of government, including our state legislature and judiciary. Hispanic community activists have led the fight for social equality. The Hispanic community has also enhanced our state's cultural life. Spanish language newspaper and radio, Latin American cuisine and Hispanic customs and ceremonies are an integral part of our state's landscape.

The Hispanic community has mobilized to meet the challenges facing it. Community-based organizations throughout the state are working to create educational and economic opportunities and meet the need for housing, health and social services. Their efforts benefit not only the Hispanic community but the state as a whole.

Washington State's Hispanic community is a dynamic and vibrant one. I sa-

lute their many accomplishments and contributions. I encourage my colleagues to join me in celebrating the diversity that makes our country so rich by commemorating National Hispanic Heritage Month.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, Hispanic Heritage Month presents a unique opportunity to celebrate the history and achievements of nearly 30 million people of Hispanic descent living in the United States and Puerto Rico. Today, as we stand on the threshold of a new century, we look to the outstanding contributions of Hispanic Americans for inspiration and leadership.

We should also acknowledge Puerto Rico's 100 years of Social, Political and Economic Union with the United States. I strongly support the right of self-determination for U.S. citizens living in Puerto Rico. Citizens in Puerto Rico should have the opportunity to decide their political future, and have a right to political, social and economic equality.

America has always drawn strength from the extraordinary diversity of its people. Throughout our nation's history, immigrants from around the world have been drawn to America's promise of hope, freedom, and opportunity. These newcomers have shared their cultural traditions and values, contributed to our nation's economy, strengthened our shared belief in democracy and helped create a more fair and just society.

Earlier this year, the House of Representatives passed the "United States-Puerto Rico Political Status Act," H.R. 856. The Senate version, S. 472, provides a congressionally recognized framework for U.S. citizens living in Puerto Rico to freely decide statehood, independence, or the continuance of the commonwealth under U.S. jurisdiction.

Hispanic Heritage Month provides us with a unique opportunity to again raise the debate of the Puerto Rico plebiscite. I cannot think of a better time to push this issue forward.

That is why I am joining today as a cosponsor of S. 472. This year, the Senate has an opportunity to grant the 3.8 million American citizens of Puerto Rico an opportunity to decide their own future. Such an election would be the first step in allowing these U.S. citizens an opportunity to exercise one of the most fundamental principles of a democracy—a government chosen by the people.

In recognition of this historic opportunity, I am hopeful that my colleagues will join with me as cosponsors of S. 472, and that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources will mark up the bill quickly.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I thank the Senator.

There are others of my colleagues who have indicated a desire to speak during this period for morning business. Unfortunately, none of them are here at this time. Therefore, I ask

unanimous consent that the remainder of the time for these presentations on "Hispanic Heritage Month" be reserved until our colleagues who wish to speak are present.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MCCONNELL addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. REID. I say to my friend from Kentucky, it is just for a unanimous consent request.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, reserving the right to object.

Mr. REID. I will even tell the Senator what it is. I want to ask that during the pendency of the Interior appropriations bill that a congressional fellow in my office have the privilege of the floor.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I do not object, Mr. President.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection? Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator is recognized.

#### PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that during the pendency of the Interior appropriations bill, Scott Conroy be extended the privilege of the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SMITH of Oregon). Objection is heard.

The assistant legislative clerk continued with the call of the roll.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? The Chair hears none, and it is so ordered.

#### DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1999

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the pending business.