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FACT SHEET: Possible Puerto Rico Statehood & Reapportioning House Seats

Arizona, Missouri, New York, South Carolina, Texas and Washington could be impacted

What would statehood for Puerto Rico mean – the need for facts: The House of Representatives is expected to soon vote on H.R. 2499, the Puerto Rico Democracy Act. This bill would provide for a two-step vote process in Puerto Rico on their future political status, including the option of becoming the nation's 51st state. Puerto Rico is able to conduct its own local plebiscite or referendum, as they have done three times in the past, yet this bill specifically seeks to provide a Congressionally-sanctioned vote. If Congress is going to ask Puerto Rico if they want to become a state, as H.R. 2499 does, then Congress has an obligation to understand in advance what statehood would mean to both Puerto Rico and the existing 50 states. However, that information is not being discussed despite an imminent vote on H.R. 2499, nor is much information on the implications of statehood for Puerto Rico even publicly available. These Fact Sheets are an effort to provide some of this information for the consideration of Representatives and the public.

How would Statehood for Puerto Rico affect the apportionment of House seats?

According to a [report](#) by the Congressional Research Service (CRS), if Puerto Rico were to become a state, based on a population of approximately 4 million, they would be entitled to six seats in the House of Representatives. As a state, they would, of course, receive two Senators.

The current number of 435 seats in the House of Representatives was set by the Apportionment Act of 1911. For nearly a century, the permanent number of seats hasn't changed.

If Puerto Rico were to become a state, Congress would either have to:

1. Reapportion the 435 seats by giving six to Puerto Rico and subtracting seats from other states;
2. Temporarily increase the size of the House until the next reapportionment following the next census; or
3. Permanently increase the size of the House.

Based on current information, a CRS report projects that the states that could lose an existing seat or not receive an expected additional seat after the 2010 Census in order to provide six of 435 seats to Puerto Rico include: Arizona, Missouri, New York, South Carolina, Texas and Washington.

BOTTOM-LINE: If Congress is going to ask Puerto Rico if they want to be a state, as H.R. 2499 does, then Congress has an obligation to address, in advance, the question of apportioning House seats. The public deserves to know whether their state could lose representation to provide six of 435 House seats to Puerto Rico, or whether their proposed solution is that the nation needs more Members of Congress than it has today.

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