

By Senator Soto

14-00889C-16

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1 Senate Memorial

2 A memorial to the Congress of the United States,
3 urging Congress to enact legislation to promote
4 economic recovery in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

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6 WHEREAS, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the State of
7 Florida share a strong cultural bond and are important trade
8 partners, and

9 WHEREAS, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico has experienced a
10 prolonged and difficult economic recession that has led to mass
11 unemployment in Puerto Rico and decreased trade opportunities
12 with the State of Florida, and

13 WHEREAS, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico has public debts
14 in excess of \$72 billion, which continue to cripple Puerto
15 Rico's ability to improve and sustain economic growth, and

16 WHEREAS, the 1984 amendments to the United States
17 Bankruptcy Code prohibit the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico from
18 authorizing its municipalities and public utilities to file for
19 bankruptcy relief under Chapter 9 of the code, and

20 WHEREAS, the United States Bankruptcy Code amendments
21 require Puerto Rico's municipalities and public utilities to
22 engage in piecemeal negotiations with each of their creditors,
23 rather than consolidating debt and developing a comprehensive
24 plan for repayment, and

25 WHEREAS, the citizens of Puerto Rico are suffering greatly
26 due to their government's inability to renegotiate the terms of
27 this debt under a comprehensive plan, and

28 WHEREAS, the United States Government has an obligation to
29 promote and assist the economic prosperity of the Commonwealth

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30 of Puerto Rico as an important territory of our nation, and

31 WHEREAS, the United States Centers for Medicare & Medicaid
32 Services will be implementing an 11-percent cut to Puerto Rico's
33 Medicare Advantage program reimbursements for 2016, further
34 contributing to economic recession in Puerto Rico, and

35 WHEREAS, the United States Congress eliminated a tax
36 exemption for manufacturers from Section 936 of the Internal
37 Revenue Code, greatly contributing to an increase in
38 unemployment in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and

39 WHEREAS, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico would greatly
40 benefit from new ideas and programs that promote economic
41 development to bring high paying jobs back to Puerto Rico, and

42 WHEREAS, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the State of
43 Florida would both benefit from Puerto Rico's renewed economic
44 prosperity, NOW, THEREFORE,

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46 Be It Resolved by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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48 That the Congress of the United States is urged to enact
49 legislation to promote economic recovery in the Commonwealth of
50 Puerto Rico, including:

51 (1) Allowing the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico to authorize
52 its municipalities and public utilities to file for bankruptcy
53 relief under Chapter 9 of the United States Bankruptcy Code.

54 (2) Allowing the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico to propose a
55 comprehensive plan to pay municipal and public utility debts
56 under Chapter 9 of the United States Bankruptcy Code.

57 (3) Discontinuing the proposed 11-percent reduction in
58 Puerto Rico's Medicare Advantage program.

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59 (4) Establishing programs to encourage economic development
60 to promote increased manufacturing, trade, and employment in
61 Puerto Rico.

62 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
63 dispatched to the President of the United States, to the
64 President of the United States Senate, to the Speaker of the
65 United States House of Representatives, and to each member of
66 the Florida delegation to the United States Congress.