

FROM THE DESK OF

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Puerto Rico Economic Task Force
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Dear Distinguished Committee:

Thank you so very much for providing this opportunity for community input to your important task to provide Puerto Rico with the economic tools to grow, improve, and prosper.

I have been visiting Puerto Rico for nearly thirty years and have witnessed first hand the economic decline of the island through the destructive -- whether willfully or blindly allowed -- negligence of the United States Congress. Steps necessary to effect stability need to be taken immediately.

Firstly, I would suggest examining the efficacy of The Merchant Marine Act of 1920, or the Jones Act, as it impacts Puerto Rico. I know this act directly inflates the cost of many daily needs of the people. While this act may have been important back in 1920, the pain that it inflicts today seems irrelevant for perpetuation ad infinitum.

Secondly, the demise of Section 936 of the US tax code without another sort of governmental mechanism to continue economic growth directly impacted the robust development of jobs on the island. The actions of Congress have directly driven the exodus of businesses from the island as well as the resettlement of hundreds of thousands of the workforce to the mainland US. This must be corrected to provide Puerto Rico with a very viable work force. They are the source of a growing economy, not the elderly and poor.

Thirdly, while Puerto Ricans are considered US citizens, many of the health programs through Medicare and Medicaid suffer inequitable funding compared to the mainland states. Such disparity must be corrected. This inequity has added to the debt burden of the island thanks to Congress and repressive funding. Such action for US citizens seems morally reprehensible and needs immediate correction.

Now that I am retired, we spend more time traveling across the United States and on the beaches of Puerto Rico. Honestly, I would live in Puerto Rico if not for the discrimination perpetuated upon residents of the island through the ineffective regulations promoted by a non-functioning Congress!

Respectfully yours,

William Jaeger