

# Fact Sheet:

## Statehood for Puerto Rico Why it Makes Sense for the U.S.

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### Statehood for Puerto Rico would make the United States more democratic

- **Improving Representativity of U.S. Senate:** The United States Senate is not representative of the country, statehood for Puerto Rico would help improve the balance.
  - The Senate gives the average black American only 75 percent as much representation as the average white American, and the average Hispanic American only 55 percent as much. ([NYT](#))
  - Puerto Rico is more than 95 percent Hispanic, almost guaranteeing two Hispanic Senators.
- **Enfranchising People of Color:** The United States has been historically slow to grant full enfranchisement to people of color, statehood for Puerto Rico would be a step in the right direction.
  - Puerto Rico's colonial status has been upheld primarily by the infamous Insular Cases, which are still the 'law of the land' and use racist logic to allow the federal government to discriminate against the island and treat its residents as second-class citizens. ([Slate](#))
  - The Insular Cases are the main reason no territory has become a state since Alaska and Hawaii 1959, the longest stretch the United States has ever gone without adding stars to the flag. ([Slate](#))
- **Respecting the Will of Voters:** Puerto Ricans have explicitly voted against the current status and in favor of statehood, ignoring those self-determination votes constitutes a lack of democracy.
  - In 2012, the U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico went to the polls and rejected the current territorial status by 54%. ([Puerto Rico State Elections Commission, 2012](#))
  - In 2020, the U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico went to the polls and chose statehood by 52.5%. ([Puerto Rico State Elections Commission, 2020](#))

### Granting statehood has been a regular part of U.S. history

- Congress admitted new states every decade from the Constitution's ratification in the 1780's through the 1910's, when Arizona and New Mexico joined the Union. ([NYT](#)) ([U.S. Census](#))
- It has been 61 years since Congress admitted a new state (Hawaii in 1959), which is the longest stretch the United States has ever gone without adding stars to the flag. ([Slate](#))

### Overwhelming majority of Americans support statehood for Puerto Rico

- According to a 2019 Gallup survey, 66% of Americans favored admitting Puerto Rico as a state, which is consistent with the 59-65% of public support Gallup has recorded for Puerto Rico statehood since 1962. ([Gallup](#))

### Granting statehood is more achievable than many other democratic reforms

- Statehood only needs 51 votes in the Senate, and would make reforms in other issue areas more feasible and representative of the needs, goals and aspirations of all U.S. citizens.