

the Air Force, Tony has supported Air Force leadership by engaging Congress on programs and weapon systems authorizations, constituent inquiries, and other congressional interests. Among some of his more notable accomplishments during his tenure as Deputy Director, Tony prepared the Air Force team for confirmation hearings for the Air Force Secretary, Under Secretary, Chief of Staff, and the Vice Chief of Staff, all in an unprecedented 2-year time frame. He also supported more than 1,500 Air Force senior leader visits to the Hill as well as over 1,000 wing commander Hill visits, more than 450 congressional delegation and congressional staff trips, over 200 congressional hearings, and countless other Air Force Hill engagements.

Today, I would like to wish Mr. Anthony P. "Tony" Reardon good luck and Godspeed in his next assignment as the Director of Strategy, Resources and Integration for the Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of the Air Force, International Affairs. We know that this next chapter of his distinguished career will be one of even more success.

On behalf of the Congress and of the United States of America, I thank Tony; his wife, Dee; and their children, Maggie and Trip, for their patriotism, commitment to country, and service to Nation.

PUERTO RICO: HOW STATEHOOD WOULD POTENTIALLY AFFECT SELECTED FEDERAL PROGRAMS AND REVENUE SOURCES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. PIERLUISI) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PIERLUISI. Mr. Speaker, this week, the GAO published a report about the fiscal impact of Puerto Rico statehood on the Federal Government.

In a 2012 referendum, a majority of voters in Puerto Rico said they didn't want Puerto Rico to remain a territory, and more voters favored statehood than any other option. In January, at my initiative, a law was enacted to provide funding for the first federally-sponsored vote in Puerto Rico's history. Meanwhile, in the past year, Puerto Rico's longstanding economic problems have devolved into a crisis. Every week, 1,000 of my constituents move to the States in search of opportunity and equality. Thus, the GAO has released its report at a time when island residents are voting for statehood—at the ballot box and with their feet—in unprecedented numbers.

The momentum in favor of statehood continues to build with this report, which supports the conclusion that statehood will be beneficial to Puerto Rico and to the U.S. as a whole.

The report confirms that statehood will enhance the quality of life in Puerto Rico. As a territory, Puerto Rico is treated unequally under key Federal spending and tax credit programs. As a

State, it will receive equal treatment. Based on the GAO's analysis and taking into account programs the GAO did not examine, it can be calculated that statehood will inject an additional \$10 billion into Puerto Rico's economy each year. This underscores the scope and severity of the discrimination Puerto Rico faces as a territory.

The report also alleviates the concern that statehood would have an adverse impact on the U.S. Treasury. As the GAO explains, new Federal outlays to Puerto Rico will be significantly counterbalanced by new Federal revenues generated from the island, which could amount to \$7 billion a year. As Puerto Rico prospers, collections will increase further.

The report, thus, reinforces that statehood, which is so plainly in Puerto Rico's interest, is also in the national interest. This Nation will benefit when Puerto Rico's economy is strong, when its residents don't need to move to the States to achieve their dreams or vote for their national leaders, when individuals and businesses on the island flourish, and when the tax base expands. The U.S. will profit from the state of Puerto Rico's success, just as it currently pays an economic and a moral price for the territory's shortcomings.

The reaction to the report from politicians in Puerto Rico who favor the status quo has been dishonest. Their strategy is clear: if you cannot convince the public, try to confuse the public.

For example, they claim the report concludes that hardworking island residents would have a large Federal tax liability under statehood. The report says no such thing, and the assertion is false. A typical household in Puerto Rico will pay the same or less in total taxes under statehood than it pays now due to the application of Federal tax credits and the ability of the Puerto Rico Government to reduce its high local rates once it no longer needs to finance a disproportionate share of public services.

In any event, this inaccurate argument shows disrespect for the people of Puerto Rico, who will be proud to assume both the rights and responsibilities of statehood. Throughout history, men and women have fought and fallen for equality and dignity. These principles are priceless.

My colleagues who requested the GAO report should now schedule a hearing on it. Seventy-five days have passed since the enactment of the law authorizing Puerto Rico to hold a federally-sponsored referendum, and 132 Members of Congress have sponsored my legislation that calls for a referendum on Puerto Rico's admission as a State, which requires Federal action if a majority of voters chooses statehood. If the Governor of Puerto Rico believes his claim that the GAO report is somehow damaging to statehood, he should have the courage of his convictions to conduct a statehood admission

vote with the available Federal funds without delay. His inaction speaks louder than his words.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 41 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

Reverend Dr. Bryan Smith, First Baptist Church Roanoke, Roanoke, Virginia, offered the following prayer:

Lord, we thank You for today, for the life that You have given to us, the riches of Your blessings, the freedoms we enjoy, and for Your gracious and tender mercies.

Forgive us for our transgressions against You, and help those gathered here today to work together in the knowledge of Your truth.

I thank You for these leaders who are here by Your authority. Please bless them and their families.

Give to them the wisdom, discernment, humility, and guidance they will need in fulfilling the obligations and responsibilities entrusted to them. May they be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger.

May their weakness be the revenue for Your strength; may their purpose for gathering today be honorable in Your sight; and may the work that is accomplished promote Your righteousness and peace throughout our Nation.

In Your holy name we pray.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.