with their children and the bad schools in which they were trapped, applied for a meager 1,000 scholarships that would enable those mothers and those fathers to move their children to a better school of their choice.

□ 1030

The people of Washington, D.C., especially those who are not at the top rungs of the socioeconomic ladder, want their children to have the same opportunity as the wealthy people who have their children in Sidwell Friends.

We have a bill that we will bring to the floor here in a few days, a bill that would allow 2,000 scholarships for the very poorest families in America, from among those who apply to be chosen at random, so that those parents can use those scholarships to take their child to that school where the child can succeed.

Let me just say, Mr. Speaker, I have met some of those children who up to this point have been the lucky recipients of the private scholarships, privately funded scholarships made available to their families. By over 60 percent, these bright young boys and girls say they like math and science the best. If we put a bright young mind in a school where they are encouraged, where somebody cares and takes the time, and yes, indeed, offers a little discipline along with that encouragement, we see a bright, happy child.

We will bring that bill to the floor. We will pass that bill. I hope Members on both sides of the aisle can find compassion for the children that overrides their desire to comply with unions, and I hope when we send that bill to the President and he picks up that pen, he will realize he has the lives of 2,000 beautiful children in his hands. He can sign the bill and give them the opportunity, or he can veto the bill and satisfy the unions.

BEFORE WE SPEND OUR FEDERAL SURPLUS, WE BETTER MAKE SURE WE REALLY HAVE ONE

(Mr. DUNCAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, every day we hear all kinds of talk now about how we are going to spend the Federal surplus. Before everyone gets all giddy about all this extra cash, however, we had really better take a closer look.

Alan Sloan, the Wall Street editor of Newsweek, recently wrote in the Washington Post, ''But get a grip. There is no surplus. If you do math the normal way, instead of Uncle Sam's way, there is nothing resembling a budget surplus on the horizon.'' Mr. Sloan wrote that all the talk about a surplus comes because we are using Federal budget accounting instead of real world accounting.

As he pointed out, ''Virtually the entire difference between Federal math and real-world math involves Social Security's retirement and disability funds, whose surpluses are masking the deficit in the rest of the budget.''

If we were not using the Social Security and many other trust funds to offset or mask the size of the deficit, we would still have a huge deficit on top of an already horrendous $5.5 trillion national debt.

Mr. Speaker, before we begin celebrating and spending our supposed, alleged surplus, we had better make sure that we really have one. We are very far from it right now.

PRESIDENT CLINTON TURNING HIS BACK ON TAX REFORM

(Mr. DELAY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, President Clinton turned his back on fundamental tax reform by reforming the tax code. He said that getting rid of the current tax code and replacing it with a better one is irresponsible.

The President is finally revealing his true liberal self. As we enter a new century, we need a new tax code. We need a tax code that encourages savings and investment. We need a tax code that is simple, so that our citizens do not need to hire accountants and lawyers to comply with the rules. We need a tax code that takes less money from working families. We need a tax code that gives the American people a break, not manipulates their lives.

For 40 years, the Democrats in this Congress built a tax code that was riddled with loopholes, ridiculous rules, and hard-to-understand regulations, all to control our lives. It is time to tear that system down and build a better, simpler, and fairer tax code for the next century.

THE SOLOMON ENGLISH LANGUAGE EMPOWERMENT AMENDMENT

(Mr. SOLOMON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, in just a few minutes this House will begin debate on something that is probably the most important issue that we will take up on the floor this Congress during this entire year. It is the question of whether or not to start in motion the wheels that will begin to admit Puerto Rico as a State to this Union.

I would just hope that all Members, and because of their interest for their constituents, would pay particular attention. I would suggest that they come over here. This debate is going to take 7 or 8 hours on this floor, but it is very, very important.

I will be offering an amendment that will begin to emphasize that based on this premise, for the past two centuries we have forged a Nation out of our different peoples by emphasizing our common beliefs, our common ideals, and perhaps, most importantly, Mr. Speaker, our common language.

Our English language has permitted this country to live up to our motto, our national motto, and that motto is e pluribus unum, and it means ''out of many, one.'' The English language is the reason that we have survived these last 200 years. Think about it.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 856, UNITED STATES-PUERTO RICO POLITICAL STATUS ACT

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 376 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 376

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 1(b) of rule XXIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 856) to provide a process leading to full self-government for Puerto Rico. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed ninety minutes equally divided and controlled by Representative Young of Alaska, Representative Miller of California, Representative Solomon of New York, and Representative Gutierrez of Illinois or their designees. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. In lieu of the amendment recommended by the Committee on Resources now printed in the bill, it shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule the amendment in the nature of a substitute printed in the Congressional Record and numbered 1 pursuant to clause 6 of rule XXIII. That amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. Points of order against that amendment in the nature of a substitute for failure to comply with clause 5(a) or rule XXI are waived.

SEC. 2. (a) Before consideration of any other amendment, it shall be in order to consider the amendment printed in the Congressional Record and numbered 3 pursuant to clause 6 of rule XXIII. Consideration of that amendment shall be preceded by an additional period of general debate, which shall be confined to the subject of that amendment and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by Representative Solomon of New York and a Member opposed to that amendment.

(b) Consideration of the amendment printed in the Congressional Record and numbered 2 pursuant to clause 6 of rule XXIII shall be preceded by an additional period of general debate, which shall be confined to the subject of that amendment and shall not exceed thirty minutes equally divided and controlled by Representative Serrano of New York and a Member opposed to that amendment.

(c) Amendments specified in subsections (a) and (b) of this resolution shall be considered as read and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. Consideration of those amendments, and all amendments thereto, shall not exceed one hour.

SEC. 3. During consideration of the bill for amendment, the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole may accord priority in recognition on the basis of whether the Member offering an amendment has caused it to be printed in the portion of the Congressional Record designated for that purpose in clause 6 of rule XXIII. Amendments so printed shall be considered as read. The Chairman of the Committee of the Whole may: (1) postpone until a time during further consideration in the Committee of the Whole a request for a recorded vote on any amendment; and (2) reduce to five minutes the minimum time for electronic voting on any postponed question that follows another electronic vote without intervening business, provided that the minimum time for electronic voting on the first in any series of questions shall be fifteen minutes. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. Any Member may demand a separate vote in the House on any amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole to the bill or to the amendment in the nature of a substitute made in order as original text. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, for purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to my good friend, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MOAKLEY), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of the resolution, all time yielded is for debate purposes only.

Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 376 is an open rule providing for consideration of H.R. 856, which is the the United States-Puerto Rico Political Status Act. The rule provides 90 minutes of general debate, equally divided and controlled by the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG), the gentleman from California (Mr. MILLER), myself, the gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON), and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. GUTIERREZ), or their designees.

The rule makes in order the amendment in the nature of a substitute offered by the gentleman from Alaska (Chairman YOUNG) and printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD and numbered 1, which shall be considered as read.

The rule also waives clause 5(a) of rule XXI prohibiting appropriations in a legislative bill against the amendment in the nature of a substitute. The Committee on Rules understands this waiver to be technical in nature, and further understands that the Committee on Appropriations has no objection to it.

Mr. Speaker, this is an open rule. However, the Committee on Rules decided to single out two significant policy amendments for particular treatment for debate on this floor. The committee determined that these amendments should receive a specified debate time and a time certain to close debate on those amendments and any amendments thereto.

These two amendments are the Solomon amendment, which clarifies the official role of English in government activities, and the Serrano amendment, which relates to eligibility of mainland U.S. citizens of Puerto Rican descent to vote in a referendum.

After general debate on the bill, there will be an additional period of general debate on the Solomon amendment, and then 1 hour of consideration of the amendment.

Mr. Speaker, the rule also provides that the amendment of the gentleman from New York (Mr. SERRANO) will have 30 minutes of additional general debate time, similar to the Solomon amendment, and 1 hour of consideration for the amendment process; in other words, amendments offered to that amendment.

The rule further provides that both the Solomon amendment and the Serrano amendment shall be considered as read and shall not be subject to a demand for a division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole, but there will be second degree amendments allowed to it, similar to an open rule process.

Mr. Speaker, the rule also provides that the Chair is authorized to accord priority in recognition to Members who have preprinted their amendments in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD that appeared today.

The rule also allows for the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole to postpone votes during consideration of the bill and to reduce voting time to 5 minutes on a postponed question if the vote follows a 15-minute vote.

Finally, the rule provides for one motion to recommit, with or without instructions.

Mr. Speaker, as the Members are well aware, this is an extremely controversial issue. It is controversial among the American people, and it is certainly controversial among the people that reside on the islands of Puerto Rico. Members of the House are divided on this issue, and not necessarily by party.

However, despite our differences over the substance of the legislation, many of us have agreed that the fairest way to consider this very controversial and difficult issue is under an open rule, and I commend Chairman YOUNG for his cooperation in bringing this matter to the floor under these considerations today.

□ 1045

The gentleman is an outstanding Member of this body, and even though he and I will tangle somewhat on the floor, we will remain good friends when we leave here. He and I very rarely ever differ. He and I have fought hundreds of battles on this floor in the last 20 years on the issue of property rights, individual property rights of individual Americans, and we will continue to do that as long as the two of us are left standing on this floor.

Mr. Speaker, I admonished Members who appeared before the committee yesterday to comport themselves in a dignified fashion and to exercise restraint in determining which amendments to offer and how many would be offered. I am pleased to note that the Members who appeared yesterday before the Committee on Rules agreed to offer a finite and limited number of amendments. That means that those in opposition to the bill will probably offer 10 or 12 amendments at the very most. Then there are several amendments by those that might be supportive of the bill itself, that might have some perfecting amendments as well. But other than that, we would expect that this debate would continue through the day, but under no circumstances would carry over into tomorrow.

So we would hope that Members would come here, that they would be dignified in their remarks, and that we would speak to the issues and not get into a lot of superfluous conversation. I would urge support of the rule.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MOAKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. MOAKLEY asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MOAKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON), my very dear friend, for yielding me the customary half-hour.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this open rule, and I commend my Chairman for allowing the rule to come to the floor in this position.

Mr. Speaker, the issue of self-determination for the people of Puerto Rico has been an issue for many, many decades. This year marks the 100th anniversary of Puerto Rico's being part of the United States.

Eighty-three years ago, Mr. Speaker, in the midst of World War I, Congress extended American citizenship to the residents of Puerto Rico with all of its rights and responsibilities, including being subject to the military draft. Since then, over 200,000 Puerto Ricans have served in this country's various military endeavors. Puerto Ricans presently abide by all American laws passed by this Congress. They are also required to serve on juries. They pledge their allegiance to the flag of the United States.

This bill we consider today, Mr. Speaker, is a bill giving 3.8 million people of Puerto Rico their long-overdue right to self-determination. Contrary to what some people say, this is not a statehood bill. It simply allows the people of Puerto Rico to decide for themselves what kind of relationship they will have with the United States rather than having it forced upon them.

Under this bill, Puerto Rico has several options. They can be integrated into the Union, as has Hawaii, or they can remain a separate Nation as the

Philippines did. And since 80 percent of the voters of Puerto Rico go to the polls, we can be assured that their decision will represent a very strong majority.

Once they make that decision, no matter what that decision may be, I believe we should support them. And I am not the only one who feels that way.

Mr. Speaker, eight years ago I was an original cosponsor of the legislation which passed the House to allow Puerto Ricans to vote on the status of their relationship with this country. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, that bill died in the Senate, but it did have the support of the majority of this House.

Self-determination also had the support of one of America's most popular Presidents. I have here, Mr. Speaker, a statement by the idol of the gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON), President Reagan. He supported Puerto Rican self-determination in a statement dated January 12, 1982, which I would like to put in the RECORD.

In his statement, President Reagan says: ''Puerto Ricans have fought beside us for decades and have worked beside us for generations. We recognize the right of the Puerto Rican people to self-determination. President Reagan also said that he believed that statehood would benefit both the people of Puerto Rico and their fellow American citizens in the States.''

President Clinton supports the legislation, as did every Republican President since Dwight Eisenhower. Mr. Speaker, it is a good idea whose time is long overdue. After 83 years of American citizenship, this country owes these people the right to make their own decision. We owe them self-determination. They are American citizens, Mr. Speaker, and they should be treated as such.

Unfortunately, in addition to Puerto Rican self-determination, which is a very popular idea, there is another issue which is being linked to the bill, the issue of whether the United States will pick an official government language. Although English is certainly the de facto language of our country, the Framers of our Constitution deliberately refused to establish a national religion or a national language. People come from all over the world to live here, and are not linked to one another by common language. They are linked to one another, Mr. Speaker, because of their love of freedom, their love of liberty.

President Reagan said, and I would like the gentleman from New York, my dear friend, the former Marine to hear this, Mr. Reagan said, and I quote, ''In statehood, the language and culture of the island, rich in history, would be respected, for in the United States the cultures of the world live together with pride.''

In fact, when the Constitution was drafted, there were nearly as many people speaking German in this country as there were speaking English.

English is already the primary language used in business, government, cultural affairs in the United States. But if we require English in all governmental functions, people who call 911 and cannot speak fluent English might be in a lot of trouble.

So rather than mandating English and prohibiting technicians from doing their jobs in life-threatening situations involving non-English speakers, I suggest we recognize the primary role of English in our national affairs, but allow the use of languages in other governmental functions when it is appropriate.

I think what I am trying to say, Mr. Speaker, is that people should be allowed to speak whatever language gets the job done at 911, in police departments, and with emergency and medical technicians. In doing so we would not only be respecting the wishes of our Founding Fathers but also probably saving many lives in the process.

So I urge my colleagues to support this rule, and I would like to just read one other statement which is attributed to Ronald Reagan. It appeared in Roll Call Thursday, February 26. And I quote again from Ronald Reagan who said this January 12, 1982. He said ''In statehood, the language and the culture of the island, rich in history and in tradition, would be respected, for in the United States, the cultures of the world live together with pride.''

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this rule, to support the bill, and to defeat the English-only amendment.

Mr. Speaker, I include the following for the RECORD:

[The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, Jan. 12, 1982]

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

When I announced my candidacy for this office more than two years ago, I pledged to support statehood for the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, should the people of that island choose it in a free and democratic election. Today I reaffirm that support, still confident in my belief that statehood would benefit both the people of Puerto Rico and their fellow American citizens in the 50 states.

While I believe the Congress and the people of this country would welcome Puerto Rican statehood, this Administration will accept whatever choice is made by a majority of the island's population.

No nation, no organization nor individual would mistake our intent in this. The status of Puerto Rico is an issue to be settled by the peoples of Puerto Rico and the United States. There must be no interference in the democratic process.

Puerto Ricans have borne the responsibilities of U.S. citizenship with honor and courage for more than 64 years. They have fought beside us for decades and have worked beside us for generations. Puerto Rico is playing an important roll in the development of the Caribbean Basin Initiative and its strong tradition of democracy provides leadership and stability in that region. In statehood, the language and culture of the island—rich in history and tradition—would be respected, for in the United States the cultures of the world live together with pride.

We recognize the right of the Puerto Rican people to self-determination. If they choose statehood, we will work together to devise a union of promises and opportunity in our Federal union of sovereign states.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, just to respond to the gentleman from Boston, Massachusetts (Mr. MOAKLEY) my very, very close friend.

Mr. Speaker, I would say, yes, I did serve in the United States Marine Corps back during the Korean War. I did not have the privilege of serving in combat, but I served with a great many Puerto Rican citizens of the United States and to this day they are some of the greatest friends that I have.

Unfortunately, they are divided on this issue just as the rest of the Puerto Rican people are, those that are still alive, some of which I talked to just in the last 48 hours. It breaks down where one-third of them are for statehood, one-third of them are for commonwealth, and surprisingly, one-third of them are for independence. I did not think that would be that high, but that is the issue.

Mr. Speaker, I take a little umbrage at the gentleman, my good friend, pointing to the ads that appeared in Roll Call, and not just in Roll Call but in the Washington Times and all kinds of papers. Millions of dollars have been spent by lobbyists trying to force a particular issue on this Congress, and I do not think the Congress is going to listen to that today because they are a pretty astute body.

But concerning my hero Ronald Reagan and, yes, he is my hero and he will forever be, even in spite of his physical condition today. It is so sad. But President Reagan, yes, he did. He supports self-determination, but he does not support this bill or its deliberately skewed language favoring statehood.

Mr. Speaker, let me read this letter that I just received dated February 27, and it is from the Ronald Reagan Foundation. It says, ''Dear Congressman Solomon, thank you for your request to clarify President Reagan's participation in the current debate on Puerto Rican statehood. As I am sure you understand, President Reagan is no longer participating in campaigns of any kind.'' Despite the unauthorized use of his name, appearing in that Roll Call, ''photograph and quotes in a recent ad in the Washington Times and Roll Call, he is not now nor will he ever be taking any position on H.R. 856, the issue of statehood for Puerto Rico, or self-determination for the Puerto Rican people.'' And it goes on to say, ''I hope this clarifies that issue.''

Mr. Speaker, I was not going to get into a debate on this during the rule because I was hopeful that we could move on to the general debate time itself so that we would not be interrupted by other votes. But there are many things that have held this country together over the last 200 years. Many of them, as I quoted before, ''e pluribus unum'' means out of many

one. It means patriotism, it means pride, it means volunteerism. But above all it means that we speak a common language in this country.

We are a melting pot of the entire world, of every ethnic background in the entire world, and we are proud of that. But had we let these various languages become a part of our American culture, this democracy would not be here today. And if my colleagues do not believe it, come up to my congressional district which borders on Canada, and see how we are faced with a situation in Quebec that literally tears that country asunder. We just cannot allow that to happen. And that is why at the appropriate time I will be offering an amendment that will clarify the English-first language in this country.

Having said all of that, I appreciate the remarks of the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MOAKLEY).

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG), one of the men I respect most in this body, chairman of the Committee on Resources, and the single representative from the great State of Alaska.

(Mr. YOUNG of Alaska asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the rule for consideration of the United States-Puerto Rico Political Status Act, H.R. 856.

The proposed open rule is consistent with the process which is followed by the Committee on Resources in the development of this bill to resolve the United States political status problem with Puerto Rico.

This was an effort to reach out and include as many sectors as possible in a fair manner in which the facts were openly aired and examined without respect to special interests or local political considerations.

I can confirm that as the chairman of the House committee of jurisdiction for territorial affairs, the committee followed and completed every legislative step in the development of this initiative during the past 4 years from 1995 to the present time.

Five extensive hearings with the broadest participation possible were held in Washington and Puerto Rico. Testimony was heard from individuals with many different views on the future relationship of Puerto Rico and the United States. Special attention was given to allow the three principal parties in Puerto Rico, each representing the status of commonwealth, independence, or statehood, to present their preferred definition with their respective status options.

Subsequent deliberations by Members of Congress were complete and exhaustive. All the issues have been raised and debated.

Once Members examined the complexity of the problems, they realized that this bill is the most viable way to address the problems facing the United States due to failure to permanently resolve Puerto Rico's status.

The bill's self-determination process in H.R. 856 is a carefully crafted three-stage process, a three-stage process leading to full self-government for Puerto Rico as a separate sovereign nation or a State of the Union if the majority of the people are ready to change the current form of local self-government as the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

□ 1100

Congress and the Americans of Puerto Rico will be required to vote in each of the three stages of the bill. I want to stress that. Congress and the Americans of Puerto Rico will be required to vote in each of the three stages of the bill, an initial referendum, a 10-year transition plan, and the final implementation act. If there is no majority for change, then the status quo continues and United States citizens of Puerto Rico are consulted again by referendum at least once every 10 years.

The Committee on Resources overwhelmingly approved and reported it twice, first in the 104th Congress and now in the 105th Congress. I firmly believe it is appropriate and necessary for the full House to now consider the United States-Puerto Rico Political Status Act, H.R. 856.

In carrying out congressional responsibilities under the Constitution for territories, Congress will be able to directly respond to the request of the Legislature of Puerto Rico to the 105th Congress to define the status choices and authorize a process to resolve Puerto Rico's political status dilemma. I support this rule, and I will discuss in debate the merits of all amendments that come before us.

I want my colleagues to understand this is nothing new. This is a project I worked on, my committee has worked on, the people of Puerto Rico have worked on for the last 4 years. It is time to act. It is time for this Congress, this House, to pass this legislation for America, for the people of Puerto Rico. This rule is a good rule, and I urge passage of the rule but, more than that, the defeat of some amendments and final passage of this legislation, long overdue for the people of Puerto Rico.

Mr. MOAKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. Maybe I did not make myself clear. I am not insinuating in any way that former President Ronald Reagan is for this bill. All I want to do was to read a statement he put out in a press release. Once a President speaks, use of that language is never unauthorized because that is his statement. It is history. Once again, he said, in statehood, the language and culture of the island, rich in history, rich in tradition, would be respected, for in the United States the cultures of the world live together with pride. Ronald Reagan.

The reason I wanted to make it so plain is because I know my dear friend, the gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON), idolizes President Reagan, and rightly so. I just wanted to be sure he knew what the President's thoughts were when he did address the Puerto Rican situation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. SERRANO).

(Mr. SERRANO asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this rule and in strong support of the bill which we are dealing with today. This is indeed a historic moment because, make no mistake about it, this is the first time that a rule has come on this floor accompanying a bill of this nature that will, in my opinion, begin a process to end what I and many other people consider, and all should consider, the present colonial status of Puerto Rico.

In order to do this, we have to put forth a process. This rule puts forth a process for the debate, and the bill puts forth the process for ending the colonial status. We have to immediately attack that which is being said either with a lack of information or viciously to defeat the bill, which is that this bill leads Puerto Rico towards statehood. How can it do that if this Congress is not committing itself at this point to any of the three options?

What this Congress is saying is, we will allow you in consultation with us to take a vote, and then the results of that vote will become our consideration here on the House floor. Some may be afraid that the vote would come out against the option they favor. That is democracy. Some may be afraid that the option somebody favors will never be dealt with. We can only find out. But I assure my colleagues that nothing will happen unless we approve this rule and approve this bill. In fact, I often tell people, I have a 31-year-old daughter and a 4-year-old granddaughter. I suspect that if this bill fails today, my grandchildren, as adults, will still be discussing the colonial status of Puerto Rico.

As we get close to the year 2000, and once in a while we listen to the U.N., the U.N. has suggested that all countries unload their territories and colonies before 2000. The greatest democracy on Earth still holds close to 4 million people in that kind of a situation. I do not care if statehood wins. I do not care if independence wins. I do care every day when I get up and I realize that the children of Puerto Rico are all members of a colony. It is good for the U.S. Government to change this. It is good for the Puerto Rican people to change it.

So I congratulate the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) for bringing this bill, and I congratulate my colleague the gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON) for this rule. I will not agree with the gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON) on everything today, and I will not agree on many things during the session with the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG), but we agree on this beyond anything else, and that is why I was proud to add my name as a co-prime sponsor early on.

I do not move back from that commitment. I support the Young bill with every bit of strength in this body, because after 100 years with the U.S. and 405 years with Spain, it is time that Puerto Rico knew whether it can join the community of nations as an independent Nation or gain sovereignty by joining the Union.

Either one is correct. The present is not. I support the rule. Vote for it. And I will support the bill strongly today. I am sure that if I am given time, you will hear from me a few times during the day today.

Mr. MOAKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 6 minutes to the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ).

(Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the rule for this H.R. 856. Today this House will consider the United States-Puerto Rico Political Status Act. For the people I represent, the 3,800,000 United States citizens living in Puerto Rico, the enactment of this legislation would be the single most important political development in 100 years. Yet many of my colleagues may wonder why this legislation is necessary and why they or their constituents should care about Puerto Rico.

They should care because, geography aside, no citizen and no constituency in this Nation is an island. They should care because the rights and privileges denied to one group of citizens threaten the rights and privileges enjoyed by the entire body politic. They should care because as individuals and as a Nation, to paraphrase the English author C.S. Lewis, we are defined by the choices we make. Incrementally, in seemingly insignificant small steps, we make decisions, and those decisions define us. Our choices tell us who we are.

The fundamental choice before this House today is this: Do we cherish the principles of our democracy enough to put an end to 100 years of colonialism and extend the right of full self-determination to the U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico? A century ago when the victorious United States signed the Treaty of Paris ending the Spanish-American War, it acquired Puerto Rico as a possession. Article 9 of the treaty stated that the civil rights and political status of the native inhabitants of the territories hereby ceded to the United States shall be determined by the Congress. Subsequent Supreme Court decisions have ruled that Puerto Rico's status is that of an incorporated territory subject to the plenary authority of Congress under the territorial clause of the Constitution.

Exercising its powers, Congress granted citizenship to the residents of Puerto Rico by statute in 1917. And in 1950, with the passage of the Puerto Rico Federal Relations Act, Congress authorized the people of Puerto Rico to draw up a Constitution and organize a local government.

Let us be clear about what the Puerto Rico Federal Relations Act did and did not do. After nearly a half century of obfuscation, some partisans would have us believe that Puerto Rico's current commonwealth status is the product of a bilateral pact between Puerto Rico and the United States and that the island is really a free associated State or an associated Republic. But the unvarnished truth is that Puerto Rico's colonial status remains unchanged. As a territory, we are self-governed in local matters not covered by Federal laws, but we have never exercised self-determination.

The Congressional record is clear. The intent of the Puerto Rico Federal Relations Act was to create a provisional government until the issue of status was resolved, and if anything was decided in the 1993 plebiscite, it is that for the first time since the United States arrived on our shores, Puerto Rico is being ruled by Congress under an agreement that does not have the support of the majority of the people of Puerto Rico. We are being governed without the consent of the governed.

Like Dorothy in the Land of Oz, we could sit here, click our heels three times, and wish the problem would disappear. Where would it go, to Kansas? But it will not. The fact is that only Congress has the authority to resolve this dilemma, and only Congress can create an environment in which Puerto Ricans can legitimately address this issue.

This is precisely what the United States-Puerto Rico Political Status Act is designed to do. This legislation does not endorse one political choice over another. It is status neutral. All it seeks to do is create constitutionally sound and congressionally approved definitions of status options to be considered by the people of Puerto Rico.

The bill proposes a timetable for referendums on status, and it makes provisions, should they prove necessary, for a smooth transition to and for the implementation of a new political status. These measures are critical if the status process is to go forward and if self-determination by the people of Puerto Rico is to have any meaning of legitimacy. The people of Puerto Rico, to borrow words of Israel's Golda Meir from 1946, only want that which is given naturally to all peoples of the world, to be masters of our fate. That for which the Puerto Ricans fought side by side with our fellow citizens in the mainland, defending other countries on foreign shores, to stand for the right of people's self-determination, is being denied to 3.8 million U.S. citizens.

Some of my colleagues in this House whose districts include large Puerto Rican communities would deny us this. But unlike my constituents, these expatriate Puerto Ricans enjoy voting representation in Congress and the right to vote in Presidential elections, and although the economic, social and political affairs of the residents of Puerto Rico are in great measure controlled by the government in which we have little to say, they would still deny the right to vote and the right to voting representation by opposing this bill.

All of my colleagues here today have the privilege of voting yes or no on the United States-Puerto Rico Political Status Act. Yet I am the sole Representative of this House for 3.8 million U.S. citizens in Puerto Rico. I cannot vote. This is the defining legislation for my constituents, and I cannot vote. This legislation would end 100 years of Puerto Rico's colonial relationship with the Nation, yet I cannot vote.

I ask you, do you cherish the principles of our democracy enough to dismantle 100 years of colonialism and extend the right of full self-determination to the U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico? I hope you do, for our sake and for the Nation's sake.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume just to respond somewhat to the last several speakers.

Just responding to the statement of the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MOAKLEY) about the position of President Ronald Reagan on this bill, I did not read the last sentence in this letter from his Chief of Staff Joanne Drake. It says, I hope this clears up any misunderstandings that these ads may have caused. These ads did not receive the authorization of Ronald Reagan to run.

□ 1115

Now, let me also state for the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MOAKLEY) that I had another idol, too, that I idolized very much, and he used to sit in that chair up there. He was a good friend of the gentleman's, and his name was Tip O'Neill. He was one pretty tough hombre, but he was pretty fair to us in the minority and that is why I also respected him a great deal

Mr. MOAKLEY. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. SOLOMON. I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts.

Mr. MOAKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I would point out to the gentleman that he just used a non-English word. Is the gentleman sure he wants to put that in the RECORD, ''hombre''?

Mr. SOLOMON. Well, Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, let me also respond a little bit on the colonialism issue by my very, very good friend, the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ). And I was willing to even yield him an additional minute if he had needed it. But it really hurts a lot of our feelings on both sides of the aisle to talk about this issue of colonialism because, my colleagues, there is no colonialism.

If the people of Puerto Rico overwhelmingly want statehood in this country, I will be the first to help lead the fight to bring them in, just as we did for the Northern Marianas, for the Marshall Islands, for Palau and for Micronesia. When the issues came up, we

pushed for them to make a decision one way or the other, but we did not try to jam one particular idea on them.

And, consequently, the Marshall Islands and Palau and Micronesia became sovereign Nations under a free association with the United States whereby we do help them, they provide military bases to us, and there is a very close relationship. But under no circumstances did we try to keep them in a colonial position.

The Northern Marianas chose to stay as a trust to the United States of America, but they chose it. We did not ask them to. So is that colonialism? The answer is absolutely not. And the truth of the matter is when the Puerto Rican people, when they overwhelmingly want statehood, as did the people of Alaska and as did the people of Hawaii, when the vote came in a plebiscite in Alaska, 83 percent of the people wanted statehood. Eighty-three percent. When the people of Hawaii wanted to come into this Nation of ours as the 49th State, they wanted it by 94 percent.

Today, my good friend, the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ), indicated that the majority of people in Puerto Rico want statehood. That just is not true. In the last plebiscite of 1993, a majority of the people wanted something other than statehood. And I defy anyone to come down here and show me the facts any differently.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from the State of Mississippi (Mr. WICKER), a very, very important Member of this body and a member of the Committee on Appropriations.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time. I have the greatest respect for the gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON), the chairman of the Committee on Rules. He is put in a very difficult position today. He has a tough job, Mr. Speaker. He is put in the position of presenting a rule to this body on a bill that he is vigorously, vigorously opposed to. So I have always respected him for the hard job he has, but even more so today because of the position that he has found himself in.

I also have the greatest respect for some of the proponents of this legislation. The gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG), chairman of the Committee on Resources, is a very effective leader in the House of Representatives. He believes fervently in this issue, and he is entitled to his beliefs and his opinions and has worked very effectively for the legislation, and I have great respect for his viewpoint.

However, I do oppose the bill and oppose the rule, Mr. Speaker, because I do not believe the American people have enough facts about this issue. I do not believe the American people are prepared to have their national legislature move on a decision concerning Puerto Rican statehood.

Now, there are people who have risen on the floor today and previously, who said this is not a statehood bill, but I would submit to my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, that this is very much a statehood bill. And this is the reason—as the chairman has previously stated, Puerto Rico has voted previously, very recently, on the issue of statehood, and they rejected the idea of statehood; 1993, I believe, was the latest plebiscite. This bill, if passed by the House of Representatives, and if enacted by the Senate and signed by the President, would say to the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, ''Vote again, you did not get it right last time.'' If Puerto Rico votes for statehood with 50 percent plus 1, a bare majority, then the Congress of the United States will have to decide the issue to decide. We must vote on a bill to decide whether to grant the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico their statehood. However, in this referendum that is proposed by this bill, if Puerto Ricans vote once again for commonwealth status, this bill says, ''Wait a minute, you didn't get it right. We will let that decision stand, but just for a little while. And after 10 years you must vote again and you must vote again and you must vote again until you get it right. And the right decision is statehood.''

So I would say that the bill is designed to eventually get a decision by the Puerto Rican people for statehood. And because of that, I say that enactment of the bill would inevitably put us down the path to admitting Puerto Rico as the 51st State, and that is a serious, serious decision. This is a major decision.

Adding a star to the United States flag is a major decision for Americans to make. It is a serious matter which Congress and the American people need to have a full understanding about. I do not think the American people know this issue is out there. When I went home to my constituents, they had no idea that Congress was about to vote on a bill which will inevitably lead to statehood.

So for that reason, I oppose the rule. I respect the chairman for bringing it forward, but I think that if we as a body want to take the position today that, having had this debate this morning, this issue is not ripe for a decision and we need to go back and have a further national conversation about this, I think the correct decision is to vote ''no'' on the rule. And that will be my vote, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. MOAKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to say that this is the first time I have heard that one of the major problems with this bill is adding a star to the flag. Betsy Ross did not have any trouble, and she did not even have the machinery we have today.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. GUTIERREZ).

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this bill but in support of the rule. I would like to thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON), the chairman of the Committee on Rules, and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MOAKLEY), for having an open rule today, because, finally, we are going to have some debate on this very critical issue, debate that I must say that on numerous occasions I, as a Member of this Congress, who represents over 150,000 Puerto Ricans in my district, was not allowed to participate in that debate. I think that was wrong. And now we want to have a debate here. So I want to thank both of the gentlemen for that.

I only come to raise one issue right now. I have a very deep preoccupation at this point, concern, and that is that all of these proceedings are being conducted in English. All of these proceedings are being conducted in English, and yet the people of Puerto Rico are the ones who are going to have to interpret everything that this Congress is doing. Many of them are not going to be able to understand what is going on here today, Mr. Speaker.

I know some of my colleagues will smile and chuckle, but it really is not anything funny. It is serious. People should understand, American citizens should understand what it is this Congress is doing in terms of their position.

Let me give my colleagues an example, gentlemen. If I walk into a theater, a movie theater today anywhere in Puerto Rico, anywhere in Puerto Rico, there are subtitles to everything said in English, in every movie theater in Puerto Rico. Why? So that the people can grasp what is going on in the movie. Many times I would laugh two seconds ahead of the rest of the audience because by the time they read the translation, I am an English native speaker, and I would understand that.

So I bring that as an issue that even in movie theaters, even in entertainment, and this is much more important than that. Look, if we were in the House of Representatives in San Juan, Puerto Rico, all of this would be going on in Spanish. So the legislators, when they legislate in Puerto Rico, do it all in Spanish. If we were in the Senate in Puerto Rico it would all be being conducted in Spanish so that the people would understand the proceedings of the representatives they elect.

If we were in a courtroom, the judge and the lawyers would all be speaking in Spanish. If we were buying a piece of property today, we would register that piece of property, not in English, but in Spanish.

So I would like to ask the chairman of the Rules Committee to see if there is some way that we might not have some simultaneous broadcast of this, a way in which this House of Representatives could translate so that the people of Puerto Rico can be fully informed of the farce of self-determination which is being perpetuated upon them with this bill here today.

Mr. MOAKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I have two remaining speakers. How much time do I have, Mr. Speaker, and how

much time does the gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON) have?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). The gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MOAKLEY) has 9 minutes remaining, and the gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON) has 10 minutes remaining.

Mr. MOAKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. CHRISTIAN-GREEN).

Ms. CHRISTIAN-GREEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Massachusetts for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the rule. This is an important day for the people of Puerto Rico. As a representative of the Virgin Islands, an unincorporated territory of the U.S., we fully support our brothers and sisters and our neighbor to the northwest on their journey to determine their relationship to the United States and achieve full self-government.

As we do so, we fully recognize how much what is done here today will likely influence and impact on the determination of our future relationship as well.

For this reason, it is of the utmost importance to us that Congress and the administration support the process of self-determination, which it does. It is also important, however, that the process be one generated, determined, and driven by the people of Puerto Rico, and that the integrity of this process be maintained.

I am, therefore, Mr. Speaker, very sympathetic to the concerns of the supporters of commonwealth for fairness in the presentation of the option they represent and all other options of H.R. 856.

Mr. Speaker, I am concerned not only that the definition presently in the bill does not reflect their input from the PDP, but also that H.R. 856 contains language which could lead one to conclude that the status of commonwealth would be a less than desirable choice for the people of Puerto Rico.

What may be viewed, Mr. Speaker, by supporters of statehood for Puerto Rico and reflected in this bill as an insupportable, undemocratic, and colonial status, could in fact be what my constituents and those of other territorial delegates aspire to, given the same opportunity.

While commonwealth may not be a status which provides complete and full self-government today, its constitutional limitations should not be trumpeted for the sake of expediency.

This Congress has a responsibility to ensure that any process it creates for the people of Puerto Rico or any of the island territories to exercise their right to self-determination must be balanced and provide inclusion and fair treatment for all of the options available.

In this regard, I look forward to supporting an amendment in the nature of a substitute which I understand will be offered later and which was worked out by the authors of H.R. 856 and the gentleman from California (Mr. MILLER), the ranking member.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Puerto Rico have waited 100 years for the opportunity to be given a legitimate chance to exercise the full right to complete self-determination. While not perfect, the bill before us today is a good beginning.

We have an opportunity to say to the people of Puerto Rico, as well as the Virgin Islands and the other territories, that the Congress of the United States respects us and will provide a fair and comprehensive process for us to make known our choice on the further political status of our islands whenever we are ready to do so.

The question of political status has for too long dominated the political landscape in Puerto Rico. What we do here today will go a long way towards finally resolving this issue once and for all. I urge passage of the rule.

I thank the gentleman from Massachusetts for yielding me time.

□ 1130

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I submit for the RECORD a short explanation of section 6 of H.R. 856, an analysis of that section of the expedited procedures.

The document is as follows:

ANALYSIS OF SECTION 6 OF H.R. 856

Requires the majority leaders in both the House of Representatives and the Senate to introduce legislation to implement the transition plan and implementation plan, as the case may be, no later than 5 legislative days after the President submits such legislation to Congress.

Requires such legislation to be immediately referred to the committee or committees of jurisdiction and, if not reported within 120 calendar days of session after its introduction, automatically discharged and placed on the appropriate legislative calendar.

Makes in order, as a highly privileged matter in the House and a privileged matter in the Senate, a motion to proceed to the consideration of the legislation qualified under these expedited procedures by a Member favoring the legislation, but not until: (1) the legislation has been on the calendar for 14 legislative days; (2) the Member consults with the presiding officer of the respective House as to scheduling; and (3) after the third legislative day after the Member gives notice to the respective House.

Waives all points of order against the motion and against consideration of the motion and, if agreed to, requires the House or the Senate, as the case may be, to proceed to immediate consideration of the legislation without intervening motion (except one motion to adjourn) or other business.

Stipulates that in the House of Representatives, the legislation would be: considered in the Committee of the Whole; debatable for four hours equally divided between a proponent and an opponent; and subject to a four hour amendment process (excluding recorded votes and quorum calls).

Requires, after the committee rises, that the previous question be considered as ordered to final passage without intervening motion, except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

Provides procedures in the House and Senate for the hook-up of identical legislation passed by both Houses or, in the event that one House receives a request for a conference from the other House, to a make in order after three legislative days following the receipt of such a request a motion by any Member to disagree to the amendment of the other House and agree to the conference.

Defines the term ''legislative day'' in the House and the Senate to mean a day on which such House is in session.

Provides that the procedures of H.R. 856 are enacted as an exercise of the constitutional rulemaking authority of the House and the Senate with full recognition of the right of either House to change its rules at anytime.

SHORT EXPLANATION OF SECTION 6 OF H.R. 856

H.R. 856 requires a referendum to be held by December 31, 1998, on Puerto Rico's path to self-government either through U.S. statehood or through sovereign independence or free association. It requires the President to submit to the Congress for approval legislation for: (1) a transition plan of up to ten years which leads to full self-government for Puerto Rico; and (2) a recommendation for the implementation of such self-government consistent with Puerto Rico's approval.

Section 6 of H.R. 856 specifies the expedited procedures in the House of Representatives and the Senate for the consideration of legislation introduced to implement a transition plan and an implementation plan. Legislation introduced in the 104th Congress (H.R. 3024) contained procedures that the Rules Committee found to be unworkable and inconsistent with the stated goals of the legislation. Consequently, on September 18, 1996, the Committee reported H.R. 3024 with a new Section 6, which more clearly reaches the stated goal and rational behind including the expedited procedures in the bill, as well as being consistent with the Rules of the House governing normal procedure. Those same provisions are contained in Section 6 of H.R. 856.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3½ minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER), an extremely outstanding Member of this body.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, first let me thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON) for the leadership that he is providing on this issue. We have learned quite often that providing leadership on controversial issues leads one to personal attacks. The gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON) has courageously stepped forward to provide leadership on this issue that is not only important to the people of Puerto Rico but also important to the people of the United States of America as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, while I oppose H.R. 856 in its current form, I do support an open rule for its consideration. The number one reason why this bill should be opposed is because it sets up basically, as we have heard in this debate so far, an unfair and undemocratic process that will cause the largest group of Puerto Rican voters to boycott the election, thus producing a phony majority for statehood.

Whenever any other territory has come into the Union, they have petitioned for giving their residents the opportunity for an up or down, yes or no vote. That is the normal process that is expected, but it is not good enough for Puerto Rico. Why? Because the Puerto

Rican Government is controlled by statehood supporters who know from past balloting and current polling that they would lose a fair up and down vote on statehood.

The statehood supporters have maneuvered the Committee on Resources into constructing a ballot that will not reflect the will of the people. This is because the definition of ''commonwealth'' in the bill describes a colonial status that is unacceptable to commonwealthers, leaving them no choice but to boycott the election since they oppose all 3 options offered by the bill.

Back in Puerto Rico, statehood supporters are gloating about how the definition being used in the bill will guarantee a victory for statehood even though they know the majority of people do not support statehood. They are right about the outcome of this bill, but they are wrong to do this to the people of Puerto Rico.

The phony pro-statehood majority produced by this bill then sets in motion a mandatory statehood vote in Congress next year and two more votes in Puerto Rico. But even then, that far down the road to statehood, H.R. 856 still does not provide the people of Puerto Rico an up or down vote, a yes or no vote as to whether or not they want to become a State.

Why are we so afraid to treat the people of Puerto Rico as we have every other State that has entered the Union? This is what we have done to every other people who wanted to join the Union. We have given them a yes or no vote on statehood. Why are people now trying to maneuver it so the people of Puerto Rico do not have this opportunity? Because they know that the people of Puerto Rico, given the opportunity, will vote ''no'' on statehood.

Mr. Speaker, the fair way to handle this is the way we have always done it, is to give the people a chance for an up or down vote. If this is a first step toward statehood, if this is a first step toward treating the Puerto Rican people as all other citizens of the United States, they should be treated just as every other group trying to join the United States were treated. H.R. 856 rejects the simple, fair way that was good enough for everybody else and substitutes a skewed ballot with foreordained results. We should not stand for this unfair, undemocratic process. We should reject H.R. 856 while accepting the rule.

Mr. MOAKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ).

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ).

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). The gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) is recognized for 2 minutes.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to the bill. I thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON) for providing the only thing that is fair about this bill, that is, to provide a rule that will provide a free and open debate. That is what this bill needs.

Mr. Speaker, this is not about self-determination. This is legislation that has been drafted by the statehood supporters. They were the ones who provided the definition for the commonwealth, indeed denying access to the democratic process by not allowing 48 percent of the people of Puerto Rico to participate in this debate. Forty-eight percent of the people of Puerto Rico supported commonwealth 5 years ago when the last plebiscite was held. But here we are presenting to the House floor legislation that will favor the statehood for Puerto Rico.

Mr. Speaker, make no mistake. By voting on this legislation, we are imposing statehood to the people of Puerto Rico. It is a shame that today by providing in the commonwealth definition that citizenship is statutory, it is shameful, it is a lack of respect to the people of Puerto Rico, it is a lack of respect to the men and women who have died, who have fought defending this country, and it is to say to even the supporters of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, you cannot support the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico because we will take the citizenship away from you. This is not about self-determination. This is about making Puerto Rico the 51st State of the Nation.

Mr. MOAKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman who represents the northern part of Puerto Rico, that is, Providence, Rhode Island (Mr. KENNEDY).

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MOAKLEY) for yielding me the time. I appreciate the chance to address the point of the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) about this bill because it was addressed earlier by the gentleman from Chicago, Illinois (Mr. GUTIERREZ) about the fact that this process was not fair. It is ironic that this process was not fair because it did not include the commonwealth definition. Yet in the bill itself, the commonwealth has an opportunity to vote for the status quo in this legislation.

But let me address the issue that she brought up. The reason why this is so awful to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) and people of Puerto Rican descent is the same reason it is awful for people who feel that we ought to have statehood for Puerto Rico. That is, without statehood the people of Puerto Rico are put down.

Just as she said, without statehood, the people of Puerto Rico can have their citizenship denied, because it will be up to this Congress in its constitutional authority, given the fact that Puerto Rico is a territory under the territorial clause of this United States Constitution, that at any time this Congress can take away the citizenship of the people of Puerto Rico. At any time the people of Puerto Rico can have the Solomon language imposed on them.

The irony with the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. GUTIERREZ) saying ''I wish this was in Spanish'' is that the only way to guarantee the people of Puerto Rico that they have a right to speak their own language is if they get to become a State. Because if they are a State, they have the rights under the 10th Amendment of the United States Constitution. They reserve the power to decide what their local language will be, just as every other State in this Union is able to do.

The irony is, unless Puerto Rico becomes a State, they will not be able to decide what their language will be, they will not ever be able to vote for the things that we vote on regularly that affect them. The irony in this debate is that we keep hearing that this process is unfair.

Let us understand. The gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) said that we already had a referendum. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the problem is it does not matter what Puerto Rico does. The whole purpose of this debate is that the Congress has to give its approval so that Puerto Rico can decide.

They cannot decide now. They never had the decision. Those plebiscites were not sanctioned by the United States Congress. And because they were not sanctioned by the United States Congress, they have no meaning. Why? Because, once again, Puerto Rico is under the territorial clause of the United States Constitution, meaning until they become a State or until they become an independent nation, they cannot choose for themselves.

That is why we are putting this bill forward, because we believe they ought to be able to decide for themselves. That is what this debate is all about. I want to commend the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG), and I want to commend the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MOAKLEY). I want to thank them for having this debate and allowing this debate to come on the floor.

I need to repeat this. We can argue until we are blue in the face about any other issue. Just understand this. Puerto Rico is under the territorial clause of the United States Constitution. I am a member of the Committee on Resources. The Committee on Resources has jurisdiction over territories and commonwealths and Native American reservations. Have my colleagues ever heard of that before? It is called the territorial clause. We have to vote on a bill to allow the people of Puerto Rico the right to make a choice.

I am really looking forward to this debate because the fact of the matter is, if we understand the simple fact that this is simply about giving the congressional authority to the people of Puerto Rico so they can make up their own mind, then I think this debate will become clearer.

Let me just conclude by saying with respect to English as the mandatory

language by the Solomon amendment, there will be an amendment to the Solomon amendment that will allow us to treat Puerto Rico, in the event that it becomes a State, which I hope it does, like any other State in this country. But the Solomon amendment is very unfair and discriminatory because it affects the people of Puerto Rico singularly and it does not apply to the people of Puerto Rico the same way it applies to everyone else in this country. I might add, English is the official language in all the proceedings within government on the island of Puerto Rico.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the debate with the gentleman from Rhode Island on the Solomon amendment. I might also add that the gentleman ought to be a little more benevolent in his praise for those who brought this bill to the floor. Think about that, when he only mentioned the names of YOUNG and MOAKLEY.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ).

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I just would like to respond to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. KENNEDY).

The problem with this bill is due process. If we are talking here about self-determination, what we are saying is we are going to provide an open, democratic process for all the political parties and all the political sectors in Puerto Rico to participate. This legislation does not do that. Why, instead of writing the definition among the gentleman from California (Mr. MILLER), the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) and the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ).

In fact the president of the Popular Democratic Party knew about the new definition when he was approached by a reporter in Puerto Rico. The definition was rewritten when El Nuevo Dia, the largest newspaper in Puerto Rico, published a poll that said that 75 percent of the people of Puerto Rico favored a commonwealth option to be included in this bill.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. Let me be brief so we can get on with the debate on the bill.

I would like to point out that there are those that think that some people are pandering for the Hispanic vote. I would just like to point out that in the national Latino poll back in 1992, which is the last official poll on record, that the Mexican-American people in the United States of America that live here opposed statehood by 55.4 percent. In other words, they were supporting a commonwealth. The Cuban-American people supported commonwealth by 60 percent. And the Puerto Rican people supported commonwealth by 69 percent. I just wanted to get that in. I submit this poll for the RECORD.

The document referred to follows:

H.R. 856 (THE UNITED STATES-PUERTO RICO POLITICAL STATUS ACT) IS NOT ONLY BAD POLICY, IT IS BAD POLITICS

Polls you may have heard of urge support for H.R. 856

''[I]t is clear that the key to winning the Latino vote is to find issues that specifically appeal to them. Puerto Rico is just such an issue.''—Luntz Research Companies, Language of the 21st Century

Polls you may not have heard of disagree with Frank Luntz

(1) Hispanics are not uniformly in support of statehood.

SUPPORT FOR STATUS OF PUERTO RICO BY ETHNIC INDICATORS

Status of Puerto Rico	National origin			Nativity	
	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Cuban	Foreign born	Native born
Statehood	22.3	27.2	28.6	23.4	27.4
Commonwealth	60.3	69.2	65.3	68.5	55.5
Independence	17.3	3.6	6.2	8.1	17.0

—de la Garza, Hernandez, Falcon, Garcia and Garcia, ''Mexican, Puerto Rican and Cuban Foreign Policy Perspectives,'' Garcia, Pursing Power, 1997.

[In percent]

Preferred status of Puerto Rico	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Cuban	Anglo
A state	23.9	27.1	35.2	26.4
A commonwealth	55.4	69.4	60.7	47.9
Independent	20.7	3.5	4.1	25.7

—National Latino Political Survey, 1992.

(2) Support for Puerto Rico statehood among U.S. voters declines as they are told more about the costs and demands of statehood

	Percent
U.S. voters favoring statehood for Puerto Rico	65
Percentage still in favor after being told English and Spanish would share equal status in Puerto Rico	55

(Mason-Dixon Research, 1997. Note: Mason Dixon did not mention that roughly 60 percent of the residents of the island of Puerto Rico, according to its Governor, Rafael Hernandez Colon, speak little or no English. Other estimates place this figure at the 80% level. Nor did they mention that statehood would cost the taxpayers as much as $4 billion annually, according to the General Accounting Office.)

☐ 1145

Mr. Speaker, this whole debate is going to boil down to a statement which was made by one of the most respected Members of this body, the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Commissioner ROMERO-BARCELÓ), in his book, when he said, ''As I have stated many other times, our language and our culture are not negotiable.''

Mr. Speaker, that is a very, very true statement. This entire debate that will take place over the next 7 or 8 hours will set forth the principle that any State that will be brought into this Union, as all previous States before, will come under the exact same laws as every other State in the Nation. That means that they will have no special national anthem, they will have no special flag, they will have no special Olympic team; they will be the same as every other State in this union.

Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. SOLOMON. I yield to the gentleman from Puerto Rico.

Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ. Mr. Speaker, I think to deny to yourself and to your children and to your people your heritage, to deny your language and who you are, is to deny yourself, your being. The fact that we want to maintain Spanish does not mean that we are going to not want to speak English also. What we are asking is, do not impose English only. Let us be bilingual, and let us help the Nation in our relationship with Latin America.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, if the gentleman reads the Solomon amendment, the Solomon amendment is setting forth into law that for every State of the Union, all 50 States today, that English will be the official language of instruction. That is what it does.

If this bill becomes law tomorrow, then all 50 States are affected tomorrow by that Solomon amendment. It does not affect Puerto Rico. But if Puerto Rico 2 years or 3 or 4 years from now would become a State, then English would be the official language of instruction, but it would in no way prohibit a second language of Spanish or any other language from being taught on the Island of Puerto Rico. That is a fact, and that is what we will debate here in a few minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support for this rule would hope there would not be a vote on it.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). The question is on the resolution.

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

Mr. WICKER. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Evidently a quorum is not present.

The Sergeant at Arms will notify absent Members.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 370, nays 41, not voting 19, as follows:

[Roll No. 27]

YEAS—370

Abercrombie	Bereuter	Brown (CA)
Ackerman	Berman	Brown (FL)
Allen	Berry	Brown (OH)
Andrews	Bilbray	Bunning
Armey	Bilirakis	Burr
Baesler	Bishop	Burton
Baker	Blagojevich	Buyer
Baldacci	Bliley	Callahan
Ballenger	Blumenauer	Calvert
Barcia	Blunt	Camp
Barr	Boehlert	Campbell
Barrett (NE)	Boehner	Canady
Barrett (WI)	Bonilla	Cannon
Bartlett	Bonior	Cardin
Barton	Borski	Castle
Bass	Boswell	Chambliss
Bateman	Boucher	Christensen
Becerra	Boyd	Clay
Bentsen	Brady	Clayton

Clement
Clyburn
Coble
Coburn
Collins
Combest
Condit
Conyers
Cook
Cooksey
Cox
Coyne
Cramer
Crapo
Cubin
Cummings
Cunningham
Danner
Davis (FL)
Davis (IL)
Davis (VA)
Deal
DeFazio
DeGette
Delahunt
DeLauro
DeLay
Deutsch
Diaz-Balart
Dickey
Dicks
Dingell
Dixon
Doggett
Dooley
Doyle
Dreier
Dunn
Edwards
Ehlers
Ehrlich
Engel
English
Ensign
Eshoo
Etheridge
Evans
Everett
Farr
Fattah
Fawell
Fazio
Filner
Foley
Forbes
Ford
Fossella
Fowler
Fox
Franks (NJ)
Frelinghuysen
Frost
Furse
Gallegly
Ganske
Gejdenson
Gekas
Gephardt
Gilchrest
Gillmor
Gilman
Goodlatte
Gordon
Goss
Granger
Green
Greenwood
Gutierrez
Gutknecht
Hall (OH)
Hamilton
Hansen
Hastert
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Hayworth
Hefner
Herger
Hill
Hilliard
Hinchey
Hinojosa
Hobson
Hoekstra
Holden
Hooley
Horn
Hostettler
Houghton
Hoyer
Hulshof
Hunter
Hutchinson
Hyde
Inglis
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jefferson
John
Johnson (CT)
Johnson (WI)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kasich
Kelly
Kennedy (MA)
Kennelly
Kildee
Kilpatrick
Kim
Kind (WI)
King (NY)
Kleczka
Klink
Klug
Knollenberg
Kolbe
Kucinich
LaFalce
Lampson
Lantos
Largent
LaTourette
Lazio
Leach
Levin
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (GA)
Linder
Lipinski
Livingston
LoBiondo
Lofgren
Lowey
Lucas
Maloney (CT)
Maloney (NY)
Manton
Manzullo
Markey
Martinez
Mascara
Matsui
McCarthy (MO)
McCarthy (NY)
McCollum
McCrery
McDade
McDermott
McGovern
McHale
McHugh
McInnis
McIntosh
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinney
McNulty
Meehan
Meek (FL)
Meeks (NY)
Menendez
Mica
Millender-McDonald
Miller (CA)
Miller (FL)
Minge
Mink
Moakley
Mollohan
Moran (KS)
Moran (VA)
Morella
Murtha
Myrick
Nadler
Neal
Nethercutt
Neumann
Ney
Northup
Nussle
Oberstar
Olver
Ortiz
Owens
Oxley
Packard
Pallone
Pappas
Parker
Pascrell
Pastor
Paul
Paxon
Payne
Pease
Pelosi
Peterson (MN)
Peterson (PA)
Pickering
Pickett
Pitts
Pombo
Pomeroy
Porter
Portman
Price (NC)
Pryce (OH)
Quinn
Radanovich
Rahall
Ramstad
Rangel
Redmond
Reyes
Riggs
Rivers
Rodriguez
Roemer
Rohrabacher
Rothman
Roukema
Roybal-Allard
Rush
Ryun
Sabo
Sanchez
Sanders
Sandlin
Sanford
Sawyer
Saxton
Schaefer, Dan
Schumer
Scott
Serrano
Shadegg
Shaw
Shays
Sherman
Shuster
Sisisky
Skaggs
Skeen
Skelton
Slaughter
Smith (MI)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (OR)
Smith (TX)
Smith, Adam
Snowbarger
Snyder
Solomon
Souder
Spratt
Stabenow
Stearns
Stenholm
Stokes
Strickland
Stump
Stupak
Sununu
Talent
Tanner
Tauscher
Tauzin
Taylor (MS)
Taylor (NC)
Thomas
Thompson
Thornberry
Thune
Thurman
Tierney
Traficant
Turner
Upton
Velazquez
Vento
Visclosky
Walsh
Waters
Watkins
Watt (NC)
Watts (OK)
Waxman
Weldon (FL)
Weldon (PA)
Wexler
Weygand
White
Wise
Wolf
Woolsey
Wynn
Yates
Young (AK)
Young (FL)

NAYS—41

Aderholt
Archer
Bachus
Bryant
Carson
Chabot
Costello
Crane
Duncan
Emerson
Goode
Goodling
Graham
Hall (TX)
Hefley
Hilleary
Istook
Jenkins
Jones
Kingston
LaHood
Latham
Lewis (KY)
Metcalf
Norwood
Obey
Petri
Regula
Riley
Rogers
Royce
Salmon
Schaffer, Bob
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Smith, Linda
Spence
Wamp
Weller
Whitfield
Wicker

NOT VOTING—19

Chenoweth
Doolittle
Ewing
Frank (MA)
Gibbons
Gonzalez
Harman
Kennedy (RI)
Luther
Poshard
Rogan
Ros-Lehtinen
Scarborough
Schiff
Shimkus
Stark
Tiahrt
Torres
Towns

□ 1209

Messrs. ARCHER, GRAHAM, HEFLEY and RILEY changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Ms. DELAURO changed her vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. ROGAN. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 27, I was inadvertently detained. Had I been present, I would have voted ''aye.''

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2369, WIRELESS PRIVACY ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 1998

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 105–427) on the resolution (H. Res. 377) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2369) to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to strengthen and clarify prohibitions on electronic eavesdropping, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3130, CHILD SUPPORT PERFORMANCE AND INCENTIVE ACT OF 1998

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 105–428) on the resolution (H. Res. 378) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3130) to provide for an alternative penalty procedure for States that fail to meet Federal child support data processing requirements, to reform Federal incentive payments for effective child support performance, and to provide for a more flexible penalty procedure for States that violate interjurisdictional adoption requirements, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

UNITED STATES-PUERTO RICO POLITICAL STATUS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). Pursuant to House Resolution 376 and rule XXIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 856.

□ 1212

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 856) to provide a process leading to full self-government for Puerto Rico, with Mr. DIAZ-BALART in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered as having been read the first time.

Under the rule, the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG), the gentleman from California (Mr. MILLER), the gentleman from New York (Mr. SOLOMON) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. GUTIERREZ) each will control 22½ minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG).

(Mr. YOUNG of Alaska asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, this is a very historical moment, one that is long overdue. In debate on the rule, there were some statements made that I think should be clarified before I go into the full text of my presentation today, why I support this legislation.

The Northern Marianas were mentioned and other territories were mentioned, and how they came into this great united part of our United States, even as territories are separate governments. But, for instance, the Northern Marianas, the Government of the United States and the Government of the Northern Marianas will consult regularly on all matters affecting the relationship between them. At the request of either government, and not less frequently than every 10 years there shall be an additional consultation taken.

Mr. Chairman, over 100 years ago, this Congress was passionately discussing the 400-year-old colonial grip that Spain had on the islands adjacent to and south of Florida. Just over 2 weeks earlier, on February 15, 266 American servicemen lost their lives in Havana harbor with the explosion of the United States warship, the Maine.