



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

(R.-Kans.)

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DOLE MARKS 27TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO RICO

WASHINGTON -- Following is a floor statement by Sen. Bob Dole (R-Kan.)
on today's 27th anniversary of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico:

"Today, July 25, marks a day of great importance for the United States citizens of Puerto Rico and of Puerto Rican descent. On July 25, 1952, the people of Puerto Rico adopted a commonwealth status and established a new relationship with the United States Congress, an imaginative experiment in democratic self-government; an experiment which over time has proven that a people committed to preserving their own particular cultural roots can yet maintain their relationship with a political entity differing in geographic scale, history and power. In commemorating this event we pay tribute to the contributions and important roles that citizens of Puerto Rico have played in America's progress.

A PROGRESSIVE PUERTO RICO

"The fruition of what may be called modern Puerto Rico has emerged over the last 40 years, as Puerto Ricans have made energetic progress in their efforts at improving health, education and job opportunities for all their citizens. Political ideals, as varied as they may be, have joined, through history, a rich heritage, America's contributions, and Puerto Rico's own unique characteristics to achieve a well-established and successful means for enacting change and yet maintaining continuity through democratic processes. We have a common commitment, as Americans, to individual freedom and the democratic tradition of representative government. Our common concern for economic growth and political development binds us in a unique relationship with our fellow Americans from Puerto Rico.

U.S. COMMITMENT TO THE PRINCIPLE OF SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE PEOPLE OF PUERTO RICO

"The nature of a commonwealth status carries with it the inherent obligation to examine, and if necessary, re-interpret the political aspects of that relationship.

"The relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States is long overdue for a thorough evaluation and revision. The question of political status in Puerto Rico has sometimes been a source of confusion, yet we remain committed to the fundamental principle of self-determination for the people of Puerto Rico, whatever decision the people may make."