

Legislation To Move Puerto Rico Forward

On Sept. 20th, 2022, Puerto Rico will commemorate five years since Hurricane Maria devastated the island. Island residents, exhausted from five years of repeated hardship including floods, severe earthquakes, rising unemployment, austerity, high poverty levels, political instability, and a global pandemic, continue to mourn the [more than 3 thousand](#) lives lost. During the four years of the Trump administration, **Puerto Rico also suffered the impact of the negligence of a federal government that intentionally blocked disaster relief and recovery funds which needlessly delayed the island's recovery process.** Recovery efforts were seriously hampered by this politicized response and suffering was compounded. Congress and the federal government have an obligation to assess what harms were caused by the slow and irresponsible federal response and work to mitigate them. Our federal government has a moral and legal responsibility to help the people of Puerto Rico recover from this tragedy just as it would help any other group of people on U.S. soil.

“ Congress and the Biden administration share equal responsibility for treating Puerto Rico with dignity and for ending the systemic discrimination against the residents of Puerto Rico. ”

Two years after Hurricane Maria, while the island was still waiting for federal disaster recovery aid, Puerto Rico experienced over 9,000 earthquakes and aftershocks (2019-2020), including the [strongest series of earthquakes](#) felt in Puerto Rico in over a century. Hundreds of buildings and thousands of homes were destroyed, resulting in an [estimated \\$3.1 billion in damage](#). Many people slept outside with their families for months out of fear that their homes would collapse. Although the U.S. House of Representatives [passed a disaster aid bill](#) intended to help Puerto Rico recover from the earthquakes, the bill was never passed in the [Republican controlled](#) U.S. Senate and faced a [veto threat from President Trump](#). In June of 2022, two years after the earthquakes, the Biden Administration [approved](#) funding for 700 earthquake-related projects.

As President Biden reaches the halfway mark of his first term, his administration continues to push forward a successful policy agenda to strengthen the entire country's economy and infrastructure. Serious recovery efforts in Puerto Rico have also commenced under the Biden administration, and the island has also benefited from historic legislation in the wake of the pandemic such as the [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act](#), the [American Rescue Plan \(ARPA\)](#), and the recently passed [Inflation Reduction Act](#).

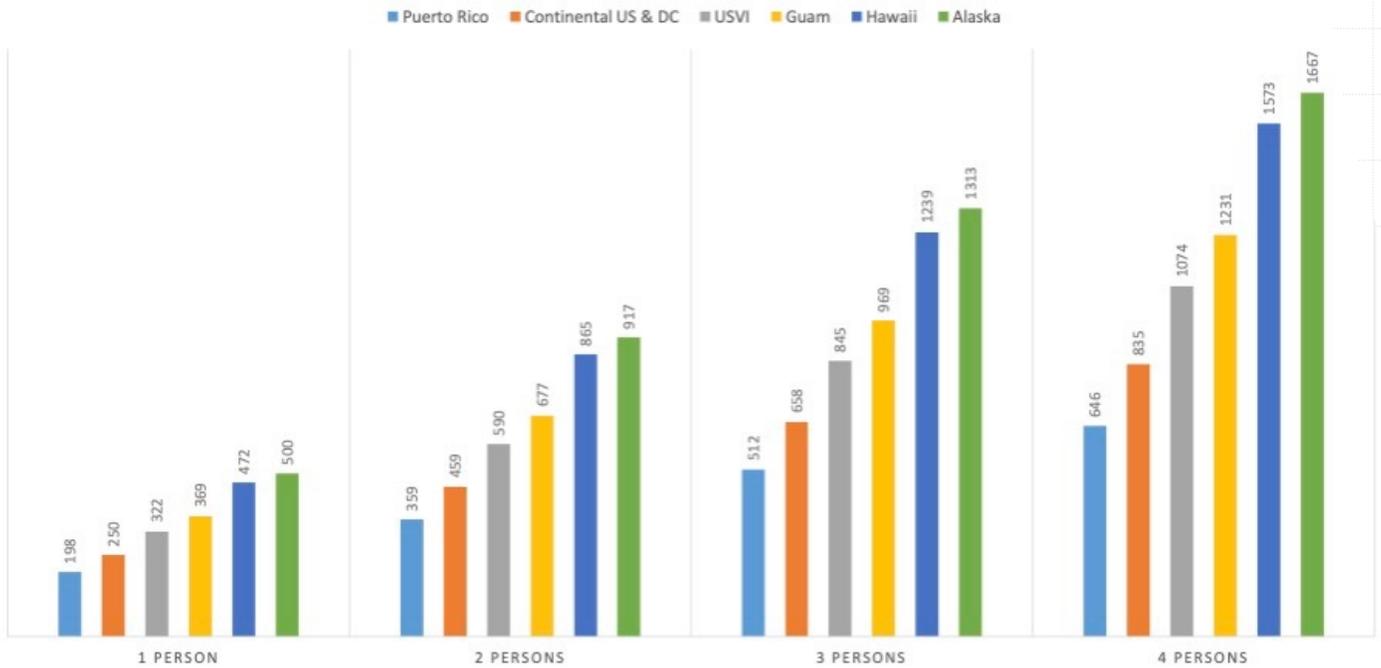
However, Puerto Rico continues to experience the effects of inequitable access and unique barriers to federal programs. The federal government must acknowledge the systemic discrimination that has been imposed for over 100 years, compounded by the intentional negligence following Maria and assume responsibility by taking immediate action to treat Puerto Rico equitably in those policies.

CONGRESS MUST END DISCRIMINATION AGAINST PUERTO RICO IN FEDERAL FUNDING

The federal government [has discriminated against the U.S. citizens](#) of Puerto Rico since it forcibly acquired the island as a “territory” in 1898. For example, Puerto Rico receives limited or no funds for many federal benefits and programs, such as [Medicaid](#), [SNAP](#) (food stamps), [SSI](#) for the blind, disabled, and elderly, and the Child Tax Credit (until 2021, only available to Puerto Rican families with at least three children), among others. The lack of parity in funding for federal benefit programs, especially those designed to alleviate poverty, has worsened the economic, social, and environmental vulnerabilities in the island.

“ This discriminatory (at best) and unconstitutional (at worst) treatment is one of the main causes of Puerto Rico's current economic crisis and the island's high poverty levels. ”

PUERTO RICO NAP VS. SNAP STATES & TERRITORIES TODAY
 ALASKA MAXIMUM BENEFITS - RURAL 2 REGION (1 OF 3 DESIGNATED REGIONS)



NAP Graphic Source: Coalition for Food Security Puerto Rico

Funding for nutrition assistance provides one stark example. U.S. citizens residing in Puerto Rico are excluded from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which prevents them from receiving the same nutrition assistance provided to other low-income U.S. citizens that reside in the states. Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit globally in March 2020, Puerto Rico has seen over 250,000 more NAP beneficiaries – a 19% increase.

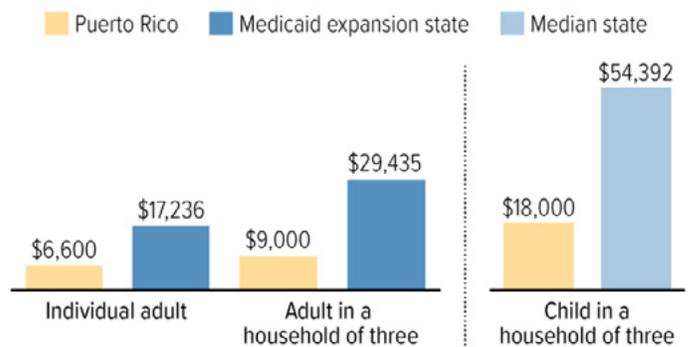
For an explainer about food insecurity and inequities in Puerto Rico [watch Mazon’s Insider Briefing Series — Addressing Food Insecurity in Puerto Rico \(May 12, 2022\)](#).

NAP GRAPHIC SOURCE: COALITION FOR FOOD SECURITY PUERTO RICO

Inequitable funding for Medicaid provides another example of the injustice faced by Puerto Rico, which receives much lower funding levels. Unlike the U.S. states that receive needs-based federal funds, Puerto Rico’s Medicaid program is funded through a statutory cap and fixed matching rate, resulting in a more restricted Medicaid program. Among other things, the funding structure means that Puerto Rico [can’t afford to cover seven of Medicaid’s 17 mandatory services, including nursing home care and nurse practitioner services](#). To make the limited federal grant dollars cover as many people as possible, only the very poorest of Puerto Rico residents qualify for Medicaid (See chart on right).

Medicaid Eligibility Limits Much Lower in Puerto Rico Than in States

Annual income caps for program eligibility



Note: Under the Affordable Care Act, states can expand Medicaid to adults with income up to 138 percent of the poverty line. Puerto Rico expanded eligibility for adults, but at a much lower poverty level. For Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program, states and Puerto both cover children at higher income levels than adults. But, states cover children up to much higher income levels than Puerto Rico does.
 Source: Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

CENTER ON BUDGET AND POLICY PRIORITIES | CBPP.ORG

Source: [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#)

Legislation Your Member of Congress Should Support

A ROADMAP

This document provides you with a range of actions Congress can take to address decades of inequities and help the island rebuild sustainably. They range from ensuring Puerto Rico receives equitable treatment in federal programs intended to support the most vulnerable residents, to rebuilding sustainable infrastructure, to providing assistance to address climate challenges. The overwhelming majority of bills introduced in the 117th Congress to provide equity to Puerto Rico are never even considered in Congressional committees, much less presented for votes.

Many of these provisions could and should be considered for inclusion in any appropriate spending or legislative package. We must insist that Congress treat Puerto Rico equitably in all legislation moving forward. *See [TakeAction4PR 2022 Policy Asks here](#).*

EQUITY IN FEDERAL PROGRAMS

[Territorial Equity Act of 2021 \(H.R. 2713 & S. 1228\)](#)

Representative Nydia M. Velázquez (D-NY) and **Senator Bernie Sanders** (I-VT) [introduced the Territorial Equity Act of 2021](#) in April of last year. This is a broad bill that contemplates equitable solutions to federal safety-net programs which would help Puerto Rico, and all the territories, gain more equitable access to federal programs such as Medicaid, SNAP, and important tax credits. Similar bills were introduced in [2017](#) and [2018](#), however they did not receive a vote in the Senate floor. Territorial residents are currently treated as second-class citizens under these programs which is not only morally wrong, but also exacerbates social and economic inequalities. After more than 120 years of discriminatory funding which has contributed to some of the [highest poverty rates in the country](#) (43.4%), this bill will end discrimination against residents in Puerto Rico in Medicaid, SSI, and SNAP programs. The most recent House and Senate bills were introduced on April 20, 2021.

Cosponsors: Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY), Rep. Raul Grijalva (D-AZ), Rep. Ritchie Torres (D-NY), Del. Michael San Nicolas (D-Guam), Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), and Sen. Edward Markey (D-MA).

Status: Referred to the Committee on Ways and Means, and the Committees on Energy and Commerce, Agriculture, Education and Labor, and Natural Resources by the House of Representatives to date. Also referred to the Subcommittee on Health by the Committee on Energy and Commerce and to the Subcommittee on Nutrition, Oversight, and Department Operations by the Committee on Agriculture to date. [No further action](#) has been taken.

[Supplemental Security Income Equality Act \(H.R. 537\)](#)

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is a program in which the federal government financially assists people ages 65 and older with income under the poverty level and minors with disabilities or conditions that affect the family and the individual's ability to generate enough income to live. Currently, most residents of the U.S. territories are not eligible for this federal program. Introduced by **Resident Commissioner González-Colón** (R-PR-At Large), this bill would extend the SSI program to Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Guam.

Cosponsors: Rep. Ritchie Torres (D-NY), Rep. Darren Soto (D-FL), Del. Stacey Plaskett (D-VI-At Large), Del. Amata Coleman Radewagen (R-AS-At Large), Del. Gregorio Sablan (D-MP-At Large), Del. Michael San Nicolas (D-GU-At Large).

Status: In January 2021, the bill was referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means. It was then referred to the House Subcommittee on Social Security.

[Territories Statistics Collection Equity Act \(H.R. 8593\)](#)

Introduced by **Rep. Raul Grijalva** (D-AZ), [this bipartisan bill](#) will direct the Interagency Council on Statistical Policy (ICSP) to develop a plan to collect and publish statistics regarding the U.S. Territories in the same manner as states and it would require the agency to publish a list and assessment of existing federal statistical programs that collect and publish data for the U.S. Territories comparable to the States. H.R. 8593 would also require the agency to submit a plan to collect and publish statistics regarding territories within one year along with recommendations and costs to implement.

Cosponsors: Del. Gregorio Sablan (D-MP), Del. Stacey Plaskett (D-VI), Del. Michael San Nicolas (D-GU), Resident Commissioner Jennifer González-Colón (R-PR), and Del. Amata Coleman Radewagen (R-AS).

Status: In July of 2021, the bill was referred to the House Natural Resources Committee and to the House Committee Oversight and Reform. [No further action](#) has been taken. No Senate companion bill has been introduced.

[House Resolution Rejecting the Supreme Court's decisions in the Insular Cases \(H.Res. 279\)](#)

H.Res. 279 was introduced by **Rep. Raul Grijalva** (D-AZ) on March 26, 2021. This bipartisan resolution acknowledges that the United States Supreme Court's decisions in the [Insular Cases](#) and the "territorial incorporation doctrine" are contrary to the principles of the United States Constitution. The resolution

states that these cases are relics of the [racial views](#) of an earlier era that have no place in our Nation today, and opposes their application in all future and present cases. This resolution sends a strong message in Congress that constitutional and democratic principles must also apply to the U.S. territories.

Cosponsors: Del. Stacey Plaskett (D-VI), Del. Gregorio Sablan (D-MP), Del. Michael San Nicolas (D-GU), Resident Commissioner Jenniffer González-Colón (R-PR), Rep. Nydia Velazquez (D-NY), Rep. Chuy Garcia (D-IL), Rep. Ritchie Torres (D-NY), Del. Eleanor Holmes (D-DC), Rep. Jared Huffman (D-CA), Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D-MI), Rep. Grace Napolitano (D-CA), Rep. Darren Soto (D-FL), Rep. Ruben Gallego (D-AZ), Rep. Steve Cohen (D-TN), Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), Rep. James McGovern (D-MA).

Status: On March 26, 2021 it was referred to the House Natural Resources Committee and the House Judiciary Committee. In May of 2021, the resolution was examined during a House Natural Resource Committee hearing. Most recently, in October of 2021, the legislation was referred to the House Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties.

NUTRITION ASSISTANCE FOR LOW INCOME FAMILIES

[Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2023 \(H.R. 8239 & S.4661\)](#)

H.R. 8239, the House appropriations bill for FY 2023, introduced by **Rep. Sanford Bishop** (D-GA), includes \$3.63B in funding for Puerto Rico's Nutritional Assistance Program (NAP). This includes an additional [\\$1 billion](#) amendment to [restore basic nutritional benefits](#) for Puerto Rico. Even this level of funding does not bring Puerto Rico to the standards of the SNAP benefits. Multiple members of Congress from both the [House](#) and [Senate](#) have [called](#) on their respective appropriations committees to increase the program's funding by \$1 billion in order to combat food insecurity on the island. The TakeAction4 Puerto Rico Campaign stands with these Members of Congress and [local advocates](#) in their call for extra funding as the bill makes its way to the House and Senate floor for a final vote.

Status: On June 23, 2022, H.R. 8239 [was passed](#) by the House Appropriations Committee with a 31 to 26 vote. Now the Senate version, S. 4661 must be amended to include the provisions of the House version and then voted on in both the House and Senate for final passage.

[Puerto Rico Nutrition Assistance Fairness Act of 2022 \(H.R.8495\)](#)

The bipartisan Puerto Rico Nutrition Assistance Act was introduced by Resident Commissioner **Jennifer González-Colón** (R-PR-At Large) on July 26, 2022. If passed, the bill would amend the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 to transition Puerto

Rico to the supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP), granting low-income Puerto Rican families access to some [much needed funding](#) for nutritional assistance. The Puerto Rico Nutrition Assistance Fairness would also ensure that the government of Puerto Rico is offered the technical assistance needed in order to make a smooth transition from the current Nutritional Assistance Program (NAP) to SNAP.

Cosponsors: This bill has five cosponsors: Rep. James McGovern (D-MA), Rep. Jahana Hayes (D-CT), Rep. Darren Soto (D-FL), Rep. Val Demings (D-FL), Rep. Chrissy Houlahan (D-PA).

Status: In September of 2021, the legislation was referred to the House Committee on Agriculture. It was later referred to the House Subcommittee on Nutrition, Oversight, and Department Operations. No further action has been taken.

[Closing the Meal Gap Act of 2021 \(H.R. 4077 & S. 2192\)](#)

Rep. Alma Adams (D-NC) [introduced](#) the Closing the Meal Gap to amend the Food and Nutrition Act of 2021 to expand and strengthen Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits for vulnerable community members struggling to make ends meet and put food on the table. **Senators Kirsten Gillibrand** (D-NY), **Bernie Sanders** (D-VT), **Cory Booker** (D-NJ), **Alex Padilla** (D-CA), and **Elizabeth Warren** (D-MA) [introduced](#) the bill in the U.S. Senate. The bill would provide for a transition for the territories into the SNAP program, ending the inequity of excluding Puerto Rico and other territories from full participation in SNAP. Congress has allowed a two-tier system of nutrition benefits for U.S. citizens residing in Puerto Rico for nearly 40 years and it must end. See the fact sheet [here](#).

Cosponsors: The Senate version is co-sponsored by Sen. Alex Padilla (D-CA), Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ), and Sen. Bernie Sanders (D-VT). The House bill has [110 co-sponsors](#).

Status: Introduced on June 23, 2021. S. 2192 was read twice and referred to the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry. On July 28, 2021, H.R. 4077 was referred to the House Subcommittee on Nutrition, Oversight, and Department Operations.

HEALTHCARE

[Puerto Rico Health Care Fairness, Accountability, and Beneficiary Access Act of 2021 \(H.R.1722\)](#)

Rep. Nydia Velazquez (D-NY) [re-introduced](#) the bipartisan Puerto Rico Health Care Fairness, Accountability, and Beneficiary Access Act of 2021 to provide a path for Puerto Rico to be [treated equitably](#) when it comes to health care for low-income people. Although the Biden administration approved an additional [\\$3 billion](#) in Medicaid funding to

the island, that amount still keeps Medicaid funding in Puerto Rico below funding for the states. However, Puerto Rico now faces a health care crisis with supplementary Medicaid funding set to expire in December 2022 (the so-called [Medicaid “cliff”](#)). If passed, the bill would provide \$15.1 billion in federal funding to raise the federal government’s portion to align with funding levels received by the states (83% FMAP). The bill provides for a 10-year transition period and includes funding to cover mandatory health benefits received by other Medicaid recipients in the states.

Cosponsors: Rep. Adriano Espaillat (D-NY), Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY), Rep. Jesus Garcia (D-IL), Rep. Raul Grijalva (D-AZ), Rep. Darren Soto (D-FL), and Resident Commissioner Jenniffer González-Colón (R-PR).

Status: Introduced March 9, 2021; referred to Subcommittee on Health date.

[Territories Health Equity Act of 2021 \(H.R.3434\)](#)

The bipartisan Territories Health Equity Act of 2021 was [introduced](#) by **Del. Plaskett** (D-VI) in May 2021. The bill would eliminate the annual federal Medicaid funding cap that limits the Medicaid funding in all U.S. territories. It would also increase the federal matching rate ([FMAP](#)) to the same levels as received by the states, provide increased funding for prescription drugs to low-income seniors, and update historically low [hospital reimbursement rates](#) which has contributed to health care providers leaving the territories.

Cosponsors: This bill has [18 co-sponsors](#) including original co-sponsors Rep. Nydia Velázquez (D-NY), Rep. Darren Soto (D-FL), Rep. Ritchie Torres (D-NY), and Resident Commissioner Jenniffer González-Colón (R-PR).

Status: On May 20, 2021, H.R. 3434 was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce and the Committee on Ways and Means. No [further action](#) has been taken.

[Supporting Medicaid in the U.S. Territories Act of 2021 \(H.R.4406\)](#)

The bipartisan Supporting Medicaid in the U.S. Territories Act of 2021 was a [bipartisan measure](#) introduced by **Rep. Darren Soto** (D-FL) and **Rep. Gus Bilirakis** (R-FL) in July 2021 to address the [looming Medicaid cliff](#) in Puerto Rico and other territories. It would provide a stopgap measure of five years of Medicaid funding for Puerto Rico and other U.S. territories. The bill would ensure low-income Puerto Ricans continue to receive Medicaid benefits by temporarily extending the [federal assistance percentage](#) and capped dollar amount for U.S. territories. In addition, this bill would also increase the cap amount in the Covid-19 response.

Cosponsors: This bill has [34 co-sponsors](#).

Status: On July 21, 2021, H.R. 4406 was marked up in the Committee on Energy and Commerce and passed with a majority vote. *See Hispanic Federation statement [here](#).* No further [action](#) has been taken.

[Vieques Recovery and Redevelopment Act of 2021 \(H.R.1317 & S. 405\)](#)

Rep. Nydia Velázquez (D-NY) and **Sen. Bob Menendez** (D-NJ) introduced the bipartisan Vieques Recovery and Redevelopment Act of 2021. This bill provides compensation to residents of the small island in the archipelago who may have contracted a chronic or life threatening case of cancer, hypertension, cirrhosis, kidney disease, diabetes, or heavy metal poisoning during or after the U.S. Navy bombed the island for 60 years for military training purposes. The island has some of the [highest sickness rates in the Caribbean](#) and compensation from the U.S. government is long overdue.

Cosponsors: The Senate bill co-sponsored by Sen. Roger Wicker (R-MS) and the House bill by Rep. Jesus Garcia (D-IL), Rep. Trent Kelly (R-MS), Rep. Bennie Thompson (D-MS), Rep. Raul Grijalva (D-AZ), and Resident Commission Jenniffer González-Colón (R-PR-At Large).

Status: On July 30, 2021, the House Natural Resources Committee held a hearing on the bill. This year, during the House Natural Resources Committee Build Back Better Markup, the committee approved a partial \$500 million dollar allocation for Vieques.

[Territories Medicare Prescription Drug Assistance Equity Act of 2022 \(S. 3778\)](#)

The Territories Medicare Prescription Drug Assistance Equity Act of 2022 was introduced by **Sen. Bob Menendez** (D-NJ) in March 2022. This bill would amend titles XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act to make healthcare more affordable for low-income seniors such as Medicare part D beneficiaries who reside in Puerto Rico or other territories.

Cosponsors: This bill has four cosponsors including Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ), and Sen. Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM).

Status: On March 8, 2022, the legislation was referred to the Committee on Finance. No further action has been taken since.

[Achieving Equity in the Treatment of Dual Eligible Beneficiaries Act \(H.R. 7997\)](#)

Introduced by **Resident Commissioner González-Colón** (R-PR-At Large), this bipartisan bill would address Medicare funding disparities by giving seniors in the territories access to the Medicare Savings Program and establishes a Medicare Advantage geographic adjustment (AGA), which would ensure rates accurately reflect the cost of delivering care in different geographic regions.

Cosponsors: Rep. Nydia Velázquez (D-NY), Rep. Darren Soto (D-FL), Rep. Maria Elvira Salazar (R-FL), Rep. Charlie Crist (D-FL), Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA), Rep. Don Bacon (R-NE), Rep. Adriano Espaillat (D-NY), Del. Amata Coleman Radewagen (R-AS-At Large), Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart (R-FL), Rep. Stephanie Murphy (D-FL).

Status: On July 9, 2022, it was referred to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce and the Committee on Ways and Means.

CLIMATE

[Environmental Justice For All Act EJ4All](#) **(H.R.2021 & S.872)**

The Environmental Justice For All was re-introduced on March 18, 2021 in both chambers of Congress by **Sen. Tammy Duckworth** (D-IL) [in the Senate](#) and by **Rep. Raul Grijalva** (D-AZ) and Rep. A. Donald McEachin (D-VA) [in the House](#). This bill would establish several environmental justice requirements and programs to address the disproportionate environmental effects of federal laws or programs on communities of color, low-income communities, or tribal and indigenous communities. The main purpose of this bicameral legislation is to address the disproportionate effects the climate crisis has had on communities of color across the nation.

Cosponsors: The House version has [104 cosponsors](#). The Senate bill is cosponsored by Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Sen. Tina Smith (D-MN), Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Sen. Richard Durbin (D-IL), Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR), Sen. Brian Shatz (D-HI), Sen. Edward Markey (D-MA), Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ), Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Sen. Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Sen. Alex Padilla (D-CA), and Sen. Robert Casey (D-PA).

Status: On February 15, 2022, the House Natural Resources Committee held a [hearing](#) on the House version of the bill. Later in July of 2022, the committee held a markup session on the bill where it was [voted out of committee](#) (26-21) and is currently awaiting a house floor vote. The Senate version was read twice and referred to the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works. No [further action](#) has been taken since.

[Insular Area Climate Change Act](#) **(H.R. 2780 & S.2613)**

The Insular Area Climate Change Act was introduced in both chambers of Congress by **Sen. Bob Menendez** (D-NJ) and **Sen. Mazie Hirono** (D-HI) [in the Senate](#) on August 4, 2021 and by **Rep. Raul Grijalva** (D-AZ) [in the House](#) on April 22, 2021. This bill would provide financial and technical support to the more than 3.5 million U.S. citizens and nationals that reside in U.S. affiliated insular areas for climate change through planning, mitigation, adaptation, and resilience efforts.

Cosponsors: H.R. 2780 co-sponsors include Del. Gregorio Killili Camacho Sablan (D-MP), Del. Michael San Nicolas (D-GU), Del. Stacey Plaskett (D-VI), Rep. Darren Soto (D-FL), Rep. Nydia Velazquez (D-NY), Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D-MI) Rep. Grace Napolitano (D-CA), Rep. Steve Cohen (D-TN), Rep. Donald McEachin (D-VA) Rep. Julia Brownley (D-CA), Rep. Ritchie Torres (D-NY), Rep. Melanie Ann Stansbury (D-NM), Rep. Joe Neguse (D-CO). The Senate version is cosponsored by Sen. Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Sen. Christopher Murphy (D-CT), Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ).

Status: On July 14, 2021, H.R. 2780 passed the House Natural Resources Committee and is currently awaiting a House floor vote. S. 2613 has been read twice and referred to the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. No further action has been taken.

ENERGY

[To require a report on Puerto Rico's progress toward rebuilding the electric grid](#) **(H.R. 8292)**

Introduced by Rep. **Ritchie Torres** (D-NY) with the co-sponsorship of Resident Commissioner **Jennifer González-Colón** (R-PR-At Large), this bill would require a report on Puerto Rico's progress toward rebuilding the electric grid. The bill would also require the report to detail the efforts the Federal Government is undertaking to expedite the rebuilding process.

Status: On July 5, 2022 the bill was referred to the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure where it was subsequently referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management. No [further action](#) has been taken.

[Renewable Energy for Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands Act](#) **(H.R.2791)**

The Renewable Energy for Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands Act [introduced](#) by Rep. **Ted Lieu** (D-CA) on April 22, 2021, would direct the Secretary of Agriculture (USDA) to establish a renewable energy grant program for Puerto Rico and other territories. In addition, this bill intends to promote renewable energy in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands by awarding grants to nonprofits, and the Department of Energy's National Laboratories may provide technical assistance. Specifically, the Department of Agriculture (USDA) must establish a grant program under which USDA may award grants for renewable energy systems, energy efficiency activities, energy storage, smart grids, or microgrids. In addition, USDA may award grants to train residents of Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands to develop, construct, maintain, or operate renewable energy systems.

Cosponsors: This bill is cosponsored by Rep. Darren Soto (D-FL), Rep. Albio Sires (D-NJ), Rep. Val Butler Demings (D-FL), Rep. Ritchie Torres (D-NY), Del. Stacey Plaskett (D-VI-At Large), Rep. Raul Grijalva (D-AZ), and Resident Commissioner Jennifer González-Colón (R-PR-At Large).

Status: On June 21, 2021, H.R. 2791 was referred to the House Subcommittee on Commodity Exchanges, Energy, and Credit. No [further action](#) has been taken.

PUERTO RICO ECONOMIC SELF-GOVERNANCE

[TRUST for Puerto Rico Act of 2022 \(H.R. 7409\)](#)

The TRUST for Puerto Rico Act of 2022 introduced by **Rep. Ritchie Torres** (D-NY) is bipartisan legislation that would provide a process for a speedier dissolution of the Financial Oversight and Management Board of Puerto Rico. It would terminate the Oversight Board no later than 90 days after the certification of two balanced budgets and transfers all duties and responsibilities to the Government of Puerto Rico after the Oversight Board is terminated. If the bill is passed by Congress and signed into law by President Biden, it could lead to the Oversight Board leaving Puerto Rico as soon as late 2023 or early 2024, if the balanced budgets are certified. The TakeAction4 Puerto Rico Campaign supports amendments to this bill that would require transparency and accountability for the actions of the FOMB and provide for a smooth transition to local governance.

Cosponsors: The TRUST for Puerto Rico Act of 2022 has 10 **cosponsors:** Rep. Jenniffer González-Colón (R-PR), Rep. Nydia Velázquez (D-NY), Rep. Darren Soto (D-FL), Rep. Raul Grijalva (D-AZ), Rep. Charlie Crist (D-FL), Rep. Adriano Espaillat (D-NY), Rep. Grace Meng (D-NY), Rep. Thomas Suozzi (D-NY), Rep. Chuy García (D-IL), Rep. Katie Porter (D-CA), and Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY).

Status: On April 5th, 2022, the bill was referred to the House Natural Resources Committee and the House Judiciary Committee.

[Territory Economic Development Tax Credit Act \(H.R. 5032 & S.2485\)](#)

The bipartisan Territory Economic Development Tax Credit Act was introduced in both chambers of Congress by Rep. **Thomas Suozzi** (D-NY) in the House and Sen. **Bob Menendez** (D-NJ) in the Senate. If passed, the legislation would amend the Internal Revenue Code to provide a credit for economic activity. It establishes a new tax credit for wages and tangible investments made by U.S. domestic corporations with branches operating in U.S. territories. The bill requires that 80% of creditable income must be derived from a territory during a 3-year period, and 75% must come from an active trade or business in a territory.

Cosponsors: The house bill has four cosponsors: Rep. Nydia Velázquez (D-NY), Rep. Bill Pascrell (D-NJ), Rep. John Larson (D-CT), and Del. Michael San Nicolas (D-GU-At Large). In the Senate, the bill has bipartisan support with the cosponsorship of Sen. Roger Wicker (R-MS).

Status: In August of 2021, the bill was referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means. The Senate version has been read twice and referred to the Committee on Finance. The House-passed version of the original Build Back Better bill included similar tax incentives like the ones in this legislation.

The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) signed by President Biden in August, 2022 unfortunately did not include these provisions.

[Puerto Rico Air Cargo Industry Empowerment Act \(H.R. 1824\)](#)

For centuries the Jones Act, a [protectionist](#) shipping law, has made costs of consumer goods in the island [unnecessarily expensive](#). Similar to the Jones Act, air cargo is also restricted by federal law in a similar way, which in turn has resulted in higher prices. Introduced on March 12, 2021 by Rep. Jenniffer González-Colón (R-PR), this bill would modify foreign air cargo regulations to allow foreign civil aircraft to stop in Puerto Rico and exchange cargo with other air carriers in the same way that is allowed in Alaska. The TakeAction4 Puerto Rico Campaign supports this legislation as well as repealing the Jones Act.

Cosponsors: This bill has 0 cosponsors.

Status: On March 12, 2021, was referred to the House Subcommittee on Aviation. No [further action](#) has been taken.

HOUSING

[Housing is Infrastructure Act of 2021 \(H.R.4497\)](#)

This bill was introduced on July 16, 2021, by **Rep Maxine Waters** (D-CA) as [part of a package of bills](#) intended to address the [growing housing crisis](#) by investing in affordable housing, increase access to homeownership and address the shame of mass homelessness in our country. The creation of programs and investments in equitable, affordable, and accessible housing infrastructure and providing affordable housing to low-income families in the United States, including Puerto Rico and the U.S. territories is long overdue.

Cosponsors: The bill has [80 co-sponsors](#).

Status: On July 16, 2021, the bill was referred to various House Committees including the House Financial Services Committee. That same month, Rep. Maxine Waters made [introductory remarks](#) on the legislation during a House session for Congressional Record. No [further action](#) has been taken since.

You can go [here](#) to see the legislation **TakeAction4PR!** supported in 2021.