Why Tea Partiers Say Throw the Bums Out

by Phyllis Schlafly May 7, 2010

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Proof that the Tea Partiers and others are on target when they criticize both political parties was supplied by the behavior of the U.S. House on April 29. Demoting all major economic and corruption problems facing our country to the bottom of the agenda, the House devoted a long afternoon and 12 roll-call votes to passing a bill to force U.S. statehood on Puerto Rico.

Of course this ploy had to be Nancy Pelosi's doing, but she made it bipartisan by getting 39 Republicans to vote with her. They walked like lambs to the slaughter, led by (I'll tactfully omit the appropriate metaphor) Rep. Mike Pence (R-IN) and Rep. Eric Cantor (R-VA).

Puerto Ricans have voted against statehood in three referenda, most recently in 1998. Congress didn't get the message and plans to make them vote again.

However, the new vote prescribed in the mischievously named "Democracy" bill will set an all-time record for dishonest elections. The plan will require Puerto Rico to hold two new referenda that are rigged to enable some to claim that Puerto Rico voted to become a state.

The first referendum would require Puerto Ricans to vote on whether they want to retain their current Commonwealth status or change their "political status." Try asking any Republican whether he wants to change our current political status and you will see what a ridiculous question that is.

If "change" wins the first referendum, a second referendum will require Puerto Ricans to choose among four options: statehood, independence, "sovereignty in association with the United States" (an obviously vague choice), or retain the current Commonwealth status. With four choices on the ballot, the winner would receive only a plurality, not a majority.

The bill would allow persons who were born in Puerto Rico but now live and vote in the United States to vote in these Puerto Rican referenda. That means giving the vote to a group based on ethnicity rather than on residency, and should be held unconstitutional under the 15th Amendment.

If statehood is approved by a plurality, the game plan of the statehood lobbyists is immediately to elect persons designated as U.S. Senators and Representatives, put them on a plane, and send them to knock on the U.S. Capitol door demanding to be seated. Those who object to recognizing these Puerto Ricans as U.S. Senate and House members would be labeled racists.

One explanation for this dishonest scheme to create a new state is political pandering to the Hispanic vote, yet not only the Hispanics but even the Puerto Ricans are very divided on statehood. The most prominent Hispanic member of Congress, Luis Gutierrez (D-IL), and one of the most prominent Puerto Ricans in Congress, Rep. Nydia Velazquez (D-NY), voted No on the statehood bill.

The whole idea of allowing Puerto Rico to decide to become our 51st state is offensive to our constitutional government. We the people of the United States are the only ones to decide whether or not to accept a new state as one of our United States.

A major reason why the American people do not want to accept Puerto Rico as a state is that this would overnight make the United States a bilingual nation because Puerto Rico will not accept English as its official language. Many U.S. pro-English

laws and customs make it is clear that the American people do not want to be a bilingual country.

Puerto Rican legislative and judicial proceedings are conducted entirely in Spanish, with English translations available only on request. It is asking for big trouble to admit a state when at least half of its people voted against becoming a state, and most of its residents won't accept English as their official language.

We need only look as far away as Canada to see what happens to a country trying to cope with two languages. In 1995, a proposal for French-speaking Quebec to secede from Canada failed on a referendum by only one-half of one percent with a 92 percent turnout.

Are you concerned about our current Congress spending too much money? Accepting Puerto Rico as a state would vastly increase federal spending for entitlements because 45 percent live below the poverty level and would immediately become eligible for Obama's "spread the wealth" policies of transferring money from U.S. taxpayers to non-taxpayers.

It made no sense at all for Republicans to vote for this Puerto Rican bill because statehood would mean adding two Senators and at least six House members, and they would all be Democrats. Puerto Rico would then have more members of Congress than 24 of our 50 states.