

December 10, 2015

The Honorable Paul D. Ryan
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker:

We are writing to urge you to expeditiously work with President Obama, Congressional leadership, and Members of Congress who are leading on this issue to provide Puerto Rico with the protections, equal treatment, and support it needs to overcome its current fiscal and economic crisis. As leaders of cities and counties representing 1.15 million Puerto Rican Americans, this crisis touches us very closely, and we are asking for your immediate attention and support to protect the future of Puerto Rico and the health, wellbeing and livelihood of our fellow American citizens.

The Obama Administration's legislative package for Puerto Rico, that was released on October 22, 2015, contains the following provisions:

- Enact broad bankruptcy protection and debt restructuring powers for Puerto Rico;
- Provide reforms and investments to improve access to Medicare and Medicaid by increasing access to coverage, raising the standard of care and preventing Medicaid's unstable financing from worsening Puerto Rico's fiscal crisis;
- Reward work and support an economic growth plan that would enact an earned income tax credit and expand a child tax credit for island residents; and
- Establish fiscal governance and safeguards to ensure adherence to needed reforms while preserving local decision making power.

These policies and programs proposed by the U.S. Treasury Department mirror many of the legislative solutions that have been suggested by concerned Members of Congress, and we urge Congress to expeditiously move these measures through the legislative process.

While we are encouraged that Puerto Rico was able to make the December 1st debt service payment, the island is facing extreme fiscal challenges. We must not overlook Governor García Padilla's statement that Puerto Rico is moving toward defaulting on the \$7 billion in loans – backed by the territory's full faith and credit – that its public corporations owe. Without swift action from Congress, government-owned corporations in Puerto Rico face great uncertainty and an unstable fiscal and legal framework, and the people of Puerto Rico face a grave economic and humanitarian crisis.

We ask for your leadership at this critical time so that the United States can live up to its responsibility to help 3.5 million U.S. citizens in Puerto Rico.

Sincerely,
Mayor Bill de Blasio, New York City
Mayor Michael Nutter, Philadelphia
Mayor Ras Baraka, Newark
Mayor Joseph Ganim, Bridgeport
Mayor Bob Buckhorn, Tampa
Mayor Tom Barrett, Milwaukee
Mayor Alex Morse, Holyoke
Mayor Dan Rivera, Lawrence

Mayor Ed Pawlowski, Allentown
Mayor Richard Gray, Lancaster
Mayor Vaughn Spencer, Reading
Mayor Pedro Segarra, Hartford
Mayor Lovely Warren, Rochester
Mayor Wilda Diaz, Perth Amboy
County Executive Joseph DiVincenzo Jr.,
Essex County