



OPENING REMARKS BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE COMMONWEALTH
OF PUERTO RICO, ALEJANDRO J. GARCIA PADILLA,

**2013 ANNUAL MEETING AND CONVENTION
FEDERAL BAR ASSOCIATION**

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Antigüo Casino de Puerto Rico, San Juan

As Governor of the Commonwealth, as a member of the Puerto Rico Federal Bar, it is a great pleasure to welcome you to Puerto Rico.

Puerto Rico places itself in a very unique position within the federal structure and within the federal court system. As a distinct political entity, without parallel in American federalism, committed to maintaining its own cultural, linguistic, even legal personality, Puerto Rico has posed significant challenges to the federal courts. The courts have met these challenges.

From Justice Holmes in the early days of the relationship, to Justice Breyer in the actual, from Judge Magruder to Judge Coffin, the great legal minds in the system have helped to strengthen the fact that Puerto Rico, with its unique profile, only enriches the tenets of American federalism and the breadth of American Law.

In the final pages of her memoir, *My Beloved World*, Judge Sonia Sotomayor recalls the day in 1992 when she took the oath of office as District Court Judge for the Southern District of New York, “the mother court” as it is known, the oldest district court in the United States. That day she realized that her appointment was part of a special journey of growth and understanding.

The journey did not end there, as we all know. In 2009, Puerto Rico rejoiced with her confirmation as US Supreme Court Judge. As she reflected on the highest honor bestowed on her, an essential conviction remained the same. And I quote from her book: *My highest inspiration for my work on the Court is to grow in understanding beyond what I can foresee, beyond any borders visible from this vantage... To remain open to understandings -perhaps even to principles- as yet not determined is the least that learning requires, its barest threshold.*

In welcoming you to our island in the sun, the words of Judge Sotomayor resonate with significance. Puerto Rico constitutes a test for the due balance between the core of the law and the appreciation of our historic and cultural idiosyncrasy.

May you continue having a very productive convention? I also hope that you and your families can enjoy the cultural richness of San Juan, one of the oldest cities in the hemisphere, and the beauty of our island. Finally, congratulations to our very own Judge Gelpí, the incoming President of the Federal Bar Association.