



Congressman Pedro R. Pierluisi

Statement As Prepared For Delivery

Presidential Installation Banquet - Federal Bar Association 2013 Annual Meeting and Convention

Saturday, September 27, 2013

Good evening to all. Let me extend a warm Puerto Rican welcome to those visiting our beautiful island. I hope you had a chance to take in some sun and explore around to nearby Old San Juan. We hope you are enjoying Puerto Rico and choose to come back soon.

I planned to be with you tonight but Congress had to extend its session and made it impossible for me to attend. However, I did not want to miss this opportunity to congratulate my friend Judge Gustavo Gelpi as he is installed as your new president.

As many of you know, I was an attorney before I was elected to office, practicing in our local and federal courts for close to 20 years in the private sector, and for four years as Puerto Rico's Attorney General. I can tell you that representing the 3.7 million U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico in Congress over the past four years has been the greatest honor of my life.

You all know of the difficult fiscal situation our federal government is facing these days. The climate of cuts in Congress represents a threat to many programs that are essential to our society. I can tell you that I believe that we need to protect our courts and our justice departments from arbitrary cuts because it is vital that our federal justice system is strong. As a member of the Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives for 5 years, members of the Federal Bar Association can count on the fact that I will advocate for adequate funding.

Electing Judge Gustavo Gelpi as your President guarantees another great chapter for this association. I have the utmost respect for him and am sure he will be as great an asset to the FBA as he has been to the Puerto Rico legal profession. His background across all aspects of the justice system in Puerto Rico provides him with a keen sense of the challenges and responsibilities of the bar and the bench at the state and federal level.

I know this for a fact, since he likes to remind me that my last case before I went into politics was before his court.

I know much more will be said about him tonight but I do want to congratulate Judge Gustavo Gelpi as he takes over the reins of the Federal Bar Association knowing he will make all Puerto Ricans proud, as he has already done throughout his illustrious legal career.

Congratulations Gustavo, *y Enhorabuena!*

Thank you all very much and enjoy this wonderful evening.