



PRESS RELEASE

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Governor Presents His Administration's Legislative Agenda

San Juan, P.R. – Governor Luis G. Fortuño addressed the Legislative Assembly and the people of Puerto Rico this evening to present the Administration's legislative agenda for the rest of the year, in an unprecedented address, where he evoked the spirit of unity and teamwork of the people of Puerto Rico that he called on in his Swearing-In Speech.

The Governor's message took place on the occasion of the beginning of the Sixteenth Legislative Assembly's Second Ordinary Session, which began today.

"I come to you... in the same spirit that I invoked from our people on this Capitol the day I was sworn in as Governor: "The reconstruction of Puerto Rico is everyone's task... and we are going to achieve it... working together... because, together, our wills can reach the highest goals," Fortuño declared at the beginning of his message.

According to the Governor, the Administration's legislative agenda for this Ordinary Session is mainly focused "on two areas of major concern for our people... their right to peace and their right to work."

Almost at the very beginning of his speech, Fortuño introduced the new Secretary of Health, Dr. Lorenzo González, to the Legislative Assembly and to the people of Puerto Rico. At the same time, he announced an agreement of understanding between the Health Department and the fiscal agencies of the government, in accordance to which the Department will have at its disposal the resources for management and budget oversight necessary to provide the Island with the health care services of excellence that it deserves, while at the same time addressing the severe administrative issues that have dogged the Health Department for years.

Fortuño provided a survey of the progress made by his administration during the last seven and a half months: stabilizing public finances—in spite of the \$3.2 billion deficit it inherited from the previous administration—saving the Island's credit; reaching savings goals in operating costs; and paying more than \$1.2 billion in debts owed by the government to suppliers, including non-profit organizations.

The Governor asked the Legislature to consider with urgency the legislative pieces that were left pending at the end of the first Ordinary Session, including the new permits act and the Executive Branch Reform Act.

“Beyond reducing expenses—as we have been doing so far cutting the use of official vehicles, travel, credit cards, cell phones, and reducing political appointees and the salaries of agency heads—we must transform our plan into law and achieve the stabilization of the government and its transformation into a more agile and efficient structure that is less costly to the people and works better for people... It's a programmatic commitment supported overwhelmingly at the ballots by the electorate,” the Governor stated.

Along the same lines, the Governor announced the appointment of a Special Commission to formulate in 30 days a Reform Bill for the Legislative Branch, to be considered during the current session. “This bill shall include the legislation necessary to make viable a referendum on the constitutional amendments required to reduce the size of the Legislative Assembly. And it should include, moreover, other measures that can be taken now as they require no constitutional amendment, including a reduction of the number of sessions and the number of days per session, as well as any other matters that have the effect of turning the Legislative Assembly's work more agile and efficient, and achieves savings for the Island,” the Governor stated.

Among legislative measures for economic development and job creation, the Governor highlighted those to jumpstart the development of projects for renewable energy, science and technology, and tourism, among others.

“While we work hard to promote our economic wellbeing, we are also going to face the social problems that rob our people of their right to dream... The most pressing of them is, no doubt, the ripping whip of crime and violence. ENOUGH... We are outraged... We will not allow criminals with no respect for life to continue killing and go unpunished. The children of this land have an inherent right to live in peace... and we will ensure that this right is respected,” the Governor said.

To this end, the Fortuño Administration will present a series of legislative measures in the area of public safety and crime fighting that include a New Municipal Police Act that will give municipal police more powers; a bill to prohibit the sale of alcoholic beverages after certain hours; stricter laws against

drunk drivers; and changes in the criminal procedural rules that govern the imposition of bail.

The Governor also announced a bill that through which, beginning next February, the Ports Authority will inspect each and every container that comes through our docks, in order to detect any illegal object including drugs and arms.

Similarly, Fortuño announced his decision to charge the Secretary of Justice with the task of leading the Penal Code reform initiative, “to give back to our police force, prosecutors and judges, the tools they need to get out of our streets violent criminals and make sure they don’t go back... What happened here when the Penal Code was amended in 2004 was give a shameful blank check to criminals who kill our children and then cheat law and order,” the Governor declared.

The governor was optimistic about the economic recovery that can already be noticed at the national level reaching Puerto Rico soon. “I am sure the worst has passed. Our economy will show growth... and what we have seen in the economy at the national level during the last few weeks is an indicator that, though slowly, the recession is coming to an end and the recovery is closer...,” he maintained.

Fortuño reminded the public that, beginning this week thousands of Puerto Ricans will receive a check as part of the \$600 million that the P.R. Treasury Department will be sending out directly to taxpayers in Puerto Rico from now until the end of the year, under the U.S. Economic Stimulus Plan, and approximately 120,000 public employees will be the first to get their checks.

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