



**Pueblo for Puerto Rico: A Teach-in on Puerto Rico's  
Economic and Political Present and Future**

**Saturday, May 14, 2016**

**9:00 am-4:00 pm**

**Sponsored by VAMOS4PR**



## **INTRODUCTION**

As Puerto Rico's \$72B public debt has brought the island's service infrastructure to the breaking point, millions of Puerto Ricans are suffering. Hundreds of thousands have migrated to the US mainland in the past few years. Meanwhile, investors who have profited off of Puerto Rico's debt are pushing Congress to adopt solutions that prioritize their own profits over families' basic needs and the economic future of Puerto Rico.

Positive change for Puerto Rico – addressing the most urgent aspects of the crisis but also going beyond -- requires a broad grassroots effort on the island and in the diaspora to develop and push for solutions. The issues will not be resolved only in the halls of government but require participation from all those who care about the 3.5 million Americans who call Puerto Rico home.

By being present and active participants in today's activities, you can help build a strong network of informed people in New York and elsewhere who will be able to take the action needed in support of Puerto Rico's future. The vision for the day is that each of you engages in discussion and challenges each other, learns more about the economic and political factors driving the crisis, and comes out with new ideas for how we can all work together in solidarity with the people of Puerto Rico.

## **PROGRAM**

- 9:00-10:00am** Breakfast and Registration
- 10:00am** Welcome – Eva Bonime, 32BJ SEIU, and Julio López Varona, Make the Road Action Fund
- Opening Remarks
- Héctor Figueroa, 32BJ SEIU
- Julie Kushner, UAW Region 9A
- 10:15am** Puerto Rico's Economic Crisis: How We Got Here
- César Ayala, UCLA Dept of Sociology, Author of *Puerto Rico in the American Century: A History Since 1898*
- Steve Abrecht, Former Chief Financial Officer and Former Director of Research and Capital Stewardship, SEIU
- 11:25am** What the Federal Government is Doing and Not Doing
- 11:35am** Puerto Ricans and Allies Stateside: Where are We, What Can We Do?
- Angelo Falcón, National Institute for Latino Policy
- 11:55pm** Discussion and Preparation for Strategy Sessions

- 12:15pm** Lunch
- 12:45pm** Learning and Strategy Sessions (choose one)
- 1) Workers Under Attack and Fighting Back – Roberto Pagan, SPT; Luisa Rivera, UAW; Facilitator, José La Luz, AFSCME (Auditorium A)
  - 2) Veterans’ Issues and Health Care –Harry Franqui-Rivera, Hunter College; Sarah Huertas Toro, Salud Para El Pueblo; Facilitator, Maryann Rosa, NYC Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO (Board Room)
  - 3) Civic Participation, Island and Stateside – Justo Méndez, VAMOS; Jaime Estades, Latino Leadership Institute; Facilitator, Otoniel Figueroa-Duran, Alianza por Puerto Rico (Auditorium D)
  - 4) Higher Education and Public Investment – Xiomara Caro, Center for Popular Democracy; Mike Fabricant, PSC-CUNY; Facilitator, Mairym Ramos, SEIU (Cafeteria)
- 2:30pm** What Have We Learned? Where Do We Go From Here?
- 3:15pm** Closing Remarks
- Henry Garrido, DC 37



## VAMOS4PR

VAMOS4PR is a group of labor, community, cultural and human rights organizations and individuals who live and work in the US mainland.

We agree that the current situation in Puerto Rico requires drastic and immediate changes that focus on improving the living conditions of the 3.5 million Puerto Ricans living on the island, and developing Puerto Rico's economy with policies that support working families.

We recognize that the current situation has been caused by decades of island and federal governmental policies that fostered extreme inequality and have resulted in a population that has more than double the unemployment rate found in the US mainland and keeps almost 40% of island residents living under the poverty line.

We believe that the only way to an equitable and just situation for all Puerto Ricans is to develop and promote policies that both hold accountable those who set off the crisis and support the well-being of working people on the island.

The VAMOS4PR network seeks to:

**WIN DEBT RESTRUCTURING** by securing a moratorium on debt payments, a thorough and complete audit of the debt and using other mechanisms that will not place an undue burden on Puerto Rican families;

**PROPOSE AN ECONOMY FAIR TO WORKERS IN PUERTO RICO** by protecting and expanding workers' rights, including the right to organize in unions; raise the minimum wage as we are seeking to do in New York and other localities to create good jobs; and protect public services and reject austerity as the solution;

**ADVANCE LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT SOLUTIONS** that will sustain the Puerto Rican economy, in areas such as renewable energy, tourism and agriculture, rejecting the notion that the only long-term economic solution is to keep the island a low-wage labor source for multinational corporations;

**EDUCATE AND MOBILIZE THE PUERTO RICAN DIASPORA AND ITS ALLIES**, and make Puerto Rico again an issue of concern and priority for progressives.

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| 32BJ SEIU                               | Fiscal Policy Institute   | New York State AFL-CIO             |
| Alianza por Puerto Rico                 | Hedge Clippers  | NYC Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO |
| Campaign for Fair Latino Representation | Latino Leadership Institute   | New York Communities for Change    |
| Comité Noviembre                        | Laundry, Distribution and Food Service<br>Joint Board, Workers United | PSC-CUNY                           |
| CSEA, Local 1000 AFSCME                 | LiUNA Local 78  | Strong Economy for All Coalition   |
| CWA District One                        | Make The Road Action Fund   | UAW Region 9A                      |
| DC 37, AFSCME                           | National Hispanic Media Coalition,<br>New York Chapter                | Working Families                   |
| DC 9 IUPAT                              |   |                                    |