



Congressman Pedro R. Pierluisi
One-Minute Statement
Introduction of *Territorial TANF Equity Act of 2012*
May 17, 2012

Mr./Madame Speaker:

Today, I am filing legislation to provide equitable treatment to Puerto Rico and other U.S. territories under the TANF program, which provides cash payments to needy families with children. Currently, the territories are not eligible for certain TANF grants—namely, supplemental grants, contingency funds and mandatory child care funds. Moreover, federal law imposes an annual cap on the overall funding that each of the territories can receive under a variety of public assistance programs, including TANF. My legislation removes this funding cap, which has not been increased since 1996, and makes the territories eligible for TANF grants that they do not presently receive.

Puerto Rico is treated unfairly under federal programs designed to help our nation's most vulnerable residents, none of whom earn enough to pay federal income taxes. This TANF bill complements two previous bills I have introduced, which would include my constituents in SSI and SNAP. To those who want evidence of how Puerto Rico is hurt by its territorial status, they need look no further than the Island's shocking treatment under these three key programs.

I yield back the balance of my time.