

(S.B.147)

(No. 54)

(Approved August 18, 2005)

AN ACT

To add a second paragraph to Section 6 of Act No. 261 of September 8, 2004, which creates the “Puerto Rico Volunteer’s Act,” in order to create volunteer programs in the Legislature for such purposes.

STATEMENT OF MOTIVES

According to the information available and to recent studies commissioned by the Economic and Social Investigation Council, carrying out volunteer work not only makes an individual feel good, but it also may increase the levels of happiness of an entire community. Said studies tend to show that community volunteer activity is closely related to a better health, a considerable reduction in criminal incidence, an improvement in educational achievements and a higher self-satisfaction.

On the other hand, it has been stressed that the concept of volunteerism is considered to be an exercise of citizenship and participation, which takes its meaning from concepts such as solidarity and justice. Volunteerism is a way to express the citizens’ willingness and capability to help others freely and in an orderly manner, and to improve society, according to their own parameters, under a principle of reciprocity.

Volunteerism and the actions produced by it have direct implications such as significant benefits for individuals and communities, that is, being a means to satisfy needs is one of its strong points. On the other hand, it is an efficient social mechanism to move energy, knowledge, and input that may

help governments to carry out better oriented, more efficient, participating, and transparent programs and policies.

Considering the above, it should be understood that it is imperative for the present Legislature of Puerto Rico to play a pro-active role in the achievement of the public policy set forth in the law herein amended. It is essential for the legislative bodies to establish volunteer programs, to encourage the citizenry to become more involved in these efforts. This Act has the purpose of setting an example for the people, who with their vote confirmed our legislators, and of using the opportunity given at the ballots to represent them with dignity, efficiently and generously.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF PUERTO RICO:

Section 1.- A second paragraph is hereby added to Section 6 of Act No. 261 of September 8, 2004, to read as follows:

“Section 6.- Volunteerism in Public Service

The municipalities, agencies, dependencies and instrumentalities of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico are hereby authorized to establish volunteer programs pursuant to the concept of volunteerism defined in Section 3 of this Act.

Also, the Presidents of both Legislative Bodies are hereby directed to establish volunteer programs and to promulgate the necessary regulations. Senators and representatives may annually report to the citizenry the activities in which they have voluntarily participated.”

Sections 2.- This Act shall take effect immediately after its approval.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify to the Secretary of State that the following Act No. 54 (S.B. 147) of the 1st Session of the 15th Legislature of Puerto Rico:

AN ACT to add a second paragraph to Section 6 of Act No. 261 of September 8, 2004, which creates the “Puerto Rico Volunteer’s Act,” in order to create volunteer programs in the Legislature for such purposes,

has been translated from Spanish to English and that the English version is correct.

In San Juan, Puerto Rico, today 23rd of November of 2005.

Francisco J. Domenech
Director