



Congressman Pedro R. Pierluisi  
Statement as Prepared For Delivery (Via Taped Video Message)  
Puerto Rico Student Art Exhibit Opening  
U.S. Department of Education  
Lyndon Baines Johnson Education Building  
400 Maryland Ave. S.W.  
Washington, DC  
*September 6, 2012*

Good morning! ¡Buenos días!

As Puerto Rico's sole representative in the U.S. Congress, I am so pleased that the U.S. Department of Education is hosting an art exhibit featuring the work of student artists from *La Isla del Encanto*. I wish I could be there in person to enjoy the exhibit, to meet the artists and shake their hands, and to watch the dance performed by the students from the Pablo Casals School in Bayamón. Unfortunately, my responsibilities in Puerto Rico made that impossible. But please be assured that I am with you in spirit and solidarity.

I know that many people—teachers, parents, and government officials in both Puerto Rico and Washington—worked very hard to make today's event a reality. Without you, this exhibit would not have been possible. So thank you.

Now I want to speak directly to our student artists, who I understand come from Arecibo, Bayamón, Humacao, Ponce, San Juan, and Yauco. I want to congratulate you and to commend you. Exhibitions like these have been occurring for a decade at the U.S. Department of Education, but this is the first time that students from Puerto Rico have had their artwork displayed in this building. Through your talent, passion, creativity and hard work, you have made your families proud, your teachers proud, and Puerto Rico proud. Your art represents what is best about the island we love. Those who view your work will see Puerto Rico through your eyes. So you have brought the spirit, culture and beauty of Puerto Rico to our nation's capital. Who knows—we might be in the presence of a future José Campeche or Miguel Pou!

In closing, I want to say a brief word about the importance of the arts and art education. The research on this subject is clear. In general, students who participate in the arts do better in math and reading. Arts learning can improve motivation, concentration and confidence. But most importantly, the arts—whether it be visual arts like painting and sculpture—or performance arts—like dance and theatre—enrich a student's life. The arts make our world a better and more interesting place. The arts unite people despite differences in their race and class, and no matter where they come from or what language they speak. That is why I believe so strongly that government, at both the local and federal level, must support the arts and art education.

I hope you all have a wonderful time, and I look forward to visiting the exhibit when I return to Washington.

¡Gracias a todos!