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**PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**ACLU of Puerto Rico Urges the Senate to Reject Senate Bill 63**

*The organization described the measure as “a dangerous step backward” for the right to access public information*

**San Juan, P.R.** – The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Puerto Rico urged the Senate to reject Senate Bill (SB) 63, a measure the legislative body intends to bring to a vote this Tuesday. The organization warned about the implications of the bill, which undermines the fundamental right of the people to access public information — a cornerstone of participatory democracy.

“Senate Bill 63 is clearly an attempt to restrict the people’s right to know information and data about the government’s public management,” said Annette Martínez Orabona, Executive Director of the ACLU of Puerto Rico.

SB 63 — which seeks to amend the Transparency and Expedited Procedure for Access to Public Information Act — proposes to significantly extend the timeframes government agencies have to respond to public information requests. Specifically, it seeks to double the response time from 10 to 20 business days and to extend the extension period to 40 days. “Doubling the response time will hinder oversight processes and create delays that harm the prompt and timely access to public information,” Martínez Orabona stated.

The organization emphasized that access to information is an essential component of constitutional rights, as reaffirmed by the Supreme Court of Puerto Rico. Without public hearings or discussion on the implications, SB 63 introduces other concerning changes and unnecessary technical requirements, such as the obligation to notify multiple officials about each request — an amendment that could invalidate legitimate petitions and arbitrarily complicate a process that should remain simple and accessible.

SB 63 also seeks to eliminate citizens' ability to request information in the format most accessible to them, weakening their capacity to use it and making the process unnecessarily burdensome.

Instead of promoting a measure that restricts and hinders access, the ACLU of Puerto Rico called on the Senate to invest sustainably in trained personnel dedicated exclusively to handling information requests, to accelerate compliance with the Transparency Act, to promote the digitization of records and the creation of unified and accessible platforms, and to establish independent oversight mechanisms to ensure compliance with existing deadlines.

The ACLU of Puerto Rico urged the Senate to promote government transparency and timely access to information, rather than approve a measure that increases bureaucracy and fosters secrecy and censorship.

“Access to information is not a privilege; it is a fundamental right that deserves to be protected and strengthened, not restricted. Limiting it under the pretext of administrative efficiency is a regression that undermines the people's trust in their institutions,” said attorney Lolimar Rodríguez Escudero, Policy and Legislation Counsel for the ACLU of Puerto Rico.

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