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April 13, 2023

The Honorable Bruce Westerman
Chair
House Committee on Natural Resources
1332 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 02515

The Honorable Raúl Grijalva
Ranking Member
House Committee on Natural Resources
1332 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 02515

Dear Chair Westerman and Ranking Member Grijalva:

Equally American (EA) strongly supports the re-introduction of the bipartisan *Insular Cases* Resolution in the U.S. House of Representatives. As the only national non-profit organization dedicated to advocating for equality and civil rights for the people of U.S. territories, we believe that the resolution is an important step towards addressing a historic injustice that impacts the everyday lives of millions of citizens.

For more than a century, the doctrines established by the *Insular Cases* have created a racist colonial framework that has been used to deny some of the most basic constitutional protections and democratic rights to the residents of U.S. territories, including Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands. This created a two-tiered polity, where some Americans are denied the full range of rights and protections that others take for granted, such as representation in our own system of government, and, in some cases, citizenship itself. Justice Neil Gorsuch has labeled this relationship “American colonialism,” declaring that the *Insular Cases* “deserve no place in our law,” because they “rest on racial stereotypes.” Justice Sotomayor has called the *Insular Cases* “odious and wrong.”

The *Insular Cases* Resolution seeks to address this structural failure of American democracy by calling on Congress to repudiate the *Insular Cases* and affirm that all Americans, regardless of where they live, are entitled to the full protections of the Constitution. Colonialism is not an American value, and we believe that this resolution is a crucial step towards rooting out its evils from our constitutional framework.

We urge Congress to support this important resolution and get on the right side of history by finally taking a stand against this vestige of the Jim Crow era.

Sincerely,

Neil Weare
President and Founder