

EXPANDED ANSWER 43:

One of the most common thoughts expressed regarding the expertise and capabilities of our citizens is that we wouldn't be qualified or able to run our own country. Many look to the way that PR and municipality governments function and conclude that our political class would fail us miserably. As the system currently operates, that is probably a valid assessment, BUT that is not the way we intend to manage our new country, and those are not the leaders we will select.

The reality of politics here and in the States is that the parties control the system. Only the team players are endorsed and financed, so the deals between the parties and the special interests rule: the elected official does pretty much what he or she is told to do and progresses up the power chain. If one doesn't play ball, one becomes unemployed. The problems with our current government are that the system is broken, and our politicians are certainly not going to provide the solution. Our government is run by patronage using an opaque structure that is established for the benefit of the politicians, not the citizens. It hides incompetence and corruption by design.

To some extent, working for any bureaucracy, or even some private companies, is going to be similar when the employees are generally seeking lifetime employment and can't rock the boat with independent thought or action. Upper managers set the policies and everyone below gets into line. Freed from this type of environment, workers can reengage their brains and actually blossom. Most of the best and brightest in Vieques are very hard working and actually hold multiple jobs or volunteer with non-profits for the betterment of the community.

Jobs are not plentiful in Vieques, so many must focus on securing government positions. These include teaching, administration, services, etc. As administrations change, many of the more educated and higher level employees are forced to seek other opportunities open to those of their political party affiliation. As a result, we actually have a number of very capable individuals with a broad range of experience and expertise.

Running a small country is certainly more of a management challenge than a normal city of 10,000 presents, but it is not rocket science or brain surgery. Many issues faced by larger countries do not involve the participation by lesser ones. Vieques will not have its own currency, armed forces, patent office, etc. We can pick and choose our areas of involvement and defer to the efforts of greater countries and contract services when appropriate. The cream of our crop is fully capable of working with outside consultants and professional, full time, permanent staff managers both to create and run a new, contemporary, country of our own design.

We can do this. Vieques, we have talent!