



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Puerto Rico Takes the Stage at Mont Pelerin Society Gathering**

**Presentation examines Puerto Rico’s colonial legacy, economic dependency, and the need for freedom-driven policy reform.**

The Mont Pelerin Society is an organization founded in 1947 in Switzerland by a multidisciplinary group of liberal thinkers including Friedrich A. Hayek, George Stigler, Ludwig von Mises, and Milton Friedman. Its purpose is to facilitate the exchange of ideas among like-minded individuals with the goal of strengthening the principles and practice of a free society, as well as to study the workings, virtues, and challenges of market-oriented economic systems.

Since its inception, the organization has maintained that preserving and improving open societies requires the active engagement of leading thinkers in intellectual debate to reaffirm the ideals of liberty and responsibility. Throughout its history, the Mont Pelerin Society has counted among its members eight Nobel Prize recipients, along with distinguished scholars and senior government officials from around the world. Members meet regularly to present and discuss the most current analyses of ideas, events, and trends.

Dr. Ángel Carrión-Tavárez, Director of Research and Public Policy at the Puerto Rico Institute for Economic Liberty (ILE, by its Spanish acronym), was invited to participate as a speaker at the Society’s most recent meeting, titled “Liberty in the Americas: Rebuilding the Foundations of Prosperity,” held from March 16 to 20, 2025, in Mexico City. Carrión-Tavárez is the first Puerto Rican ever to deliver a presentation at a meeting of this prestigious organization.

His address offered a historiographical perspective on Puerto Rico’s colonial relationship with the United States and the origins of *el mantengo*—a term implying living off public assistance. He explained that federal welfare programs “have institutionalized two major problems on the Island: a passive reliance on U.S. economic aid rather than the pursuit of self-sustaining solutions, and the rise of a large, interventionist government fostering both individual and corporate dependence on government assistance.”

Dr. Carrión-Tavárez emphasized how the public policies and regulatory framework of the Government of Puerto Rico have undermined economic freedom and stifled the development of

a free market for decades. These government-imposed barriers restrict individuals' ability to fully participate in the economy and contribute to the Island's prosperity. He stressed that the lack of economic freedom lies at the heart of Puerto Rico's most pressing socioeconomic challenges.

"For the last 73 years, the Island has experienced weaker economic growth than the United States, and the gap between Puerto Rico and the U.S. states has widened. The expectation of the fathers of Puerto Rico's constitution that the Island would converge with the wealthiest U.S. jurisdictions never materialized; on the contrary, rather than narrowing, the economic gap has grown—even in comparison with the poorest U.S. states," asserted Carrión-Tavárez.

He highlighted that Puerto Rico ranks as the least free jurisdiction in the United States in the *Economic Freedom of North America 2024* report, with a score of 2.13. The next lowest-ranked jurisdiction, New York, has 4.25—nearly double Puerto Rico's score. In a broader comparison with Canada, the United States, and Mexico, Puerto Rico stands at 61st place, below all 50 U.S. states and the 10 Canadian provinces, with a score of 6.57—just 0.03 points above Mexico's top-ranked state.

"Puerto Rico's economic trajectory has been shaped by U.S. industrial policy and federal incentives for too long, rather than by an independent, sustainable development strategy beyond the shifting tides of federal policymaking. Implementing reforms that promote economic freedom is a concrete action policymakers in Puerto Rico can take to foster economic growth, retain local talent, attract Puerto Ricans to return to the Island, and generate opportunities for prosperity free from undue government interference," Carrión-Tavárez added.

According to Jorge L. Rodríguez, founder and CEO of ILE, "Dr. Carrión-Tavárez's participation in the Mont Pelerin Society meeting demonstrates the growing presence of Puerto Rican scholarship in international conversations on liberty and prosperity. Opportunities like this reaffirm our commitment to academic and public policy dialogue and our presence in the marketplace of ideas that promote economic freedom and development. ILE strives to help build a Puerto Rico where all individuals can pursue their goals and prosper in a free and open society."

## Contact

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### About the Puerto Rico Institute for Economic Liberty

The Institute for Economic Liberty (ILE) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, non-partisan, non-governmental organization created with a genuine desire to ensure that everyone on the Island has equal opportunities to reach their full potential and build their own success. We believe that effort and merit should be rewarded, and that prosperity should be driven by people's creativity, entrepreneurship, and innovation. We envision a Puerto Rico where everyone is empowered to achieve their goals and thrive in a free and open society. You can learn more about ILE at [institutodelibertadeconomica.org](http://institutodelibertadeconomica.org), and follow us on Facebook and Instagram @ilepuertorico.