

## Vieques Denied Equal Access, Volume 2

The following is an addition to the previous document :

**Definition:** Among the various meanings or usages of “discrimination” we find the potentially harmful:

*a:* the act, practice, or an instance of discriminating categorically rather than individually

*b:* prejudiced or prejudicial outlook, action, or treatment

### Reference the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment:

**Section 1.** *All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.*

...

**Section 5.** *The Congress shall have power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.*<sup>1</sup>

### Questions:

1. Do we receive due process under the law when we have no say in the operation of the ferry which provides us the access to the goods and services (public and private) offered only on the main island?
2. Do we receive equal protection of the law when our system of access is controlled by a PR government entity that demonstrates little or no concern for us and whose policies and procedures are designed to benefit employees at the expense of our needs and wants?
3. Does the Congress of the US step in to provide us legislative support, or do they just continue to send money to this self-serving bully of an organization?

We need products, services, and customers in order to survive. Our sole product is tourism. The ferry system is our lifeblood, and everyone knows this. Who controls the ferry system? Not us! Others control it for their own benefit and deny us opportunity. The only private ferry that we had was closed down by denying access to the Mosquito pier landing because the Ports Authority controlled the pier and wanted the ferry out. Now there is no private ferry (Fast Ferries is a contract service, not an independent private operation.) and no competition.

Just because there is no element of race, gender, religion, etc. does not mean that an entire defined group of citizens is not being discriminated against. While our history reflects a slow growth of the specific groups deemed worthy of or

applicable to protection from discrimination, the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment proposes no limitations.

As a group, the ATM personnel are favored over the clients they serve, and they have inordinately limited the citizens of Vieques access to competitive commercial markets, health care, education, justice system, and government services. (Each area is worthy of full discussion.) Through both benign neglect and intentional discrimination, the governments of the United States and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico are guilty of failing to provide equal protection.