

the U.S. with the rest of the world, and trade without payment of duty with any other part of the U.S. For trade with Canada, Puerto Rico is regarded as part of the U.S. and is subject to the provisions of the Free Trade Agreement.

The U.S. federal government, however, does retain control of all areas in which it normally exercises authority in the states, such as customs, interstate commerce, operation of the post office, coast guard, lighthouse service, licensing of radio and TV stations, and so forth. Federal courts are maintained to adjudicate civil and criminal matters that are in the province of the U.S. government.

The constitution cannot be changed without the consent of both the U.S. Congress and the people of Puerto Rico through their elected representatives.

The "commonwealth" constitution, adopted by the people and ratified by the U.S. Congress in 1952, provides for a republican form of government with executive, judicial and legislative branches. It provides for the exercise of government through a governor, elected by direct referendum for a term of four years and advised by a Council of Secretaries (or Cabinet) of 10, appointed by the Governor and ratified by the Senate. The legislature consists of a Senate comprising 32 members and a House of Representatives with 63 members, elected to represent electoral districts, and 11 "members at large," the minority representation.

The executive branch of the government operates through separate departments responsible for major activities, each headed by a Secretary who, as a group, form the Governor's Council of Secretaries or Cabinet, and who are appointed by the Governor subject to Senate approval.

Climate

Puerto Rico enjoys a tropical climate with little seasonal and daily variations of temperature. The average temperature is 23°C between November and April, and 27°C from May to October. The temperature in the mountains can be 6 degrees lower during the summer months and even lower in "winter." In the mountains between December and February, temperatures can fall as low as 19°C late at night. During the summer months, however, even along the coastal areas, the temperature seldom climbs higher than 36°C due to the flow of the trade winds.