

1-1 By: Lopez, et al. (Senate Sponsor - Blanco, et al.) H.C.R. No. 71
 1-2 (In the Senate - Received from the House May 12, 2021;
 1-3 May 12, 2021, read first time and referred to Committee on Veteran
 1-4 Affairs & Border Security; May 20, 2021, reported adversely, with
 1-5 favorable Committee Substitute by the following vote: Yeas 6,
 1-6 Nays 0; May 20, 2021, sent to printer.)

1-7 COMMITTEE VOTE

	Yea	Nay	Absent	PNV
1-8				
1-9	X			
1-10	X			
1-11	X			
1-12	X			
1-13	X			
1-14			X	
1-15	X			

1-16 COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR H.C.R. No. 71 By: Blanco

1-17 HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1-18 WHEREAS, Marcelino Serna was one of the most decorated
 1-19 military veterans in Texas history, and his heroic actions during
 1-20 World War I make him a worthy candidate for the Congressional Medal
 1-21 of Honor, our nation's highest military award; and

1-22 WHEREAS, Born in Chihuahua, Mexico, in 1896, Mr. Serna came
 1-23 to the United States as a young man and spent time in Texas, Kansas,
 1-24 and Colorado; after the United States entered World War I in 1917,
 1-25 he enlisted in the U.S. Army at the age of 20, and after only three
 1-26 weeks of training, he was shipped overseas with the 355th Infantry,
 1-27 89th Division; when his superior officers in France learned that he
 1-28 was not a U.S. citizen, they gave him the opportunity to return
 1-29 home, but Private Serna chose to stay and fight; and

1-30 WHEREAS, Private Serna demonstrated exceptional
 1-31 resourcefulness and courage on the battlefield; during an
 1-32 engagement near the French town of St. Mihiel, 12 members of his
 1-33 unit were hit by fire from an enemy machine gun, and Private Serna
 1-34 obtained permission from his lieutenant to scout out the gun
 1-35 emplacement on his own; moving through heavy fire, and surviving
 1-36 two rounds that were deflected by his helmet, he tossed four hand
 1-37 grenades into the machine gun nest, killing six of the enemy; he
 1-38 then took the eight survivors captive; and

1-39 WHEREAS, Shortly thereafter, during the Meuse-Argonne
 1-40 campaign, Private Serna embarked on a second lone scouting mission;
 1-41 he began by wounding a German sniper with a shot from 200 yards,
 1-42 then followed the injured man into a trench; firing and hurling
 1-43 grenades in all directions to make it seem as if he were part of a
 1-44 larger force, he shot three German soldiers immediately, then
 1-45 attacked an enemy dugout, felling 26 more and capturing 24; he
 1-46 single-handedly held the prisoners at gunpoint until other members
 1-47 of his unit arrived; and

1-48 WHEREAS, Private Serna continued to serve in combat until the
 1-49 end of the war, receiving a wound in each leg, and while he was
 1-50 recovering in a French hospital, he was presented with the
 1-51 Distinguished Service Cross, our nation's second highest military
 1-52 decoration, from the American commander in France, General John J.
 1-53 Pershing; he also earned the World War I Victory Medal with five
 1-54 stars, the Victory Medal with three campaign bars, the St. Mihiel
 1-55 Medal, the Verdun Medal, and two Purple Hearts; he was further
 1-56 decorated by the governments of France, Italy, and the United
 1-57 Kingdom, receiving two French Croix de Guerre with Palm Medals, the
 1-58 French Medaille Militaire, the French Commemorative Medal, the
 1-59 British Medal of Honor, and the Italian Cross of Merit; and

1-60 WHEREAS, After returning to the United States, Mr. Serna

2-1 became a U.S. citizen in 1924 and settled in El Paso, where he
2-2 worked for the quartermaster at Fort Bliss; he was a charter member
2-3 of VFW Post No. 2753 and volunteered with veterans advocacy groups,
2-4 and when he died in 1992, he was buried with full military honors at
2-5 Fort Bliss; he was the most decorated Texas veteran of World War I,
2-6 winning every major military award short of the Congressional Medal
2-7 of Honor, and records indicate that he was denied that supreme honor
2-8 only because he was a Mexican American immigrant and did not know
2-9 enough English to be promoted; and

2-10 WHEREAS, Marcelino Serna volunteered to serve our nation in
2-11 combat before he was even a citizen, and he stayed to fight when he
2-12 might have gone home; his courageous battlefield actions during
2-13 World War I have been recognized with a host of illustrious
2-14 commendations, and he truly warrants the highest honor that can be
2-15 bestowed on a member of the armed forces of the United States; now,
2-16 therefore, be it

2-17 RESOLVED, That the 87th Legislature of the State of Texas
2-18 hereby respectfully urge the United States Congress to support the
2-19 nomination of Marcelino Serna for the Congressional Medal of Honor;
2-20 and, be it further

2-21 RESOLVED, That the Texas secretary of state forward official
2-22 copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to
2-23 the president of the Senate and the speaker of the House of
2-24 Representatives of the United States Congress, to the United States
2-25 secretary of defense, and to all the members of the Texas delegation
2-26 to Congress with the request that this resolution be officially
2-27 entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to the Congress of
2-28 the United States of America.

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