

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 293

WHEREAS, March 19, 2025, marks the 143rd anniversary of the birth of trailblazing activist Minnie Fisher Cunningham, who played a vital role in securing women's suffrage; and

WHEREAS, The daughter of Horatio and Sallie Fisher, the former Minnie Fisher was born on the family farm near New Waverly in 1882; she was one of the first women in the state to receive a pharmacy degree but soon discovered that her untrained male colleagues made twice her salary; following her marriage to Beverly "Bill" Cunningham, she became active in social reform efforts in Galveston; she chaired two Women's Health Protective Association committees and was a founding member and then president of the Galveston Equal Suffrage Association; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Cunningham was elected president of the Texas Equal Suffrage Association in 1915; membership grew to 10,000 under her leadership, and her formidable coalition-building and negotiating skills resulted in a bill granting Texas women the right to vote in state primary elections; the National American Woman Suffrage Association recruited her to lobby Congress and President Woodrow Wilson, and she eventually became the group's congressional secretary; after passage of the 19th Amendment in 1919, she traveled across the Southwest to rally support for ratification; her shrewdness and determination were instrumental in making Texas the first southern state to ratify the amendment, thwarting an attempt to create a regional bulwark against it; and

WHEREAS, A founder and officer of the National League of Women Voters, Mrs. Cunningham successfully championed the nation's first social welfare measure, the Sheppard-Towner Maternity and Infancy Act; back in Texas, she became one of the first American women to pursue a career in party politics, running for the U.S. Senate in 1928 and the governorship in 1944; she was an early inspiration to Eleanor Roosevelt and in turn energetically supported the Roosevelt administration's New Deal initiatives in numerous professional and volunteer capacities, including editor for the Texas A&M University Agricultural Extension Service, senior specialist in the Information Division of the federal Agricultural Adjustment Administration, and acting head of the Women's Division of the Democratic National Committee; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Cunningham returned to New Waverly to run the family farm but remained highly engaged in the progressive movement; in 1954, she helped establish the *Texas Observer*, and six years later, she managed the local headquarters of the John F. Kennedy presidential campaign, which carried Walker County; she died on December 9, 1964, at the age of 82; and

WHEREAS, Through her vision, resolve, and extraordinary ability, Minnie Fisher Cunningham contributed enormously to the empowerment of American women, and 60 years after her passing, her accomplishments continue to resonate; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 89th Legislature, hereby commemorate the 143rd anniversary of the birth of Minnie Fisher Cunningham.

Alvarado

Bettencourt	Hall	Middleton
Birdwell	Hancock	Miles
Blanco	Hinojosa of Hidalgo	Nichols
Campbell	Hinojosa of Nueces	Parker
Cook	Huffman	Paxton
Creighton	Hughes	Perry
Eckhardt	Johnson	Schwertner
Flores	King	Sparks
Gutierrez	Kolkhorst	West
Hagenbuch	Menéndez	Zaffirini

Patrick, President of the Senate

President of the Senate

I hereby certify that the
above Resolution was adopted by
the Senate on March 19, 2025.

Secretary of the Senate

Member, Texas Senate