

By: Alvarado

S.R. No. 293

R E S O L U T I O N

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

4 WHEREAS, The daughter of Horatio and Sallie Fisher, the  
5 former Minnie Fisher was born on the family farm near New Waverly in  
6 1882; she was one of the first women in the state to receive a  
7 pharmacy degree but soon discovered that her untrained male  
8 colleagues made twice her salary; following her marriage to Beverly  
9 "Bill" Cunningham, she became active in social reform efforts in  
10 Galveston; she chaired two Women's Health Protective Association  
11 committees and was a founding member and then president of the  
12 Galveston Equal Suffrage Association; and

13 WHEREAS, Mrs. Cunningham was elected president of the Texas  
14 Equal Suffrage Association in 1915; membership grew to 10,000 under  
15 her leadership, and her formidable coalition-building and  
16 negotiating skills resulted in a bill granting Texas women the  
17 right to vote in state primary elections; the National American  
18 Woman Suffrage Association recruited her to lobby Congress and  
19 President Woodrow Wilson, and she eventually became the group's  
20 congressional secretary; after passage of the 19th Amendment in  
21 1919, she traveled across the Southwest to rally support for  
22 ratification; her shrewdness and determination were instrumental  
23 in making Texas the first southern state to ratify the amendment,  
24 thwarting an attempt to create a regional bulwark against it; and

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

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

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

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