

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 54

WHEREAS, Hatton William Sumners was a native of Lincoln County, Tennessee, who grew up to become one of the most influential members of the United States House of Representatives as congressman for the Fifth District of Texas; and

WHEREAS, Lacking the money to pursue his education, but with a burning desire to study law, Mr. Sumners was hired as a clerk by the law firm of McLaurin & Wozencraft and was permitted to sleep in the offices and "study law" under the supervision of Dallas attorney Alfred P. Wozencraft; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Sumners passed the Texas bar examination and was admitted to the bar in 1897; three years later he was elected Dallas County attorney, thus beginning a distinguished career in the law and public service; and

WHEREAS, In 1912, he was elected to a new at-large seat in the United States House of Representatives; two years later he was elected as the United States congressman for the Fifth District of Texas, a position he held from 1914 through World War I, the Roaring Twenties, the Great Depression, and World War II, until his retirement in 1946; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Sumners was appointed to the House Committee on the Judiciary in 1919; he rose to the chairmanship in 1932 and served with such distinction in that capacity that, along with fellow Texas Congressman Sam Rayburn, he was considered one of the most powerful men in congress; and

WHEREAS, During the course of his service as chairman of the House Committee on the Judiciary, Mr. Sumners became known as the congress's foremost authority on constitutional law; he appeared before the United States Supreme Court several times in cases involving the constitutionality of New Deal programs, and he drafted the constitution for the Philippine Islands in 1934; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Sumners was considered an almost certain appointee for the United States Supreme Court until he led the opposition to President Franklin Roosevelt's court-packing plan of 1937 and uttered the famous comment, "Boys, here's where I cash in my chips"; and

WHEREAS, Following his retirement from congress, Mr. Sumners served as director of research in law and government at Southwestern Legal Foundation in Dallas and lived in the Lawyers' Inn on the campus of Southern Methodist University; remembering his early days of poverty, which frustrated his ambition for a formal education, he spent the remaining days of his life helping thousands of deserving young Texans secure their own education; and

WHEREAS, In 1949, Mr. Sumners established the Hatton W. Sumners Foundation for the purpose of encouraging "study, teaching and research into the science and art of self-government, to the end that the American people may understand the fundamental principles of democracy and be guided thereby in shaping governmental policies"; and

WHEREAS, In furtherance of its purpose, the Hatton W. Sumners Foundation has, from that date to this, awarded loans, scholarships, and other funding to thousands of Texas youth to aid them in the pursuit of their education, and

for many other worthy educational endeavors, such as lectures, seminars, academic contests, and other educational programs on the fundamental principles of American self-government and free enterprise and, when appropriate, their relationship with current public policy issues; and

WHEREAS, The YMCA Youth and Government Program was formed in 1946 to teach Texas youth about their state government and the blessings and responsibilities of democratic self-governance through its model legislature and model state government program held annually in the chambers and meeting rooms of the State Capitol; and

WHEREAS, The YMCA Youth and Government Program has joined many other educational and youth organizations throughout Texas as a beneficiary of the foundation established by Congressman Hatton W. Sumners, and it is appropriate to take this opportunity to recognize the lasting influence of one of this state's great political leaders; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 78th Legislature, 1st Called Session, hereby join the YMCA Youth and Government Program in expressing gratitude for and acknowledgment of the legacy of leadership, accomplishment, devotion to the virtues of law and self-governance, and generosity of Congressman Hatton W. Sumners and recognize the longstanding contributions of the Hatton W. Sumners Foundation to the education and training of Texas youth in citizenship and public service, and in the challenges, blessings, and responsibilities of self-governance and freedom in a democracy.

Staples, West,
Wentworth

Member, Texas Senate

Member, Texas Senate

Member, Texas Senate

President of the Senate

I hereby certify that the above Resolution was adopted by the Senate on July 14, 2003.

Secretary of the Senate