

By: Castro

H.B. No. 1979

R E S O L U T I O N

1           WHEREAS, The State of Texas lost a most distinguished native  
2 son with the death of Pete Tijerina, founder of the Mexican American  
3 Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), on May 14, 2003, at the  
4 age of 80; and

5           WHEREAS, Serving as the state civil rights chairman for San  
6 Antonio's League of United Latin American Citizens in the 1960s,  
7 Mr. Tijerina was outraged at the lack of representation of Mexican  
8 Americans on juries; making a personal commitment of money as well  
9 as time to travel throughout the Southwest, he obtained a \$2.2  
10 million grant from the Ford Foundation, and MALDEF was born; and

11           WHEREAS, Through his genius and determination, Mr. Tijerina  
12 set into motion a quest for justice that continues today; MALDEF is  
13 committed to safeguarding the civil rights of the 40 million  
14 Latinos living in the United States as the leading nonprofit Latino  
15 litigation, advocacy, and educational outreach institution in the  
16 country; and

17           WHEREAS, Mr. Tijerina was a native of Laredo and a graduate of  
18 St. Mary's Law School in San Antonio; he chose to stay in the Alamo  
19 City when MALDEF moved its headquarters to San Francisco in 1970,  
20 but he remained committed to the organization's mission of  
21 protecting the rights of Mexican Americans throughout his lifetime;  
22 and

23           WHEREAS, Pete Tijerina was a man who saw injustice and  
24 refused to be denied, helping to open the doors of opportunity for

1 countless Latinos; his work will be a continuing source of  
2 inspiration to others for generations to come, and his remarkable  
3 spirit lives on in the vital legacy he forged during his time on  
4 this earth; now, therefore, be it

5         RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 78th Texas  
6 Legislature hereby pay special tribute to the life of Pete Tijerina  
7 and extend sincere sympathy to the members of his family: to his  
8 wife, Grace Tijerina; to his daughters, Lynn-Audrey Tijerina and  
9 Christina Tijerina; to his son, Peter Tijerina II; to his sister,  
10 Minerva Leyendecker; and to the other relatives, friends, and  
11 admirers of this esteemed civil rights activist; and, be it further

12         RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be  
13 prepared for his family and that when the Texas House of  
14 Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Pete  
15 Tijerina.