

By: Moreno of El Paso

H.R. No. 1112

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, Constructed in 1930, the Plaza Theatre in El Paso is
2 an exceptional example of an atmospheric movie palace in the United
3 States; and

4 WHEREAS, Embodying the distinctive, illusion-producing
5 characteristics of movie theater architecture during the 1930s, the
6 theater meets the criteria of Nationally Significant established by
7 the National Register of Historic Places; and

8 WHEREAS, Located in a major metropolitan center on the United
9 States-Mexico border and articulated in a Spanish colonial revival
10 style, the Plaza Theatre also embodies the unique binational,
11 bicultural, and bilingual identity of the borderlands region of the
12 Southwest; and

13 WHEREAS, Constructed at the apex of a period of tremendous
14 economic and population growth in the Southwest, the theater is
15 associated with broad patterns in the history of this part of the
16 country, specifically the development of El Paso as an important
17 commercial and cultural center for the region and the blending of
18 Anglo and Hispanic peoples and cultures that has characterized the
19 borderlands region over the history of its settlement; and

20 WHEREAS, Among the many distinctions touted on opening night,
21 September 12, 1930, the Plaza was the largest movie theater west of
22 Dallas, it had the first refrigerated drinking water system in a
23 public building in the United States, it was one of only six
24 theaters in the Southwest to feature a Brenograph, a machine that

1 could project stationary or moving color effects onto the screen or
2 across the proscenium, it was the first to employ a telecheck
3 system, an in-house communication system linking the box office to
4 the ushers at various levels in the auditorium, and its organ, a
5 Balaban III, was one of only six produced by the Wurlitzer Company
6 and is one of only two that still exist today; and

7 WHEREAS, The significance of the Plaza Theatre is its
8 outstanding architectural value as an intact atmospheric movie
9 palace, combined inextricably with its direct association with the
10 events of a key period of development in the Southwestern region of
11 the United States; now, therefore, be it

12 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 78th Texas
13 Legislature hereby recognize the Plaza Theatre in El Paso as a
14 treasure of Texas history within the context of movie theater
15 architecture and development in the United States.