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SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The United States and the United Mexican States 3 share a border of 2,000 miles from Brownsville, Texas, to San Diego, 4 California; the four states of the United States and the six states 5 of the United Mexican States along the border are home to more than 6 75 million residents, an increase of about 11 million since 1990; 7 and

8 WHEREAS, A significant percentage of these 10 states' 9 population resides in the 44 United States counties and 80 Mexican 10 municipalities adjacent to the border, where rapid population 11 growth is putting great pressure on an already inadequate 12 infrastructure and straining the border region past its economic 13 limits and resources, the tragic effects of which have broad 14 repercussions on the health of residents in both countries; and

WHEREAS, Setting the stage for many of the health problems of the border is the standard of living of many in the region; more than a third of United States border families live at or below the federal poverty guideline, and an estimated 350,000 people live in colonias, unzoned, semirural communities with no access to public drinking water or wastewater facilities; and

21 WHEREAS, Such deficiencies in public works have increased the 22 risk of exposure to pollution and water-borne contaminants since 23 many of the primary sources of water along the border are 24 contaminated by sewage and pollution from agricultural and

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industrial sources; according to the United States Health Resources and Services Administration, 122 million liters of raw sewage are dumped into the Tijuana, New, and Rio Grande rivers daily, and a series of studies conducted by several United States and Mexican agencies, including the Texas Department of Health, monitored sites along the Rio Grande and found chemicals such as PCBs, cyanide, mercury, and lead at significant levels; and

8 WHEREAS, Beyond the effects of population, poverty, and 9 pollution, many of the health concerns endemic to the border region 10 are exacerbated by a lack of access to primary care and preventive 11 medicine; uneven distribution of hospitals and physicians, 12 inadequate transportation, limited immunizations, and a shortage 13 of bilingual health care providers contribute to otherwise 14 preventable health problems; and

WHEREAS, Several standard health indicators reflect the shortcomings of the health care system along the border; the incidence of hepatitis A and tuberculosis is two to three times the national average, and measles, HIV/AIDS, and various infectious diseases disproportionately threaten the population of the border region as compared to the United States as a whole; and

WHEREAS, Due to these and many other concerns and in an effort to provide international leadership to optimize health and quality of life along the United States-Mexico border, an agreement between the United States secretary of health and human services and the secretary of health of the United Mexican States created the United States-Mexico Border Health Commission in 2000; and

27 WHEREAS, The crises of health along the border are myriad and

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profound, with complications arising from cultural, economic, and geographic conditions unique to the region; although the United States-Mexico Border Health Commission has made great progress in promoting health and reducing health disparities, strategic planning and comprehensive study are critical for the commission to fulfill its mission to provide the tools necessary for the future well-being of the border population; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the 78th Legislature of the State of Texas 8 9 hereby memorialize the Congress of the United States to request 10 that the United States Department of Health and Human Services fund a benchmark study coordinated by the United States-Mexico Border 11 Health Commission and conducted by universities from the border 12 13 area of each of the adjoining border states in both the United States and the United Mexican States to engage each state's health 14 15 policy with respect to the border health issues and goals outlined 16 in Healthy Border 2010/Frontera Saludable 2010, a border-wide program of health promotion and disease prevention that defines an 17 18 agenda for improving health in the United States-Mexico border region; and, be it further 19

20 RESOLVED, That the study also address early intervention and 21 preventive strategies; water and wastewater issues; immunization; 22 behavioral health issues, including nutrition and exercise; 23 elimination of health disparities among the border population; and 24 response to disaster and disease outbreak; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Texas secretary of state forward official copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to the speaker of the house of representatives and the president of the

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senate of the United States Congress, to the secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, and to all the members of the Texas delegation to the congress with the request that this resolution be officially entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.

President of the Senate

Speaker of the House

I hereby certify that S.C.R. No. 21 was adopted by the Senate on May 1, 2003.

Secretary of the Senate

I hereby certify that S.C.R. No. 21 was adopted by the House on May 23, 2003.

Chief Clerk of the House

Approved:

Date

Governor