

By: Giddings

H.R. No. 200

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, From the beginning and throughout this proud state's
2 history, blacks have played a role in the discovery, exploration,
3 and development of Texas; and

4 WHEREAS, The first blacks had come to Texas from Mexico, but
5 by the early 1800s a wave of immigration from the United States had
6 begun to swell Texas' black population; many of these newcomers
7 came as slaves, but some were able to purchase their freedom and
8 eventually prospered as freemen and established members of their
9 respective communities; on the eve of the Texas Revolution, there
10 were about 3,000 blacks, both freemen and slaves, in Texas; and

11 WHEREAS, Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, blacks
12 played key roles in nearly every aspect of Texas' economic and
13 cultural development, including ranching, one of the pillars not
14 only of the state's economy but of its near-mythic identity; for
15 example, of the estimated 35,000 cowboys that worked the ranches
16 and rode on the epic trail drives of the Old West, between 5,000 and
17 9,000 were black cowboys; and

18 WHEREAS, From the famed Buffalo Soldiers to groundbreaking
19 activists such as Heman Sweatt to political figures such as Barbara
20 Jordan, many blacks have become icons in the state's long history,
21 and they have left a legacy of courage, pride, self-determination,
22 and noteworthy achievement that continues to inspire and motivate
23 Texans everywhere regardless of ancestry or origin; and

24 WHEREAS, Recognizing the importance of preserving this

1 legacy and the state's multicultural heritage, several Texas
2 universities offer black studies programs, among them Baylor
3 University, Southern Methodist University, the University of
4 Houston, and The University of Texas at Austin; it is noteworthy
5 that all of the black studies programs in the state are offered only
6 at four-year institutions; and

7 WHEREAS, In recent years, however, enrollment at community
8 colleges and junior colleges has been increasing at a greater rate
9 than enrollment at four-year colleges and universities, and more
10 than half of all students in the state attending public
11 institutions of higher education during the 2004-2005 academic year
12 are community college students; and

13 WHEREAS, In light of the growing role that public community
14 colleges are playing in educating the citizens of Texas, it is vital
15 that they expand their offerings to include important programs now
16 available only to students at senior colleges and universities;
17 now, therefore, be it

18 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 79th Texas
19 Legislature, 1st Called Session, 2005, hereby urge Texas community
20 colleges to offer an associate's degree with an emphasis on African
21 American/Black Studies.