

By: Pena

H.R. No. 302

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The month of October typically brings to Texas a
2 host of festivals celebrating the Czech heritage that is enjoyed by
3 a multitude of citizens across the state; and

4 WHEREAS, Among the first Czechs to come to Texas in the years
5 following annexation was the Reverend Josef Arnost Bergmann, who
6 arrived with his family in 1850 and settled in the German community
7 of Cat Spring in Austin County; Reverend Bergmann soon began
8 writing back to Europe, praising the availability of inexpensive
9 land and the opportunities to be found in Texas; his letters, one of
10 which was published in the *Moravian News*, are credited with
11 spurring many other Czechs to emigrate as well; and

12 WHEREAS, Most of those newcomers landed at Galveston and then
13 traveled to Cat Spring, dispersing from there to establish new
14 homes throughout the state; the census of 1860 reported some 700
15 Czechs living in Texas, and by 1900 the state had approximately 250
16 Czech communities, the majority of which were concentrated in 15
17 counties situated on the Blackland and Coastal Prairies; and

18 WHEREAS, Notable characteristics of the Czech Texans have
19 included their close-knit family structure, a deep attachment to
20 the land and to farming as a way of life, and an egalitarianism that
21 has expressed itself in staunch support for this country's
22 democratic ideals; Czechs have also been quite active in forming
23 cooperative societies and fraternal organizations; and

24 WHEREAS, Together with Texans of German descent, Czechs have

1 bequeathed to posterity a number of churches that are famed for
2 their decoratively painted interiors; four of the most noted are
3 around Schulenburg, in the communities of Ammansville, Dubina, High
4 Hill, and Praha; and

5 WHEREAS, From their earliest days in Texas, Czechs have
6 sought to preserve their oral traditions, folk songs and dances,
7 foods, and various customs, and especially the Czech language; the
8 Czech spoken in Texas is distinctive in that Moravian dialects
9 predominate in this state, as opposed to the Bohemian dialects that
10 prevail in other Czech American communities; and

11 WHEREAS, To further promote knowledge and appreciation of
12 Czech culture, the Czech Heritage Society of Texas was established
13 in 1982; the society is currently cooperating with other Czech
14 organizations in the state to create the Texas Czech Heritage and
15 Cultural Center, which is being developed in La Grange; and

16 WHEREAS, Today Texas boasts, by some estimates,
17 approximately one million Czech descendants, the largest Czech
18 population of any state in the country; the pride these Texans take
19 in their rich and vibrant culture is expressed each October through
20 numerous Czech festivals, some of them generations old; and

21 WHEREAS, Texans of Czech ancestry have made significant and
22 lasting contributions to the prosperity and cultural vitality of
23 the Lone Star State, and it is a pleasure to acknowledge the
24 indelible imprint of their lives and labors; and

25 WHEREAS, Representative Aaron Pena has justly recognized the
26 crucial role of Czech Texans by authoring this resolution in their
27 behalf during the 1st Called Session of the 79th Texas Legislature;

1 now, therefore, be it

2 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 79th Texas
3 Legislature, 1st Called Session, hereby recognize October 2005 as
4 Czech Heritage Month in Texas and encourage all Texans to join in
5 Czech festival celebrations; and, be it further

6 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
7 prepared for the Czech Heritage Society of Texas as an expression of
8 high regard by the Texas House of Representatives.