

By: Burnam

H.R. No. 1410

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, Since the year 2000, Will Harrell has demonstrated
2 remarkable ability in leading the American Civil Liberties Union of
3 Texas as its executive director, and his fifth anniversary in that
4 position provides a fitting opportunity to reflect on his
5 contributions to the organization and to the citizens of Texas; and

6 WHEREAS, Mr. Harrell spent his formative years in the Lone
7 Star State, attending high school in Houston and college at The
8 University of Texas at Austin and finding his initial employment in
9 the field of law as a legal assistant for the Texas ACLU; he left
10 Texas, however, to attend law school at the American University in
11 Washington, D.C., and to travel the world fighting for social
12 justice; before returning to Texas five years ago, he was busy
13 monitoring elections in Bosnia, representing farm workers in
14 Colorado, defending victims of human rights abuse in Guatemala, and
15 serving as executive director of the National Police Accountability
16 Project at the Center for Constitutional Rights in New York; and

17 WHEREAS, When he arrived in Texas to direct the state
18 affiliate of the ACLU, he discovered a limited budget, a meager
19 membership, a staff of two, and an absence of volunteer
20 infrastructure; determined to turn things around, Mr. Harrell spent
21 the first year of his tenure traveling the state, meeting with
22 individuals working on civil rights issues and mobilizing
23 communities through such grassroots efforts as local town hall
24 meetings; and

1 WHEREAS, Five years later, the Texas ACLU has made
2 revolutionary progress under his direction; it has supported the
3 work of the legislature in important criminal justice initiatives,
4 and Mr. Harrell has fostered relationships of mutual respect with
5 legislators on both sides of the aisle; and

6 WHEREAS, He has also enlisted dozens of talented lawyers and
7 activists and forged important alliances with LULAC, the NAACP, and
8 other civil rights groups to build an effective and cohesive
9 coalition for criminal justice, a cause which he considers the most
10 pressing issue in the state today; moreover, he has increased the
11 ACLU staff to 15, attracted more than twice as many members across
12 the state, and tripled the budget; and

13 WHEREAS, Perhaps the key to Will Harrell's successes lies in
14 his innate and passionate desire for justice and liberty for all
15 citizens; he has inspired many Texans with his hard work and
16 determination; now, therefore, be it

17 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 79th Texas
18 Legislature hereby congratulate Will Harrell on his fifth
19 anniversary as executive director of the American Civil Liberties
20 Union of Texas and commend him for his commitment to the people of
21 this state; and, be it further

22 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
23 prepared for Mr. Harrell as an expression of high regard by the
24 Texas House of Representatives.