

By: Lucio

S.C.R. No. 35

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, Tejanos, the descendants of Spanish explorers,
2 settlers, and the indigenous people who were the first to tame and
3 settle this great land, have contributed significantly to the
4 development of Texas, first as a republic and later as a state, but
5 have not been given credit in our textbooks for their contributions
6 and achievements; and

7 WHEREAS, A content analysis conducted by the Mexican American
8 School Board Members Association of the textbooks used in Texas
9 public schools indicated that there was little mention of the many
10 contributions by Tejanos, thereby depriving the children of Texas
11 of important historical information about the development and
12 culture of our state; and

13 WHEREAS, A survey of high school students by the National
14 Hispanic Institute demonstrated that Hispano youth have limited
15 cultural awareness of Hispano cultural and political figures and
16 that 83 percent either cannot identify a Hispano leader or are
17 unaware of the history of Hispanos in Texas and this country, such
18 as being segregated in the schools and not being allowed to speak
19 Spanish on the playgrounds through the 1960s; and

20 WHEREAS, This lack of awareness persists despite the fact
21 that for more than 500 years, beginning with the arrival of the
22 first European explorers and the establishment of early settlements
23 around Spanish missions and presidios and continuing through the
24 Texas revolution and the early republic to subsequent statehood,

1 forebears of today's Tejanos not only laid the foundation but
2 helped build on it to give rise to present-day Texas culture and
3 society; and

4 WHEREAS, There is no scarcity of either individual or
5 collective contributions to honor and recognize, especially of
6 those who died defending the Alamo; and

7 WHEREAS, In the early 1800s, individuals such as Juan N.
8 Seguín, José Antonio Navarro, and Lorenzo de Zavala played vital
9 roles in the struggle for independence and the founding of a new
10 republic; and

11 WHEREAS, Seguín, a member of the Senate of the Republic of
12 Texas, served in Texas' Second, Third, and Fourth Congresses during
13 an illustrious political career; Navarro and de Zavala signed the
14 Texas Declaration of Independence; Navarro also helped draft the
15 first state constitution in 1845, while de Zavala performed a
16 similar service in the drafting of the republic's constitution;
17 Navarro served in the Texas Congress and later in the Texas
18 Legislature and de Zavala served as vice president during the
19 critical first months of the fledgling republic; and

20 WHEREAS, While these three men are among those individuals
21 whose names are familiar to students of history, many lesser-known
22 Tejanos and countless others have made contributions, both great
23 and small, all worthy of recognition for helping create the vibrant
24 mosaic that is Texas history and culture; and

25 WHEREAS, The state's Hispano legacy lives on and is evident
26 all around us in the myriad place names that dot the Texas map, from
27 natural features such as the Rio Grande and the Guadalupe

1 Mountains, to the many cities and towns such as El Paso, Corpus
2 Christi, and San Antonio, to political subdivisions such as Zavala
3 and Navarro Counties and the City of Seguin that bear the names of
4 notable Hispanos; and

5 WHEREAS, Hispano contributions to Texas culture and daily
6 life endure in countless other ways, especially in their strong
7 work ethic and strong family and religious values, in much of our
8 language, music, food, and art, and also in many of the artifacts,
9 customs, and terminology that defined the cornerstone of Texas'
10 early economy, the cattle industry that gave rise to that
11 quintessential icon of Texas identity, the cowboy; and

12 WHEREAS, Hispano surnames also punctuate the nation's
13 history from the time of the American Revolution when Bernardo de
14 Galvez, Spanish governor of Louisiana and namesake of Galveston,
15 provided the Continental Army with arms and supplies and later
16 raised a sizable force to fight the British along a front from the
17 Mississippi River to western Florida; and

18 WHEREAS, Hispanos continued to fight for freedom as members
19 of the armed forces in subsequent conflicts, their valor epitomized
20 by Army Master Sergeant Roy P. Benavides, who was awarded the U.S.
21 Army Medal of Honor for his actions in Vietnam; Master Sergeant
22 Benavides followed a long line of Hispano Medal of Honor
23 recipients, beginning with David Bennes Barkley, a Mexican American
24 from San Antonio who, for his service in World War I, became the
25 first Hispano to be awarded this medal; during World War II and the
26 Korean War, an additional 17 Hispanos made this illustrious roll of
27 honorees; and

1 WHEREAS, The members of this legislature realize that the
2 Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for social studies
3 requires schools to teach Texas history in grades 4 and 7 and to
4 teach U.S. history in grade 5, providing several occasions where
5 the contributions and achievements of Hispanos can be integrated
6 into both the textbooks and lesson plans to portray accurately the
7 diversity of the peoples who made this state and this nation great;
8 and

9 WHEREAS, Beyond those specific requirements, other TEKS
10 social studies requirements for the elementary and middle school
11 curriculum provide appropriate opportunities at each grade level
12 for textbook publishers and classroom teachers to integrate
13 information about Hispano achievements and contributions in their
14 textbooks and lesson plans; now, therefore, be it

15 RESOLVED, That the 79th Legislature of the State of Texas
16 hereby recognize that the State Board of Education is responsible
17 for the oversight of the public school curriculum, and that the
18 legislature encourage the board to ensure that public schools teach
19 students at all grade levels about the contributions of Hispano men
20 and women to the development of Texas and the United States and that
21 their role in the shaping of our history, culture, government, and
22 daily life be integrated into the history and government textbooks
23 adopted for use in Texas public schools' social studies curriculum;
24 and, be it further

25 RESOLVED, That the secretary of state forward an official
26 copy of this resolution to the chair and members of the State Board
27 of Education.