

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.S.B. 1805
By: Hinojosa
Culture, Recreation, & Tourism
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Dr. Hector P. Garcia left an undeniable impact on the State of Texas, the nation, and the world. His service and accomplishments in life were many and included some of the most memorable occasions in recent Texas history. In 1948, Dr. Garcia founded the American GI Forum, aimed at giving Hispanic veterans equal access to the education, job training, and home loans promised by the GI Bill of Rights. Dr. Garcia made national headlines with the group's first big fight, which came after the family of a Hispanic World War II veteran killed in the Philippines was turned away at a Three Rivers funeral home and told to bury him in a segregated cemetery for Hispanics. The doctor contacted state and federal lawmakers and eventually secured a full military burial for the veteran, Private Felix Longoria, in Arlington National Cemetery. The event made the cover of the *New York Times* and marked the launch of the American GI Forum as a civil rights organization. From then until his death in 1996, Dr. Garcia fought for Mexican-American rights, both locally as a respected doctor and in the national arena.

Dr. Garcia was an alternate ambassador to the United Nations, the first Mexican-American to serve on the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, and a recipient of the nation's highest civilian honor when he received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1984.

This legislation creates a state holiday for Dr. Garcia to ensure that the late doctor's life work and legacy is preserved for future generations. This bill does not create a mandatory day off for Texas students and workers, but would permit public schools to incorporate curriculum lessons based on Dr. Garcia's efforts on behalf of civil rights and veteran causes. This holiday falls on the third Wednesday in September, in the middle of Hispanic Heritage Week.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter C, Chapter 662, Government Code, by adding Section 662.053, as follows:

Sec. 662.053. DR. HECTOR P. GARCIA DAY. (a) The third Wednesday of September is Dr. Hector P. Garcia Day in memory of the significant contributions to the Mexican American civil rights movement of Dr. Hector P. Garcia, a recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the founder of the American GI Forum which promotes civil rights protection of Hispanic veterans and all United States citizens.

(b) Dr. Hector P. Garcia Day may be regularly observed by appropriate ceremonies and activities in the public schools and other places to properly commemorate the importance of the contributions made by Dr. Garcia.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2007.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2007

C.S.S.B. 1805 80(R)

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL TO SUBSTITUTE

The committee substitute includes that Dr. Garcia received the Presidential Medal of Freedom and also that he founded the American G.I. Forum. The committee substitute also changes language that requires Texas public schools to observe the day to providing that they be permitted to observe the day.