

1-1 By: West (Senate Sponsor - Seliger) H.C.R. No. 16  
1-2 (In the Senate - Received from the House May 14, 2007;  
1-3 May 15, 2007, read first time and referred to Committee on Veteran  
1-4 Affairs and Military Installations; May 18, 2007, reported  
1-5 favorably by the following vote: Yeas 4, Nays 0; May 18, 2007, sent  
1-6 to printer.)

1-7 HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1-8 WHEREAS, The United States Merchant Marine is made up of a  
1-9 fleet of ships used for commercial transport during peace time and  
1-10 as an auxiliary to the United States Navy during times of war; and

1-11 WHEREAS, The members of the U.S. Merchant Marine served the  
1-12 United States bravely in World War II, suffering the highest  
1-13 casualty rate of any branch of the military; in spite of their  
1-14 dedicated and heroic service, these men and women are not  
1-15 considered veterans under the Social Security Act, thereby denying  
1-16 them the financial support in their later years that is afforded to  
1-17 those whom they served alongside in war time; and

1-18 WHEREAS, Merchant mariners are considered military personnel  
1-19 in times of war and have an illustrious history of defending this  
1-20 country that started with contributing to American independence by  
1-21 disrupting the British supply chain during the Revolutionary War;  
1-22 and

1-23 WHEREAS, The Merchant Marine ranks during World War II were  
1-24 filled through campaigns by the War Shipping Administration and  
1-25 military recruiters, served under the auspices of the military,  
1-26 included transferred members from other branches of the military,  
1-27 and were instructed by their commanders about the critical,  
1-28 patriotic importance of service on troop and supply ships; and

1-29 WHEREAS, The delivery of tanks, aircraft, jeeps, gasoline,  
1-30 medicine, and food rations by the Merchant Marine to troops in every  
1-31 theater of World War II was integral to the Allies' victory; and

1-32 WHEREAS, Despite accolades from then General Dwight  
1-33 D. Eisenhower and President Franklin D. Roosevelt for the vital  
1-34 military contribution and service in every invasion from Normandy  
1-35 to Okinawa, the merchant mariners were excluded from the GI Bill of  
1-36 Rights enacted in 1945, and for 43 years the U.S. government denied  
1-37 them benefits ranging from housing to health care until Congress  
1-38 awarded them veterans' status in 1988--too late for 125,000  
1-39 mariners to benefit, roughly half of those who had served;  
1-40 moreover, these merchant mariners continue to be denied veterans'  
1-41 benefits under the Social Security Act; and

1-42 WHEREAS, The Belated Thank You to the Merchant Mariners of  
1-43 World War II Act of 2005 appropriately honors the service of World  
1-44 War II merchant mariners and attempts to rectify the previous  
1-45 denial of financial benefits by providing a monthly monetary  
1-46 benefit, from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, for each  
1-47 Merchant Marine World War II veteran, or surviving spouse, and  
1-48 bestowing veteran status upon them under the Social Security Act,  
1-49 qualifying these brave individuals for Social Security veterans'  
1-50 benefits; now, therefore, be it

1-51 RESOLVED, That the 80th Legislature of the State of Texas  
1-52 hereby respectfully urge the Congress of the United States to  
1-53 support the Belated Thank You to the Merchant Mariners of World War  
1-54 II Act of 2005; and, be it further

1-55 RESOLVED, That the Texas secretary of state forward official  
1-56 copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to  
1-57 the speaker of the house of representatives and the president of the  
1-58 senate of the United States Congress, and to all the members of the  
1-59 Texas delegation to the congress with the request that this  
1-60 resolution be officially entered in the Congressional Record as a  
1-61 memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.

1-62 \* \* \* \* \*