

By: Davis of Dallas

H.C.R. No. 36

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1           WHEREAS, According to the United States Census Bureau, 37  
2 million Americans, representing 12.7 percent of the nation's  
3 population, were living in poverty in 2004; regrettably, this  
4 figure signified an increase of 1.1 million people from the  
5 previous year; and

6           WHEREAS, Although we have made progress combating this  
7 intractable human problem since President Lyndon Baines Johnson  
8 declared an "unconditional war on poverty" more than 40 years ago,  
9 rapid economic and demographic changes since that time have caused  
10 economic inequality between the poorest of the poor in America and  
11 the rest of the nation to rise sharply; and

12           WHEREAS, Because poverty and inequality are often  
13 inextricably linked, individuals, families, and even entire  
14 neighborhood communities that fall behind economically often fall  
15 behind in other ways that make it difficult for them, and ultimately  
16 their children, to compete successfully with their more advantaged  
17 counterparts and thus end the cycle of poverty; regardless of the  
18 conditions that give rise to poverty, the economic inequality and  
19 social injustice that result are antithetical to the principles  
20 upon which this nation and this state were founded; now, therefore,  
21 be it

22           RESOLVED, That the 80th Legislature of the State of Texas  
23 hereby express its support for a bill of rights for the poor based  
24 on the following principles: (1) all people, and especially the

1 poor, have the right to pursue life, liberty, and happiness without  
2 institutional barriers; (2) the poor have a right to a public policy  
3 agenda that invests in human beings; (3) every child should have  
4 access to quality health care, education, and housing and live in a  
5 safe community; (4) all people have a constitutional right to equal  
6 protection under the law and, to that end, the poor must be  
7 protected from injustice in the legal system; (5) the poor have the  
8 right to full employment and a guaranteed income that enables them  
9 to rise above the poverty level; (6) the poor should not be  
10 victimized by inequality of opportunity; (7) the poor must be  
11 protected from environmental racism that disproportionately  
12 targets impoverished communities with toxic waste sites and other  
13 elements that adversely affect the atmosphere and health of persons  
14 in those communities; (8) the poor have a right to substance-abuse  
15 treatment and that substance-abuse treatment, rather than  
16 incarceration, should be the first response to substance abuse; (9)  
17 the poor have a right to quality health care that is affordable; and  
18 (10) the foreign policy of the United States should be based on  
19 justice and freedom and should ensure the elimination of economic  
20 exploitation of impoverished people throughout the world.