

By: Gallego

H.C.R. No. 102

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1           WHEREAS, The State of Texas has customarily recognized a  
2 variety of official symbols as tangible representations of the  
3 state's culture and history; and

4           WHEREAS, The precious metal silver has played a prominent  
5 role in the story of the Lone Star State, and it continues to be a  
6 visible part of Texas culture, reflecting the enduring influence of  
7 Spanish colonial design and the western heritage that is so much a  
8 part of the state's lore; and

9           WHEREAS, Silver has been mined in Texas for more than three  
10 centuries, beginning shortly after the Spanish established their  
11 first permanent settlements in the area in the late 1600s; the first  
12 mines were founded by Franciscan friars who dug for silver deposits  
13 near El Paso, and these same sites were worked periodically for the  
14 next 200 years; and

15           WHEREAS, In the late 1800s, prospectors began exploring other  
16 parts of West Texas, with figures such as John W. Spencer, Samuel B.  
17 Buckley, Lieutenant John L. Bullis, and Colonel William R. Shafter  
18 focusing their efforts on Presidio County; this led to the opening  
19 of the Shafter Mining District, which was the site of the famous  
20 Presidio Mine; operated between 1884 and 1947, it produced more  
21 than 90 percent of all the silver that has ever been mined in Texas  
22 and became a prominent business that spurred greater development in  
23 the Big Bend region; and

24           WHEREAS, Other mining districts in the state also yielded

1 silver; Hudspeth and Culberson Counties were home to the Van  
2 Horn-Allamoore and the Plata Verde Districts, and Hudspeth County  
3 also contained the Quitman Mountains District; in addition,  
4 Brewster County was the site of the Altuda Mountain District, and  
5 mining took place at locations in Llano, Mason, and Gillespie  
6 Counties in the Hill Country; in total, Texas mines yielded more  
7 than 33 million fine ounces of silver, which had a value of nearly  
8 \$23.5 million, between 1885 and 1952; the manual labor of carving  
9 these riches from the rocks fell to a hardy group of miners who, in  
10 true Texan fashion, used their skill and determination to complete  
11 a difficult and dangerous job; and

12 WHEREAS, Most mining came to an end in the 1950s, but interest  
13 in harvesting the state's silver deposits continues; 20 million  
14 troy ounces of the metal are believed to still remain in the Shafter  
15 Mining District, and resources of this kind may prove profitable  
16 given silver's widespread use in commercial and industrial  
17 applications, where it plays a role in everything from photography  
18 to coin making, x-rays, water treatment, and electronics; and

19 WHEREAS, Jewelry makers and other artisans also rely on this  
20 precious metal, and the stately sheen of silver is a key element in  
21 beautiful stylistic designs, both rustic and refined, that can be  
22 seen throughout Texas; in belt buckles, tie clasps, and boot  
23 decorations, it is a staple of the western-wear fashions that  
24 harken back to the state's pioneer past; moreover, silver's rich,  
25 pure luster also makes it a favorite material for religious jewelry  
26 and other devotional objects, as well as any item or decoration that  
27 may benefit from its luxurious, glittering hues; and

1           WHEREAS, In both its historical and economic significance and  
2 its enduring connections to Texas imagery and culture, silver is a  
3 fitting symbol for the state and its people, and it is indeed  
4 appropriate that this metal receive special legislative  
5 recognition; now, therefore, be it

6           RESOLVED, That the 80th Legislature of the State of Texas  
7 hereby designate silver as the official precious metal of Texas.