

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.