

By: Martinez

H.C.R. No. 141

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1           WHEREAS, Because of its proximity to the international border  
2 with the United Mexican States, the State of Texas has a unique  
3 awareness of the importance of effective migration management to  
4 facilitate economic growth and promote community while minimizing  
5 potential threats to the well-being of Texas residents; and

6           WHEREAS, The immigrant workforce plays a critical role in the  
7 economies of the United States and Texas, filling skilled positions  
8 in areas of particular need; retaining the 1.1 million immigrants  
9 who are health care providers and the foreign-born professionals  
10 who account for 25.2 percent of all physicians in the United States  
11 is a need acutely felt by the 158 Texas counties that are federally  
12 designated health professional shortage areas; immigrants also  
13 comprise a significant proportion of the high-tech workforce, a key  
14 component of Governor Perry's job creation and economic development  
15 plans for the state; and

16           WHEREAS, The unification of Texas families is an important  
17 goal and value for the State of Texas, and immigration processing  
18 delays continue to separate families who are entitled to  
19 immigration benefits; and

20           WHEREAS, While immigration and naturalization applications  
21 must be quickly and efficiently adjudicated and processed to ensure  
22 that we receive the benefit of these skilled resources and that the  
23 goal of family unification is met, they must also be managed  
24 carefully to ensure that the safety and security of the nation and

1 the state are maintained; the United States Citizenship and  
2 Immigration Services (USCIS) has struggled with an overwhelming  
3 workload for a number of years, leading to dangerous lapses in  
4 processing applications; according to the United States Government  
5 Accountability Office, in 2005 USCIS misplaced 111,000 files in 14  
6 of the agency's busiest district offices and granted citizenship to  
7 30,000 applicants without following proper screening procedures;  
8 and

9 WHEREAS, The need for greater funding for the agency has led  
10 the USCIS to propose a fee increase that would make application fees  
11 for U.S. immigration among the highest in the world; this totally  
12 fee-dependent funding strategy is ill-advised, as it creates an  
13 incentive for the agency to admit more applicants to cover the cost  
14 of its activities and does not create a concomitant incentive to  
15 provide for improved security measures; and

16 WHEREAS, The United States Congress has previously  
17 acknowledged the importance of adequate funding for the USCIS,  
18 appropriating an additional \$115 million in federal fiscal year  
19 2006 to reduce the backlog in applications, and current  
20 circumstances certainly warrant continuing congressional  
21 commitment to providing for an efficient and secure immigration  
22 and naturalization process; now, therefore, be it

23 RESOLVED, That the 80th Legislature of the State of Texas  
24 hereby respectfully urge the United States Congress to appropriate  
25 funds to ensure that the United States Citizenship and Immigration  
26 Services can provide an immigration and naturalization processing  
27 system that is both efficient and secure; and, be it further

1           RESOLVED, That the Texas secretary of state forward official  
2 copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, the  
3 secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the director  
4 of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, the  
5 speaker of the house of representatives and the president of the  
6 senate of the United States Congress, and all members of the Texas  
7 delegation to the Congress with the request that this resolution be  
8 officially entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to the  
9 Congress of the United States of America.