

By: Garcia

H.C.R. No. 268

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, Dr. Hector P. Garcia of Corpus Christi, the founder
2 of the American GI Forum, earned nationwide renown as a
3 humanitarian and civil rights advocate during his lifetime; and

4 WHEREAS, A native of Mexico, this distinguished physician
5 earned his medical degree from The University of Texas School of
6 Medicine in 1940 before answering this country's call to arms
7 during World War II; he joined the United States Army after
8 completing his surgical internship and attained the rank of major
9 in the medical corps, earning a Bronze Star with six battle stars
10 for his valorous service; and

11 WHEREAS, Following his return to the United States, Dr.
12 Garcia came to the disturbing realization that, despite their
13 courageous service in the military, Hispanic veterans were being
14 denied the benefits they were rightfully entitled to under the GI
15 Bill of Rights; and

16 WHEREAS, Vowing to address this glaring inequity, Dr. Garcia
17 founded the American GI Forum in 1948 to tackle the problems of
18 discrimination faced by Hispanic veterans; as a result of his
19 visionary efforts, the forum grew to become a major civil rights
20 organization that works to register voters, to combat racial
21 stereotyping, and to bring about more equitable judicial
22 proceedings, in addition to participating in many other vital
23 causes; today the organization continues to reflect Dr. Garcia's
24 deep commitment to treating others with dignity and to working

1 within the system to effect change; and

2 WHEREAS, Dr. Garcia went on to provide leadership and
3 expertise in the civil rights arena for several United States
4 presidents, beginning with President John F. Kennedy, and served in
5 a variety of important capacities during the administration of
6 President Lyndon B. Johnson, including membership on the United
7 States National Commission on Civil Rights and on the National
8 Advisory Council on Economic Opportunity; and

9 WHEREAS, In 1984, he was awarded the Presidential Medal of
10 Freedom by President Ronald Reagan, the highest honor that may be
11 bestowed on a civilian, in recognition of his extraordinary
12 service; and

13 WHEREAS, Beloved by the people of Corpus Christi, "Dr.
14 Hector" had a city park, a post office, and a health clinic at
15 Memorial Medical Center named in his honor; in addition, he
16 received the first honorary doctorate conferred by Texas A&M
17 University--Corpus Christi, which also erected a statue of him and
18 dedicated a plaza on campus in his honor; in 1990, he was further
19 lauded for his exceptional endeavors by Pope John Paul II; and

20 WHEREAS, A man of tremendous decency and compassion, Dr.
21 Garcia devoted his life to the service of others, and through his
22 unrelenting efforts the country he cherished achieved a fuller
23 realization of its highest ideals; now, therefore, be it

24 RESOLVED, That the 80th Legislature of the State of Texas
25 hereby designate the third Wednesday of September in 2007 and in
26 2008 as Dr. Hector P. Garcia Day in Texas to pay fitting tribute to
27 the life of this remarkable man.