

By: Gallego

H.R. No. 261

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, Uvalde native James Ortiz has proven himself a man
2 of monumental courage and determination for his efforts to recover
3 from a serious accident he suffered in June 2006; and

4 WHEREAS, A premier distance runner at the high school and
5 collegiate level, James Ortiz has shown the same competitive spirit
6 in recuperating from his injuries, and his resolve in facing these
7 trials is an inspiration to all who know his story; and

8 WHEREAS, Mr. Ortiz first took up running after watching the
9 track and cross-country performances of his older brother, Reuben,
10 who competed for Uvalde High School and, later, for Texas State
11 University; when he was old enough, James also joined the running
12 teams at Uvalde High and demonstrated his outstanding athleticism
13 by setting the Amateur Athletic Union national record in the
14 2,000-meter steeplechase and helping the Coyotes to win three
15 district titles; and

16 WHEREAS, Following in his brother's footsteps, James Ortiz
17 enrolled at Texas State University in 2002 and continued to hone his
18 athletic talents; during his junior season in 2005, he enjoyed
19 great success, winning a number of races, earning All-Southland
20 Conference honors, and setting the TSU school record in the
21 1,500-meter event; though he sat out the 2006 season due to
22 tendonitis, Mr. Ortiz was looking forward to returning to
23 competition in 2007 and bettering his previous times; and

24 WHEREAS, Those plans changed on June 5, 2006, when his right

1 leg was crushed in a truck-bicycle accident in San Marcos and had to
2 be amputated below the knee; confined to the hospital for a month
3 and subjected to numerous surgeries, the young man who had once sped
4 away from his rivals now faced the prospect that he might never run
5 again; and

6 WHEREAS, In recovery, as in his races, James Ortiz didn't
7 give up, and he received significant help from his loved ones; his
8 brother, Reuben, left his job as a high school track coach in order
9 to assist James; his girlfriend Tenley Determan, a fellow student
10 and runner at Texas State, provided key daily support; and his
11 mother, Pura Elia Ortiz, offered her loving guidance; Mr. Ortiz was
12 further buoyed by an avalanche of letters and e-mail offering
13 encouragement, much of it from total strangers who had learned of
14 the accident through news and Internet stories; and

15 WHEREAS, This valiant competitor was fitted with a prosthetic
16 leg in August, and he soon set his sights on a new goal--to once
17 again run for TSU; he continues to train with the track team and
18 performs other intense physical therapy with the intent of
19 regaining his running ability and reclaiming his place on the
20 track; and

21 WHEREAS, The true measure of an individual can be gauged by
22 the manner in which he or she responds to life-changing events; the
23 bravery and dedication exhibited by James Ortiz have defined him as
24 a young man of immense strength and character, and his unwavering
25 dedication to personal improvement is indicative of a bright and
26 promising future still to come; now, therefore, be it

27 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 80th Texas

1 Legislature hereby honor James Ortiz for his determined recovery
2 efforts and extend to him best wishes for continued success toward
3 achieving his goals; and, be it further

4 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
5 prepared for Mr. Ortiz as an expression of high regard from the
6 Texas House of Representatives.