

By: Chavez

H.R. No. 764

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, One of the most forceful, impassioned voices to be  
2 raised in behalf of African Americans during the 20th century was  
3 that of Malcolm X; and

4 WHEREAS, Born in Omaha, Nebraska, on May 19, 1925, Malcolm X  
5 experienced the harsh effects of racial intolerance from an early  
6 age; while he was still quite young, his family had to move several  
7 times because of threats from a white supremacist group, and in 1931  
8 his father died in a suspicious accident; and

9 WHEREAS, Although he was a gifted student who graduated at  
10 the head of his class in junior high, Malcolm X was discouraged from  
11 pursuing his ambition to become a lawyer by a teacher who told him  
12 it was not a realistic goal; he subsequently dropped out of school  
13 and moved to the Northeast; and

14 WHEREAS, In 1946, Malcolm X was sentenced to 10 years in  
15 prison for burglary; while in jail, he became a follower of Elijah  
16 Muhammad, leader of a black separatist group known as the Nation of  
17 Islam; he also used his time in prison to read voraciously about  
18 politics and history, especially about African slavery and the  
19 oppression of African Americans; and

20 WHEREAS, Paroled in 1952, Malcolm X rose swiftly in the  
21 Nation of Islam hierarchy: within two years, he had become minister  
22 of the temples in Boston, Philadelphia, and New York, and in 1957 he  
23 became the group's national spokesman; and

24 WHEREAS, A fiery, charismatic orator, he received numerous

1 invitations to participate in debates and make personal  
2 appearances; it was largely through his influence that the Nation  
3 of Islam grew from 500 members in 1952 to 30,000 members in 1963,  
4 the year the *New York Times* reported him to be the second most  
5 sought-after speaker in the country; and

6 WHEREAS, Malcolm X broke with Elijah Muhammad in March 1964  
7 and founded his own religious organization, Muslim Mosque, Inc.;  
8 the next month he made a pilgrimage to Mecca that profoundly altered  
9 his world view; after engaging with people from many different  
10 cultures during this sojourn, he moved closer to orthodox Islam and  
11 became more hopeful about the possibility of racial harmony; and

12 WHEREAS, Following his return to the U.S., Malcolm X founded  
13 the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU), to bring together  
14 the different elements of the African American struggle for  
15 equality; and

16 WHEREAS, Among the fundamental tenets espoused by Malcolm X  
17 were a belief in the vital importance of education and self-help and  
18 a conviction that faith should be expressed in action; in his last  
19 years, he looked to collaboration and coalition building to help  
20 achieve African American advancement; and

21 WHEREAS, Malcolm X was assassinated on February 21, 1965,  
22 during an OAAU rally in New York City; since that time, his life and  
23 views have reached a still wider audience through several books,  
24 including an autobiography written in collaboration with Alex  
25 Haley, and a major film by Spike Lee; and

26 WHEREAS, Today, Malcolm X is remembered around the world as  
27 an eloquent, powerful champion for human dignity and freedom; now,

1 therefore, be it

2           RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 80th Texas  
3 Legislature hereby commemorate the 42nd anniversary of the death of  
4 Malcolm X.