

By: Naishtat

H.R. No. 768

R E S O L U T I O N

1           WHEREAS, The city of Austin and the State of Texas lost an  
2 important advocate for social justice with the passing of Wallace  
3 Gordon Ellinger on February 14, 2007, at the age of 88; and

4           WHEREAS, A Missouri native, Wally Ellinger was born on August  
5 24, 1918, in Webster Groves; he served his country as a member of  
6 the U.S. Air Force during World War II and went on to earn a degree  
7 in philosophy from Conception College in 1949; and

8           WHEREAS, In 1953, Mr. Ellinger graduated from Kenrick  
9 Seminary in St. Louis and was ordained as a priest of the Roman  
10 Catholic Church; over the next two decades, he met the spiritual  
11 needs of his parishioners, served as superintendent of four  
12 schools, and championed social justice and human welfare through  
13 his active participation with several committees and programs; and

14           WHEREAS, After receiving a papal dispensation, Mr. Ellinger  
15 left the priesthood; he married his brother's widow, Ruth Hunter  
16 Ellinger, and this union found him accepting new responsibilities  
17 as the stepfather of 12 children; the couple were well-known Austin  
18 Democrats, and their home was a center for like-minded individuals  
19 dedicated to social and welfare initiatives; and

20           WHEREAS, Employed by the Texas Comptroller's Office for many  
21 years, Mr. Ellinger was best known by the general public for his  
22 vehement opposition to capital punishment and brutality; he was  
23 affiliated with Texas Citizens United for Rehabilitation of Errants  
24 for 16 years, including seven as that organization's executive

1 director, and he continued to reach out to ex-offenders throughout  
2 his life; furthermore, he was often heard voicing opposition to  
3 public bonds for funding prison construction and advocating  
4 alternative forms of punishment; and

5 WHEREAS, Many groups benefited from the participation of  
6 Mr. Ellinger, including the West Austin Democrats, the Texas  
7 AFL-CIO COPE Council, Austin Groups for the Elderly, and AMBIS, a  
8 nonprofit organization providing low-cost funeral and memorial  
9 services; during his years in the priesthood, he was equally active  
10 as he endeavored to aid the downtrodden and disenfranchised by  
11 helping to establish credit unions and legal-aid services for  
12 marginalized citizens; and

13 WHEREAS, Wally Ellinger found happiness in helping others,  
14 and although the loss of his mortal presence has left a void in the  
15 lives of those who knew and loved him, his legacy as a spiritual  
16 mentor, civic leader, human rights advocate, and loving husband and  
17 father ensures that he will not be forgotten; now, therefore, be it

18 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 80th Texas  
19 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the life and achievements of  
20 Wallace Gordon Ellinger and extend deepest sympathy to the members  
21 of his family: to his wife, Ruth Hunter Ellinger; to his 12  
22 stepchildren; to his nephews and nieces and their families; and to  
23 his other relatives and many friends; and, be it further

24 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be  
25 prepared for his family and that when the Texas House of  
26 Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Wallace  
27 Gordon Ellinger.