

By: Harless

H.R. No. 1817

R E S O L U T I O N

1           WHEREAS, The Honorable Robert Eckels stepped down in March  
2 2007 from the office of county judge of Harris County after  
3 rendering nationally acclaimed service in that critical post; and

4           WHEREAS, First elected as county judge in 1994, Judge Eckels  
5 led the commissioners court of the third most populous county in the  
6 nation for more than a decade; the Harris County Commissioners  
7 Court, whose members collectively represent a population of over  
8 3.6 million, is responsible for providing basic governmental  
9 services to the more than one million county residents who live  
10 outside the limits of any incorporated municipality; as head of the  
11 commissioners court, Mr. Eckels also served as director of the  
12 Harris County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management  
13 and represented the county on numerous boards, committees, and  
14 regional councils of government; and

15           WHEREAS, Among the priorities on which Judge Eckels focused  
16 during his tenure in office were transportation, homeland security,  
17 and health care; while chairing the Transportation Policy Council  
18 for the Houston-Galveston region, he played a vital role in  
19 drafting the Regional Transportation 2025 Plan; in 2005 Speaker Tom  
20 Craddick appointed him to the Study Commission on Transportation  
21 Financing, and he chairs both the Alliance of I-69 Texas and the  
22 Texas High Speed Rail & Transportation Corporation; and

23           WHEREAS, Under his leadership, the Harris County Office of  
24 Homeland Security and Emergency Management became a national model

1 for preparedness and response to emergency situations; considered  
2 an expert in local emergency management and response, Judge Eckels  
3 has testified on such matters before committees of both the U.S.  
4 House and Senate and serves on the state and local senior advisory  
5 committee to the president's Homeland Security Council; and

6 WHEREAS, In order to facilitate better delivery of health  
7 care services to uninsured and underinsured residents, Judge Eckels  
8 guided Harris County and the Harris County Hospital District in  
9 forging strong partnerships with nonprofit, private, public, and  
10 faith-based health care providers and clinics; he is highly  
11 regarded for his expertise in devising and implementing acceptable  
12 air quality plans on the county level; and

13 WHEREAS, When Hurricanes Katrina and Rita devastated  
14 sections of the Gulf Coast, Robert Eckels coordinated and managed  
15 relief assistance for refugees that was widely admired for its  
16 efficient administration; in recognition of his outstanding  
17 efforts, he received the 2006 State Leader of the Year Award from  
18 the Jon Ben Shepperd Public Leadership Institute, as well as  
19 tributes from *American City and County* magazine, Partners for  
20 Livable Communities, the National Conflict Resolution Center, the  
21 Greater Houston Partnership, and *Esquire* magazine; and

22 WHEREAS, Before assuming the office of county judge, Judge  
23 Eckels served six terms in the Texas House of Representatives, from  
24 1983 to 1994; a native of Houston, he received his undergraduate  
25 degree from the University of Houston and his law degree from South  
26 Texas College of Law; he is currently a partner with Fulbright &  
27 Jaworski; and

1           WHEREAS, Robert Eckels has exemplified the highest standards  
2 of public service, and the conclusion of his tenure provides a  
3 fitting opportunity to recognize his immeasurable contributions to  
4 the people of Harris County; now, therefore, be it

5           RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 80th Texas  
6 Legislature hereby commend the Honorable Robert Eckels for his  
7 exceptional leadership as county judge of Harris County and extend  
8 to him sincere best wishes for continued success; and, be it further

9           RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be  
10 prepared for Judge Eckels as an expression of high regard by the  
11 Texas House of Representatives.