

By: Davis of Dallas

H.R. No. 1954

R E S O L U T I O N

1           WHEREAS, According to the United States Census Bureau, 37  
2 million Americans, representing 12.7 percent of the nation's  
3 population, were living in poverty in 2004; regrettably, this  
4 figure signified an increase of 1.1 million people from the  
5 previous year; and

6           WHEREAS, Although we have made progress combating this  
7 intractable human problem since President Lyndon Baines Johnson  
8 declared an "unconditional war on poverty" more than 40 years ago,  
9 rapid economic and demographic changes since that time have caused  
10 economic inequality between the poorest of the poor in America and  
11 the rest of the nation to rise sharply; and

12           WHEREAS, Because poverty and inequality are often  
13 inextricably linked, individuals, families, and even entire  
14 neighborhood communities that fall behind economically often fall  
15 behind in other ways that make it difficult for them, and ultimately  
16 their children, to compete successfully with their more advantaged  
17 counterparts and thus end the cycle of poverty; regardless of the  
18 conditions that give rise to poverty, the economic inequality and  
19 social injustice that result are antithetical to the principles  
20 upon which this nation and this state were founded; now, therefore,  
21 be it

22           RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 80th Texas  
23 Legislature hereby express its support for a bill of rights for the  
24 poor based on the following principles: (1) all people, and

1 especially the poor, have the right to pursue life, liberty, and  
2 happiness without institutional barriers; (2) the poor have a right  
3 to a public policy agenda that invests in human beings; (3) every  
4 child should have access to quality health care, education, and  
5 housing and live in a safe community; (4) all people have a  
6 constitutional right to equal protection under the law and, to that  
7 end, the poor must be protected from injustice in the legal system;  
8 (5) the poor have the right to full employment and a guaranteed  
9 income that enables them to rise above the poverty level; (6) the  
10 poor should not be victimized by inequality of opportunity; (7) the  
11 poor must be protected from environmental racism that  
12 disproportionately targets impoverished communities with toxic  
13 waste sites and other elements that adversely affect the atmosphere  
14 and health of persons in those communities; (8) the poor have a  
15 right to substance-abuse treatment and that substance-abuse  
16 treatment, rather than incarceration, should be the first response  
17 to substance abuse; (9) the poor have a right to quality health care  
18 that is affordable; and (10) the foreign policy of the United States  
19 should be based on justice and freedom and should ensure the  
20 elimination of economic exploitation of impoverished people  
21 throughout the world.