

By: Averitt

S.C.R. No. 46

1 SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The Thomas T. Connally Department of Veterans
3 Affairs Medical Center was a fundamental part of the City of Marlin,
4 Texas, for more than 50 years, and its recent closure dealt a
5 significant blow to the community and surrounding area; and

6 WHEREAS, Beginning in 1943, the citizens of Marlin organized
7 a campaign to secure their city as the location for a proposed naval
8 medical facility; initially, 31 individual contributors donated
9 \$2,025 to finance their preliminary effort, and two years later,
10 the city raised an additional \$25,000 in small contributions from
11 the local citizenry to purchase 150 acres of land for a new naval
12 hospital; and

13 WHEREAS, Although Marlin's selection as the site for the
14 hospital had been announced in 1944, and the order approving
15 construction of the new 500-bed facility was signed by President
16 Harry S. Truman on July 1, 1945, congressional funding for the
17 project was omitted from appropriations legislation later that
18 year; and

19 WHEREAS, Undeterred, the residents focused on attracting a
20 200-bed Veterans Administration general and surgical hospital and
21 collected additional funds for the purchase of eight acres to
22 donate for the facility; the city's efforts came to fruition when
23 the Marlin Veterans Administration Hospital opened on November 1,
24 1950, with a staff of 14 physicians, 42 nurses, and two dentists;

1 during its 50 years of operation, the hospital provided hundreds of
2 jobs to area residents, continuing to reward the community's early
3 faith and determination; and

4 WHEREAS, In 1992, the facility was renamed the Thomas T.
5 Connally Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center after United
6 States Senator Connally, who championed the city's efforts to have
7 the hospital located in Marlin; regrettably, the medical center has
8 since been closed by the United States Department of Veterans
9 Affairs, and there currently are no plans for its reuse despite a
10 recent extensive remodeling; and

11 WHEREAS, Although the center's closure was a major economic
12 loss to the residents of Marlin, the city's spirit and goodwill have
13 yet to waver; in the aftermath of Hurricanes Rita and Katrina,
14 Marlin opened the Connally Veterans Administration Medical Center
15 to house medically fragile evacuees from the affected areas, but,
16 with that notable exception, the complex has sat empty and will
17 likely be razed if a permanent use for the center cannot be found;
18 and

19 WHEREAS, Fortunately, the Connally Veterans Administration
20 Medical Center facilities can be easily converted for a number of
21 uses by the state, presenting a practical and beneficial use for the
22 idle buildings; precedent for the adaptation of a Veterans
23 Administration facility to state use was established in 2001 when
24 the United States Congress authorized the conveyance, without
25 consideration, of all real property and improvements associated
26 with the Fort Lyon Veterans Administration Medical Center in Las
27 Animas, Colorado, to the state of Colorado; and

1 WHEREAS, Elected officials from Falls County and the City of
2 Marlin, as well as many civic leaders, have expressed their support
3 for the reuse of the Connally Veterans Administration Medical
4 Center, and given the City of Marlin's long history with the site
5 and the fact that it would cost more to destroy the center than to
6 convey the facility to the State of Texas, it is only fitting that
7 the state take advantage of this available resource; now,
8 therefore, be it

9 RESOLVED, That the 80th Legislature of the State of Texas
10 hereby respectfully request the Congress of the United States to
11 authorize the secretary of the United States Department of Veterans
12 Affairs to convey the Thomas T. Connally Department of Veterans
13 Affairs Medical Center located in Marlin, Texas, to the State of
14 Texas; and, be it further

15 RESOLVED, That the Texas secretary of state forward official
16 copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to
17 the speaker of the house of representatives and the president of the
18 senate of the United States Congress, to all members of the Texas
19 delegation to the congress, and to the secretary of the United
20 States Department of Veterans Affairs with the request that this
21 resolution be officially entered in the Congressional Record as a
22 memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.