

By: Averitt

S.C.R. No. 46

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

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

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

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

18           WHEREAS, Undeterred, the residents focused on attracting a  
19 200-bed Veterans Administration (VA) general and surgical hospital  
20 and collected additional funds for the purchase of eight acres to  
21 donate for the facility; the city's efforts came to fruition when  
22 the Marlin VA Hospital opened on November 1, 1950, with a staff of  
23 14 physicians, 42 nurses, and two dentists; during its 50 years of  
24 operation, the hospital provided hundreds of jobs to area

1 residents, continuing to reward the community's early faith and  
2 determination; and

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

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

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

25         WHEREAS, Elected officials from Falls County and the City of  
26 Marlin, as well as many civic leaders, have expressed their support  
27 for the reuse of the Connally VA Medical Center, and given the City

1 of Marlin's long history with the site and the fact that it would  
2 cost more to destroy the center than to convey the facility to the  
3 State of Texas, it is only fitting that the state take advantage of  
4 this available resource; now, therefore, be it

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

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