

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 1129

WHEREAS, Dr. Hector P. Garcia of Corpus Christi, the founder of the American GI Forum, earned nationwide renown as a humanitarian and civil rights advocate during his lifetime; and

WHEREAS, A native of Mexico, this distinguished physician earned his medical degree from The University of Texas School of Medicine in 1940 before answering this country's call to arms during World War II; he joined the United States Army after completing his surgical internship and attained the rank of major in the Medical Corps, earning a Bronze Star with six battle stars for his valorous service; and

WHEREAS, Following his return to the United States, Dr. Garcia came to the disturbing realization that, despite their courageous service in the military, Hispanic veterans were being denied the benefits they were rightfully entitled to under the GI Bill of Rights; and

WHEREAS, Vowing to address this glaring inequity, Dr. Garcia founded the American GI Forum in 1948 to tackle the problems of discrimination faced by Hispanic veterans; as a result of his visionary efforts, the forum grew to become a major civil rights organization that works to register voters, to combat racial stereotyping, and to bring about more equitable judicial proceedings, in addition to participating in many other vital causes; today the organization continues to reflect Dr. Garcia's deep commitment to treating others with dignity and to working within the system to effect change; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Garcia went on to provide leadership and expertise in the civil rights arena for several United States presidents, beginning with President John F. Kennedy, and served in a variety of important capacities during the administration of President Lyndon B. Johnson, including membership on the United States National Commission on Civil Rights and on the National Advisory Council on Economic Opportunity; and

WHEREAS, In 1984, he was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Ronald Reagan, the highest honor that may be bestowed on a civilian, in recognition of his extraordinary service; and

WHEREAS, Beloved by the people of Corpus Christi, "Dr. Hector" had a city park, a post office, and a health clinic at Memorial Medical Center named in his honor; in addition, he received the first honorary doctorate conferred by Texas A&M University--Corpus Christi, which also erected a statue of him and dedicated a plaza on campus in his honor; in 1990, he was further lauded for his exceptional endeavors by Pope John Paul II; and

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WHEREAS, A man of tremendous decency and compassion, Dr. Garcia devoted his life to the service of others, and through his unrelenting efforts the country he cherished achieved a fuller realization of its highest ideals; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 80th Legislature, hereby recognize the third Wednesday of September in 2007 and in 2008 as Dr. Hector P. Garcia Day in Texas to pay fitting tribute to the life of this remarkable man.

Hinojosa

President of the Senate

I hereby certify that the above Resolution was adopted by the Senate on May 23, 2007.

Secretary of the Senate

Member, Texas Senate