

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center  
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Engrossed

### **AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

The history and culture of Texas have been greatly influenced by the celebrated era of cowboys and cattle drives and by the ranching industry, which continues to be an important component of the Texas economy to this day; the significance of these elements to the state's identity is reflected in a number of the official symbols that have been recognized by the Texas Legislature, including the designation of the longhorn as the state large mammal and rodeo as the state sport.

Perhaps the most iconic symbol of western lore is the horse, and one breed in particular, the American quarter horse, has played a central role in the story of the Lone Star State. This versatile animal likely arrived in Texas soon after the region was opened to colonization in the 1820s, helping to transform the unsettled wilderness into a productive land of farms and small towns; quarter horses also proved invaluable to such legendary figures as Sam Houston, whose mount Copper Bottom was a member of the breed.

The American quarter horse first caught the attention of many during the cattle drives of the late 1800s; strong, smart, fast, and tough, the animal was perfectly suited to the task of carrying cowboys on the long journeys from Texas to the railheads of Missouri and Kansas; the drovers called these prized ponies "steeldusts," a name derived from the well-known American quarter horse racer Steel Dust, who had won a host of victories in Texas in the mid-1800s and who sired numerous offspring.

While widely admired for its achievements on the western frontier, the American quarter horse traces its heritage to an earlier era of U.S. history; in the colonies of Virginia and North Carolina and South Carolina, the Galloway and hobby breeds from England were mated with Spanish Barb horses raised by the Chickasaw people; the result was the "Celebrated Quarter of a Mile Running Horse," which excelled at short-distance races; later, Thoroughbred stallions and the hardy mustangs of the American West also contributed to the bloodline to produce the horse so beloved by the Texas cowhands.

Today, the Lone Star State is home to nearly 500,000 American quarter horses that are owned by more than 130,000 Texans, and the breed has a sizable commercial impact on the state through its prominent role in horse shows, racing, ranching, recreational riding, and other endeavors. This noble animal endears itself to Texans in numerous ways; rodeo athletes rely on its agility and intelligence when competing in roping and barrel-racing events, and riders of all abilities know it as a gentle and amiable animal that is a faithful companion on the trail; of course, the quarter horse remains a fixture on the working ranches of Texas, where its hoofbeats still resound across the wide open spaces that were trodden by its ancestors in decades past. A uniquely American breed that reflects the historical development of our state and nation, the American quarter horse is a vital part of our Texas heritage, and it is indeed a most appropriate symbol for the Lone Star State.

### **RESOLVED**

That the 81st Legislature of the State of Texas hereby designate the American quarter horse as the official State Horse of Texas.