

By: Phillips, Swinford, Smithee, Chisum,  
Homer

H.C.R. No. 53

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

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

9           WHEREAS, Perhaps the most iconic symbol of western lore is  
10 the horse, and one breed in particular, the American quarter horse,  
11 has played a central role in the story of the Lone Star State; and

12           WHEREAS, This versatile animal likely arrived in Texas soon  
13 after the region was opened to colonization in the 1820s, helping to  
14 transform the unsettled wilderness into a productive land of farms  
15 and small towns; quarter horses also proved invaluable to such  
16 legendary figures as Sam Houston, whose mount Copper Bottom was a  
17 member of the breed; and

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

1 Texas in the mid-1800s and who sired numerous offspring; and

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

12       WHEREAS, Today, the Lone Star State is home to nearly 500,000  
13 American quarter horses that are owned by more than 130,000 Texans,  
14 and the breed has a sizable commercial impact on the state through  
15 its prominent role in horse shows, racing, ranching, recreational  
16 riding, and other endeavors; and

17       WHEREAS, This noble animal endears itself to Texans in  
18 numerous ways; rodeo athletes rely on its agility and intelligence  
19 when competing in roping and barrel-racing events, and riders of  
20 all abilities know it as a gentle and amiable animal that is a  
21 faithful companion on the trail; of course, the quarter horse  
22 remains a fixture on the working ranches of Texas, where its  
23 hoofbeats still resound across the wide open spaces that were  
24 trodden by its ancestors in decades past; and

25       WHEREAS, A uniquely American breed that reflects the  
26 historical development of our state and nation, the American  
27 quarter horse is a vital part of our Texas heritage, and it is

1 indeed a most appropriate symbol for the Lone Star State; now,  
2 therefore, be it

3       RESOLVED, That the 81st Legislature of the State of Texas  
4 hereby designate the American quarter horse as the official State  
5 Horse of Texas.