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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.