

1-1 By: Pena (Senate Sponsor - Lucio) H.C.R. No. 86
1-2 (In the Senate - Received from the House April 22, 2009;
1-3 May 1, 2009, read first time and referred to Committee on Veteran
1-4 Affairs and Military Installations; May 8, 2009, reported
1-5 favorably by the following vote: Yeas 5, Nays 0; May 8, 2009, sent
1-6 to printer.)

1-7 HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1-8 WHEREAS, The men and women who have served in this nation's
1-9 armed forces are entitled to ready access to the best possible
1-10 medical care; and

1-11 WHEREAS, For the more than 100,000 veterans living in the Rio
1-12 Grande Valley, the nearest U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
1-13 hospital is in San Antonio, as much as 300 miles and a five-hour
1-14 trip away, and the lack of a VA hospital in the Valley has long
1-15 imposed great hardships on veterans in that region and on their
1-16 families; and

1-17 WHEREAS, Veterans requesting appointments at the facility in
1-18 San Antonio typically wait months to be seen, even for serious
1-19 conditions; for those who cannot drive themselves, or who cannot
1-20 afford to drive, van transportation is provided by veterans service
1-21 groups; the lengthy trip, however, adds to the patients' physical
1-22 distress; no ambulances are available to convey veterans to San
1-23 Antonio, which makes the journey especially difficult for those who
1-24 are bedridden; and

1-25 WHEREAS, Once veterans arrive in San Antonio, they often wait
1-26 hours for an appointment that may take only 15 minutes, or they may
1-27 find that their appointment has been canceled; they may also
1-28 discover that they need to stay overnight, which adds to the
1-29 time-consuming nature of their trip and to its expense; and

1-30 WHEREAS, For veterans who must go to San Antonio several
1-31 times a month, the time lost to travel can make it difficult to hold
1-32 a job; the demands of such a trip also place a great burden on family
1-33 members who have to take time off from work, and possibly arrange
1-34 for child care, to drive a veteran to San Antonio, and who may need
1-35 to make such trips for many years; the cost of gas and meals, in
1-36 addition to the expense of lodging, if that is required,
1-37 substantially exceeds the prescribed travel allowance; and

1-38 WHEREAS, The current facilities for veterans health care in
1-39 the Valley are manifestly inadequate; the VA presently operates
1-40 several outpatient clinics in the region, but these do not offer the
1-41 full range of services, including testing and therapy, available in
1-42 San Antonio; moreover, the VA has failed to pay the bills of many
1-43 veterans who have had to seek emergency care at a local hospital; in
1-44 addition, although there are plans to contract with area hospitals
1-45 to provide some inpatient veterans care, the medical personnel in
1-46 those facilities are unlikely to have the necessary expertise in
1-47 treating the injuries and psychological trauma sustained by combat
1-48 veterans; and

1-49 WHEREAS, In recent years, local veterans organizations have
1-50 formed the Veterans Alliance of the Rio Grande Valley to help raise
1-51 awareness of this issue; and

1-52 WHEREAS, Veterans who live in the Valley, veterans from out
1-53 of state who make their home in the Valley during the winter months,
1-54 and U.S. veterans who reside in Mexico all sorely need and clearly
1-55 deserve a fully staffed, full-service veterans hospital in far
1-56 South Texas; now, therefore, be it

1-57 RESOLVED, That the 81st Legislature of the State of Texas
1-58 hereby affirm its support for the establishment of a veterans
1-59 hospital in the Rio Grande Valley; and, be it further

1-60 RESOLVED, That the Texas secretary of state forward official
1-61 copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to
1-62 the secretary of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, to the
1-63 speaker of the house of representatives and the president of the
1-64 senate of the United States Congress, and to all the members of the

2-1 Texas delegation to the Congress with the request that this
2-2 resolution be officially entered in the Congressional Record as a
2-3 memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.

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