

By: Lucio III

H.C.R. No. 96

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

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

4 WHEREAS, For the more than 100,000 veterans living in the Rio
5 Grande Valley, the nearest U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
6 hospital is in San Antonio, 300 miles and a five-hour trip away, and
7 the lack of a VA hospital in the valley has long imposed great
8 hardships on veterans in that region and on their families; and

9 WHEREAS, Veterans requesting appointments at the facility in
10 San Antonio typically wait months to be seen, even for serious
11 conditions; for those who cannot drive themselves, or who cannot
12 afford to drive, van transportation is provided by veterans service
13 groups; the lengthy trip, however, adds to the patients' physical
14 distress; no ambulances are available to convey veterans to San
15 Antonio, which makes the journey especially difficult for those who
16 are bedridden; and

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

22 WHEREAS, For veterans who must go to San Antonio several
23 times a month, the time lost to travel can make it difficult to hold
24 a job; the demands of such a trip also place a great burden on family

1 members who have to take off from work, and possibly arrange for
2 child care, to drive a veteran to San Antonio, and who may need to
3 make such trips for many years; the cost of gas and meals, in
4 addition to the expense of lodging, if that is required,
5 substantially exceeds the prescribed travel allowance; and

6 WHEREAS, The current facilities for veterans health care in
7 the Valley are manifestly inadequate; the VA presently operates
8 several outpatient clinics in the region, but these do not offer the
9 full range of services, including testing and therapy, available in
10 San Antonio; moreover, the VA has failed to pay the bills of many
11 veterans who have had to seek emergency care at a local hospital; in
12 addition, although there are plans to contract with area hospitals
13 to provide some in-patient veterans care, the medical personnel in
14 those facilities are unlikely to have the necessary expertise in
15 treating the injuries and psychological trauma sustained by combat
16 veterans; and

17 WHEREAS, In recent years, local veterans organizations have
18 formed the Veterans Alliance of the Rio Grande Valley to help raise
19 awareness of this issue; and

20 WHEREAS, Veterans in the Valley sorely need and clearly
21 deserve a fully staffed, full-service veterans hospital in far
22 South Texas; now, therefore, be it

23 RESOLVED, That the 81st Legislature of the State of Texas
24 hereby affirm its support for the establishment of a veterans
25 hospital in the Rio Grande Valley; and, be it further

26 RESOLVED, That the Texas secretary of state forward official
27 copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to

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1 the secretary of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, to the
2 speaker of the house of representatives and the president of the
3 senate of the United States Congress, and to all the members of the
4 Texas delegation to the congress with the request that this
5 resolution be officially entered in the Congressional Record as a
6 memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.