

By: Pena

H.R. No. 271

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, An esteemed educator and civil rights activist, Dr.  
2 Blandina Cardenas has rendered exceptional service to The  
3 University of Texas-Pan American; and

4 WHEREAS, Born and raised in the border community of Del Rio,  
5 Blandina Cardenas earned a bachelor's degree in journalism from The  
6 University of Texas at Austin; she returned to her hometown to teach  
7 preschool children from the migrant community and garnered national  
8 praise for the educational models she developed as a public school  
9 teacher; in 1977, she accepted a presidential appointment to serve  
10 as commissioner for children, youth, and families in the Department  
11 of Health, Education, and Welfare; she also completed her doctoral  
12 studies in education administration at the University of  
13 Massachusetts at Amherst; and

14 WHEREAS, In 1980, Dr. Cardenas was appointed to the U.S.  
15 Commission on Civil Rights, where she served for more than a decade;  
16 she went on to work closely with various advocacy groups, including  
17 the Inter-American Children's Institute, and she directed the  
18 Southwest Center on Values, Achievement and Community in Education  
19 at the LBJ Institute at Southwest Texas State University; she later  
20 joined The University of Texas at San Antonio as a professor before  
21 being named dean of its College of Education; she made further  
22 contributions to the field of education through her affiliation  
23 with the American Council on Education and through her work with  
24 Mexican universities, for which she received the highest honor

1 bestowed on a noncitizen by the government of Mexico; and

2           WHEREAS, The first woman to lead The University of Texas-Pan  
3 American, Dr. Cardenas became its seventh president in 2004; in  
4 that role, she launched several initiatives aimed at establishing  
5 the university as a model of higher education for a diverse student  
6 population; she also worked to modernize the institution and raise  
7 its academic standards; continuing her efforts to encourage  
8 underrepresented groups to pursue higher education, she oversaw an  
9 increase in financial aid from \$84 million to \$111 million and  
10 provided much needed relief to many of the families from the  
11 neighboring communities who struggled to pay for college; and

12           WHEREAS, In nearly five years as president of UTPA, Dr.  
13 Cardenas helped raise the number of students receiving degrees,  
14 including significant increases in nursing and graduate degrees, as  
15 well as the number of internships and study abroad programs being  
16 offered to students; in addition, she supported the creation of  
17 collaborative partnerships with South Texas College and the  
18 addition of a doctoral program in rehabilitation counseling; she  
19 also ushered in a new era of research in such fields as economics,  
20 border life, medicine, and engineering; moreover, under her skilled  
21 leadership, UTPA saw increased faculty and student scholarly  
22 productivity, with more undergraduate students publishing or  
23 presenting their academic research and more students in master's  
24 programs writing theses; and

25           WHEREAS, Dr. Blandina Cardenas has demonstrated an  
26 unwavering commitment to making higher education more accessible to  
27 the residents of South Texas, and her work has benefited both UTPA

1 and the surrounding community in myriad ways; now, therefore, be it

2           RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 81st Texas  
3 Legislature hereby commend Dr. Blandina Cardenas for her notable  
4 contributions to The University of Texas-Pan American and extend to  
5 her sincere best wishes for the future; and, be it further

6           RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be  
7 prepared for Dr. Cardenas as an expression of high regard by the  
8 Texas House of Representatives.