

By: Vaught

H.R. No. 1111

R E S O L U T I O N

1           WHEREAS, Dallas County District Attorney Craig Watkins has  
2 been named 2008 Texan of the Year by the *Dallas Morning News* and  
3 has been selected as one of *Governing Magazine's* 2008 Public  
4 Officials of the Year; and

5           WHEREAS, A native of Dallas, Mr. Watkins graduated from  
6 Prairie View A&M University with a bachelor's degree in political  
7 science and went on to earn his juris doctorate from Texas Wesleyan  
8 University School of Law; he established himself as a defense  
9 attorney and businessman, opening a law office and title company  
10 with his wife, Tanya, before becoming the first African American to  
11 win election as a district attorney in Texas; and

12           WHEREAS, Mr. Watkins has won national attention for the  
13 reforms and initiatives undertaken since his inauguration in  
14 January 2007; in light of the high number of DNA-based exonerations  
15 in Dallas, he partnered with the Innocence Project of Texas to  
16 reexamine nearly 40 death penalty cases and review hundreds of  
17 felony convictions dating back to 1970; Mr. Watkins created a  
18 conviction integrity unit, and the county now leads the nation with  
19 19 DNA exonerations to date; placing justice and public safety over  
20 high conviction rates, he has also revised procedures for  
21 eyewitness identification to reduce the number of false  
22 identifications; and

23           WHEREAS, With a philosophy of being "smart on crime," Mr.  
24 Watkins has focused on the root causes of criminal activity and such

1 underlying issues as illegal substance abuse and lack of skills and  
2 education; he emphasizes rehabilitation to reduce crime and  
3 recidivism, promoting efforts to help low-level, nonviolent  
4 criminals become productive, law-abiding citizens on their  
5 release, rather than more hardened and dangerous repeat offenders;  
6 and

7 WHEREAS, The Texas Court of Criminal Appeals named Mr.  
8 Watkins to its new Texas Criminal Justice Integrity Unit in June  
9 2008; his innovative strategies and dynamic leadership have brought  
10 numerous accolades, including the Torch Award from the Dallas Urban  
11 League and selection as a member of *Ebony* magazine's Power 150, a  
12 list recognizing the next generation of leaders; this  
13 groundbreaking Texan has been featured in such national  
14 publications as the *Washington Post*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and  
15 the *New York Times* and on television's *Good Morning America* and *60*  
16 *Minutes*; and

17 WHEREAS, Craig Watkins has brought transformational change  
18 to the Dallas County district attorney's office, increasing  
19 confidence in the criminal justice system and working to decrease  
20 crime through proactive measures as well as convictions; now,  
21 therefore, be it

22 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 81st Texas  
23 Legislature hereby congratulate Dallas County District Attorney  
24 Craig Watkins on being named 2008 Texan of the Year by the *Dallas*  
25 *Morning News* and being selected as one of *Governing Magazine's* 2008  
26 Public Officials of the Year and extend to him best wishes for  
27 continued success; and, be it further

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1           RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be  
2 prepared for Mr. Watkins as an expression of high regard by the  
3 Texas House of Representatives.