

By: Martinez

H.R. No. 1991

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, Tom Torkelson was nominated for inclusion in *TIME*
2 magazine's 2009 *TIME 100* list of the world's most influential
3 people; and

4 WHEREAS, In selecting nominees, *TIME* turned to newsmakers and
5 past *TIME 100* honorees, including Teach for America founder and CEO
6 Wendy Kopp, who named Mr. Torkelson for his outstanding
7 contributions to education as the chief executive officer and
8 co-founder of IDEA Public Schools; and

9 WHEREAS, Mr. Torkelson, who holds an economics degree from
10 Georgetown University, taught fourth grade in Donna with Teach for
11 America for three years, during which he joined with colleague
12 JoAnn Gonzales to found the IDEA Academy as an after-school program
13 to help resolve some of the educational deficiencies that were
14 holding back their students; their focus on high expectations and
15 college readiness brought immediate success, and in 2000, the state
16 granted IDEA a charter, making Mr. Torkelson, then 24, the youngest
17 charter school founder in Texas; and

18 WHEREAS, Today, IDEA serves nearly 4,000 students at its
19 flagship campus in Donna and at schools in Brownsville,
20 McAllen/Edinburg, Mission, and San Benito; another school is set to
21 open in San Juan in August 2009; IDEA College Preparatory was ranked
22 19th in the nation in the 2008 *US News and World Report* list of top
23 high schools and ranked 6th among charter schools; it has been
24 featured in numerous publications, among them *USA Today* and *Parade*

1 magazine, and in 2008, Mr. Torkelson received the Freddy Fender
2 Humanitarian Award honoring his work in behalf of the children of
3 the Rio Grande Valley; and

4 WHEREAS, This dynamic educator and civic leader serves on the
5 board and executive committee for The University of Texas-Pan
6 American Foundation and on the boards of the McAllen Chamber of
7 Commerce and Encore, a community-based organization working to
8 shift attitudes on college readiness in the Valley; in addition, he
9 served as chair of the 2007 National Charter Schools Conference;
10 and

11 WHEREAS, Through his commitment to excellence and belief that
12 all children deserve a college preparatory academic program of the
13 highest caliber, Tom Torkelson is making a profound difference in
14 the Rio Grande Valley and has won the respect and admiration of
15 education professionals across the country; now, therefore, be it

16 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 81st Texas
17 Legislature hereby congratulate Tom Torkelson on his nomination for
18 inclusion in the 2009 *TIME* 100 list of the world's most influential
19 people; and, be it further

20 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
21 prepared for Mr. Torkelson as an expression of high regard by the
22 Texas House of Representatives.