

By: Guillen

H.R. No. 2865

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The Honorable Aaron Peña, Jr., a four-term member of
2 the Texas House of Representatives from Hidalgo County, is
3 celebrating his 50th birthday on June 8, 2009; and

4 WHEREAS, Born in Austin and raised his first few years in the
5 shadow of the Capitol, Aaron Peña moved to Edinburg with his family
6 as a young child; after earning his diploma from Edinburg High
7 School in 1977 and his bachelor's degree from UT-Austin in 1984, he
8 was awarded his juris doctor degree from Texas Southern University
9 in 1987; and

10 WHEREAS, Representative Peña was licensed to practice law by
11 the State Bar of Texas in May 1988; in December 1995, he became
12 board certified by the State Bar of Texas in the area of Labor and
13 Employment Law; Aaron Peña enjoyed a celebrated career as one of the
14 more accomplished employment trial lawyers in the state, later
15 serving on the State Bar of Texas' governing board for Labor and
16 Employment attorneys; after 17 years of practicing almost
17 exclusively as a plaintiff's lawyer, Representative Peña began
18 working solely as a civil defense lawyer in April 2005; *Texas*
19 *Monthly* has recognized him as a "Super Lawyer" in both fields; he
20 has been employed by the Peña, McDonald, Prestia and Ornelas law
21 firm, by Aaron Peña and Associates, and by Colvin and Chaney; and

22 WHEREAS, First elected to the Texas Legislature in 2002,
23 Representative Peña has been a strong advocate for education,
24 working to increase salaries for public school teachers and to

1 significantly further the development of The University of
2 Texas-Pan American; to that end, he has been instrumental in
3 securing funding for the construction of a fine arts center and
4 student wellness center and for augmenting the resources of the
5 Regional Academic Health Center on campus; he is also the author and
6 house sponsor of legislation to create a medical school in the Rio
7 Grande Valley; and

8 WHEREAS, Having entered service in the Texas State Guard as a
9 captain, Aaron Peña has been a staunch champion of military
10 veterans; he participated in the March 14-20, 2009, march from
11 Edinburg to the Audie L. Murphy Veterans Hospital in San Antonio, a
12 march that was sponsored by veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan
13 wars who are living in the Rio Grande Valley and that was intended
14 to draw attention to the need for a VA hospital in the Valley; in
15 addition, he has authored legislation to posthumously award the
16 Texas Legislative Medal of Honor to Sergeant Alfredo Gonzalez and
17 Private Pedro Cano; and

18 WHEREAS, Representative Peña is also a forceful proponent of
19 drug-abuse treatment and prevention programs, with his primary
20 legislative goal in this area being the establishment of a drug
21 treatment center in South Texas; moreover, he supports the John
22 Austin Peña Memorial Scholarship, which was established by the
23 Texas Association of Addiction Professionals to provide assistance
24 to members of Texas Teens for Legislative Change who wish to pursue
25 higher education; and

26 WHEREAS, Representative Peña formerly chaired the criminal
27 jurisprudence committee and currently serves as vice chair of the

1 elections committee and as a member of the ways and means and
2 redistricting committees; and

3 WHEREAS, Recognized by *Capitol Inside* as a top house
4 negotiator during the 80th Legislature, Representative Peña has
5 received numerous other accolades as well; among these are the
6 Tough on Crime award, given by the Texas District and County
7 Attorneys Association, the Champion for Children award from the
8 Boys and Girls Club, the Bulldog award from the Rio Grande Valley
9 Teachers Association, and the Lifetime Achievement award from
10 LULAC, the League of United Latin American Citizens; and

11 WHEREAS, Aaron Peña and his wife, Monica, are the parents of
12 five children, Adrienne Peña-Garza, Aron Leonel Peña III, John
13 Austin Peña, Alyssa Victoria Peña, and Michael Anthony Peña; they
14 are also the grandparents of Aquiles Jaime Garza, Chelsea Nicole
15 Peña, Aron Christian Garza, Aaron Austin Peña, and Addison Rose
16 Peña; and

17 WHEREAS, This esteemed Texan continues to embody the highest
18 standards of public service, and it is a pleasure to pay tribute to
19 him as he prepares to embark on a new, and no doubt equally
20 productive, decade; now, therefore, be it

21 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 81st Texas
22 Legislature hereby congratulate the Honorable Aaron Peña, Jr., on
23 his upcoming 50th birthday and extend to him sincere best wishes for
24 the coming year; and, be it further

25 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
26 prepared for Representative Peña as an expression of high regard by
27 the Texas House of Representatives.