

By: Gonzales of Hidalgo

H.R. No. 254

R E S O L U T I O N

1           WHEREAS, The Rio Grande Valley lost a revered civic leader  
2 with the death of physician, educator, and civil rights pioneer Dr.  
3 Ramiro Raul Casso on June 23, 2011, at the age of 88; and

4           WHEREAS, Born August 4, 1922, in the Buenos Aires colonia in  
5 Laredo, Ramiro Casso was the son of Francisco and Josefa Casso; he  
6 earned his bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from Texas  
7 A&M University and immediately enlisted in the United States Army  
8 Reserve; during World War II, he served his country as an  
9 antiaircraft artillery captain; he then worked for two years in  
10 Laredo as an engineer for the International Boundary and Water  
11 Commission; and

12           WHEREAS, This dynamic Texan completed a second bachelor's  
13 degree in chemistry at Baylor University in 1952 and went on to  
14 graduate from The University of Texas Southwestern Medical School;  
15 following his internship at Robert B. Green Memorial Hospital in  
16 San Antonio, he opened a private family medical practice in  
17 McAllen; he frequently treated those who could not afford to pay  
18 him, and he worked tirelessly to ensure that all in need could find  
19 access to quality health care; in addition to operating a  
20 charitable medical clinic for migrant workers, he assisted in the  
21 founding of the Hidalgo County Health Care Corporation, and he  
22 later helped found El Milagro Clinic and served for many years on  
23 its board; and

24           WHEREAS, Dedicated to equal rights and justice, Dr. Casso was

1 a member of the League of United Latin American Citizens, and in  
2 1948 he played a key role in the organization's *Delgado v. Bastrop*  
3 *ISD* lawsuit, which concluded with the judge ordering the cessation  
4 of the segregation of Hispanic public school children in Texas; he  
5 vigorously supported the United Farm Workers union in its drive to  
6 win workers' compensation and unemployment benefits for field  
7 laborers and in its efforts to secure their right to know the  
8 dangers of pesticides that they encountered in the course of their  
9 employment; in the mid-1960s, he treated the injuries of workers  
10 beaten during a strike, and his forceful statements against  
11 brutality reached a national audience and changed the culture of  
12 the Texas Rangers; he was appointed to the Texas Commission on Human  
13 Rights in 1983 and served on the national board of the American  
14 Civil Liberties Union; and

15 WHEREAS, Dr. Casso was a member of the Health Planning  
16 Advisory Committee of the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development  
17 Council, and he became the first physician member of the board of  
18 McAllen General Hospital; he served on the boards of McAllen  
19 Methodist Hospital and McAllen Medical Center and participated in  
20 two White House health conferences; as a member of the National  
21 Advisory Board for Health-Care for the Aged under Social Security,  
22 he helped build support for the implementation of Medicare; he was  
23 appointed to the National Advisory Board for Health Research  
24 Facilities of the National Institutes of Health and was twice  
25 appointed to the Texas Board of Health; responding to a critical  
26 need, he galvanized public support for the establishment of a  
27 University of Texas Regional Academic Health Center in the Rio

1 Grande Valley, and he served on the adjunct faculty of the Texas A&M  
2 University School of Rural Public Health as well; and

3       WHEREAS, In 1994, Dr. Casso retired from his medical  
4 practice, but the following year, he accepted the task of  
5 establishing the nursing program at South Texas College; he served  
6 as the first director of the school's Nursing and Allied Health  
7 Division and then became the college's vice president for  
8 institutional advancement and raised millions of dollars for the  
9 construction of the Nursing and Allied Health Center; moreover, he  
10 co-founded the Valley Scholars Program at STC and forged agreements  
11 with four-year institutions to grant scholarships to Valley  
12 Scholars graduates; the college named the Dr. Ramiro R. Casso  
13 Nursing and Allied Health Center in his honor; in 2002, he retired  
14 for the second time at the age of 80; and

15       WHEREAS, Selfless in his concern for his fellow citizens, Dr.  
16 Casso also served through the years on the boards of the McAllen  
17 Independent School District, the McAllen Housing Authority, and the  
18 Hidalgo County Housing Authority; his myriad accolades included the  
19 Bishop Medeiros Golden Deeds Award, and in 1996 he was named Man of  
20 the Year by the McAllen Chamber of Commerce; a 32nd degree Mason, he  
21 was accorded his lodge's highest honor, the Golden Trowel Award, in  
22 2003, and *Latino Monthly* selected him as one of 100 Outstanding  
23 Hispanic Americans for the 20th Century; and

24       WHEREAS, Dr. Ramiro Casso wielded tremendous influence in the  
25 Rio Grande Valley and at the state and national levels, yet he  
26 remained a humble, gentle man with a subtle sense of humor; his  
27 tremendous contributions will continue to resonate widely in the

1 years to come, and although he will be deeply missed, his unyielding  
2 devotion to education, health care, and social progress will  
3 forever inspire those who were privileged to know this visionary  
4 leader; now, therefore, be it

5         RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 82nd Texas  
6 Legislature, 1st Called Session, hereby pay tribute to the life of  
7 Dr. Ramiro Raul Casso and extend sincere sympathy to the members of  
8 his family: to his wife of 62 years, Emma Laurel Casso; to his 5  
9 children, Thelma Casso Morales and her husband, Pete, Lydia Casso  
10 Tummel and her husband, Ken, Sylvia Casso, Daniel Casso and his  
11 wife, Araceli, and David Casso and his wife, Vicki; to his 10  
12 grandchildren; to his great-grandson; and to his many other  
13 relatives and friends; and, be it further

14         RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be  
15 prepared for his family and that when the Texas House of  
16 Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Dr. Ramiro  
17 Raul Casso.