

By: Craddick

H.R. No. 285

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, Southwest Airlines is celebrating its 40th
2 anniversary on June 18, 2011, providing a welcome opportunity to
3 celebrate the success of this signature Texas company and its
4 cofounder, Herb Kelleher; and

5 WHEREAS, In the mid-1960s, businessman Rollin W. King
6 conceived of a new kind of airline that could fly passengers
7 inexpensively and quickly across short distances; in a meeting with
8 his lawyer, Herb Kelleher, at the St. Anthony Club in San Antonio,
9 he used a napkin to illustrate his idea, drawing a triangle with
10 points labeled San Antonio, Houston, and Dallas; this simple sketch
11 would go on to become a symbol of the infant company's ethos and to
12 form the basis of its initial route map; and

13 WHEREAS, Southwest Airlines was chartered as a Texas
14 corporation, and on June 18, 1971, the company began commercial
15 flights with three Boeing 737 airliners and fewer than 70
16 employees; since then, thanks in large part to the dynamic
17 leadership of Mr. Kelleher, who served as the company's chairman,
18 president, and CEO from 1982 until 2001, Southwest has become one of
19 the most respected names in the industry; now under the direction of
20 Gary Kelly, nearly 35,000 employees schedule, maintain, and fly
21 more than 500 Boeing 737s between 72 cities in 37 states; the
22 airline operates 3,400 flights a day, making it the largest U.S.
23 carrier of domestic passengers as of September 2010; moreover, the
24 airline has turned a profit for 38 years in a row; and

1 WHEREAS, Southwest has regularly earned top rankings in
2 safety from the International Airline Passengers Association, and
3 it has consistently received the lowest ratio of customer
4 complaints per passenger boarded of all major U.S. airlines
5 according to data from the U.S. Department of Transportation; and

6 WHEREAS, This impressive record of customer satisfaction is
7 no doubt linked to Southwest's approach to employee relations; in
8 1973, the company initiated the first profit-sharing program in the
9 U.S. airline industry, and it has never laid off or furloughed a
10 single employee; among its many honors, Southwest is often
11 recognized as one of the best places in the country to work; in
12 addition, it was recently named the "greenest airline" by the
13 nonprofit group Climate Counts, and it has been repeatedly ranked
14 as one of the most admired companies in the world by *Fortune*
15 magazine; and

16 WHEREAS, Over the last four decades, the percentage of
17 American adults who have flown on a commercial airliner has risen
18 from 15 to 85 percent, a result that is often referred to as the
19 "Southwest Effect," and on the occasion of this special
20 anniversary, Mr. Kelleher, Mr. Kelly, and the employees of
21 Southwest may indeed take great pride in their enormous
22 contributions to the mobility of Americans and to the culture as a
23 whole; now, therefore, be it

24 RESOLVED, That the 82nd Legislature of the State of Texas,
25 1st Called Session, hereby commemorate the 40th anniversary of
26 Southwest Airlines and extend to Herb Kelleher, Gary Kelly, and the
27 entire Southwest family sincere best wishes for continued success;

1 and, be it further

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