

1-1 By: Chisum, Landtroop, Gallego H.C.R. No. 86  
1-2 (Senate Sponsor - Duncan)  
1-3 (In the Senate - Received from the House May 6, 2011;  
1-4 May 9, 2011, read first time and referred to Committee on  
1-5 Government Organization; May 21, 2011, reported favorably by the  
1-6 following vote: Yeas 5, Nays 0; May 21, 2011, sent to printer.)

1-7 HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1-8 WHEREAS, The State of Texas has customarily recognized a  
1-9 variety of official symbols as tangible representations of the  
1-10 state's historical and cultural heritage; figuring prominently in  
1-11 that distinctive list are animals that played a central role in the  
1-12 rich Western heritage of Texas, including the longhorn and the  
1-13 American quarter horse; and

1-14 WHEREAS, Another deserving candidate for recognition is the  
1-15 bison, popularly known as the buffalo; after arriving in North  
1-16 America some 25,000 years ago, the bison adapted particularly well  
1-17 to the environment of the Great Plains; by the 1700s, as many as 60  
1-18 million buffalo were living on the continent, and the lands that  
1-19 were to become Texas were among the areas roamed by the vast herds;  
1-20 and

1-21 WHEREAS, The animals were central to the livelihood of the  
1-22 Native Americans of the Great Plains, providing not only their main  
1-23 diet but also materials for shelter, clothing, and many other  
1-24 staples; the ample supply of bison and the hunting culture of the  
1-25 Plains tribes were not to last, however; with the completion of the  
1-26 transcontinental railroad in 1869, it became possible to profitably  
1-27 ship bison hides and meat to eastern markets by rail, and in the  
1-28 next 15 years, buffalo hunters almost completely exterminated the  
1-29 herds; by 1885, fewer than 1,000 animals remained; and

1-30 WHEREAS, Fortunately, some Texans had the foresight to try  
1-31 and save this noble creature; Mary Ann "Molly" Goodnight, the wife  
1-32 of legendary Texas rancher Charles Goodnight, was so distressed by  
1-33 the rapid disappearance of the bison that she convinced her husband  
1-34 to begin capturing and protecting bison calves from the small  
1-35 number of wild animals that remained on the Southern Plains; he  
1-36 began to round up young bison in the 1870s in the northern Texas  
1-37 Panhandle, and the herd at Goodnight's JA Ranch eventually grew to  
1-38 about 250 head by the time Mr. Goodnight passed away in 1929; and

1-39 WHEREAS, The Goodnight bison herd became one of the five  
1-40 foundation herds in the United States from which the majority of  
1-41 surviving buffalo have developed; a number of animals directly  
1-42 descended from the Goodnight stock were donated to the Texas Parks  
1-43 and Wildlife Department in 1996, and a subset of that group was  
1-44 determined to be a pure strain that had not been crossbred with  
1-45 bison from other areas; given a home at Caprock Canyons State Park,  
1-46 those buffalo and their offspring are today known as the Texas State  
1-47 Bison Herd and are notable for their strong genetic link to the  
1-48 original Southern Plains buffalo and because they continue to live  
1-49 in the area where their ancestors were first caught; and

1-50 WHEREAS, In both its historical significance and its enduring  
1-51 connections to Texas imagery and culture, the Texas State Bison  
1-52 Herd at Caprock Canyons State Park is indeed a fitting symbol for  
1-53 the Lone Star State; now, therefore, be it

1-54 RESOLVED, That the 82nd Legislature of the State of Texas  
1-55 hereby designate the Texas State Bison Herd at Caprock Canyons  
1-56 State Park as the official State Bison Herd of Texas.

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