

By: Guillen

H.C.R. No. 166

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, May 18, 2011, marked the 10th anniversary of the
2 untimely passing of John Austin Pena of Edinburg, and a new drug
3 treatment center being completed in Hidalgo County has been named
4 the John Austin Pena Memorial Center in honor of this beloved young
5 man; and

6 WHEREAS, We stand together in commemoration of John's life
7 with his loving family members: his father and stepmother, Aaron
8 Pena, Jr., and Monica Pena; his mother, Criselda Pena; his dear
9 siblings, Adrienne Pena-Garza, Aaron Leonel Pena, Alyssa Victoria
10 Pena, and Michael Anthony Pena; his beloved young daughter, Chelsea
11 Pena, and all his other relatives; and

12 WHEREAS, John Austin Pena was born at Park Place Hospital in
13 Houston on October 4, 1984; he was a bright, spirited, cheerful
14 young man who had many good friends; his broad spectrum of interests
15 ranged from sports--especially basketball, soccer, and
16 baseball--to skateboarding and playing laser tag with his pals and
17 playing video games with his younger brother "Mikey"; endowed with
18 a lively imagination and curiosity, he also enjoyed writing and
19 traveling; and

20 WHEREAS, On May 18, 2001, the limitless potential that was
21 embodied in the life of John Austin Pena was tragically brought to
22 an untimely end when he and two other young people attending a
23 social gathering were encouraged to ingest a substance, distributed
24 at the gathering, that later proved to be deadly to all three; his

1 death and absence caused considerable anguish among his friends and
2 relatives, particularly his parents and siblings; many were led to
3 channel their deep remorse by seeking solutions to the growing drug
4 epidemic among our youth, with particular attention to those living
5 along the Texas-Mexico border; and

6 WHEREAS, In June 2002, John's father, Aaron Pena, embarked on
7 a journey to examine how Texas was dealing with rising drug abuse;
8 he began visiting drug treatment centers across Texas to raise
9 awareness of the growing problem, and the endeavor culminated with
10 a visit to La Hacienda Drug Treatment Center in Hunt; in order to
11 bring attention to the lack of treatment facilities in Texas,
12 Representative Pena walked 125 miles from La Hacienda treatment
13 center to our state Capitol in Austin; as a result of that visit, he
14 made a promise to bring a drug treatment center to South Texas; and

15 WHEREAS, In 2004, to further this goal of drug abuse
16 awareness, the John Austin Pena Memorial Scholarship was
17 established in John's memory by the Texas Association of Addiction
18 Professionals; the scholarship is presented annually to a student
19 in recovery who is pursuing a college degree; and

20 WHEREAS, On May 18, 2007, through the diligent work of his
21 father, State Representative Aaron Pena, the Texas House of
22 Representatives gave budgetary approval for a drug treatment
23 facility in the Rio Grande Valley; on March 26, 2010, Hidalgo County
24 held a ground-breaking ceremony for the substance abuse treatment
25 facility located at 3341 E. Richardson Road in Edinburg; and

26 WHEREAS, On May 17, 2011, the Hidalgo County Commissioners
27 Court unanimously voted to not only memorialize the legacy of a

1 young life cut short, but also recognize the efforts of those
2 inspired by that tragedy to combat the evils of drug abuse, by
3 ordering that the Hidalgo County Substance Abuse Treatment Facility
4 be designated the John Austin Pena Memorial Center; and

5 WHEREAS, The new John Austin Pena Memorial Center, opening in
6 the fall of 2011, will provide substance abuse treatment services
7 to adolescents on an outpatient basis; although John Pena is deeply
8 missed by his loved ones, the scholarship and the drug treatment
9 center that bear his name increase awareness and offer hope of a
10 brighter future to young people struggling to move beyond
11 addiction; now, therefore, be it

12 RESOLVED, That the 82nd Legislature of the State of Texas
13 hereby pay tribute to the memory of John Austin Pena on the 10th
14 anniversary of his passing and commemorate the naming of the John
15 Austin Pena Memorial Center in his honor.