

By: Pena

H.R. No. 1614

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, Memories of a life filled with joyful times and
2 meaningful accomplishments may comfort the family and friends of
3 Benigno "Benny" Layton of Elsa, who passed away on March 26, 2011,
4 at the age of 60; and

5 WHEREAS, A native of Port Lavaca, Benny was one of five
6 children born to Pablo and Santos Layton; by the age of six, he was
7 already playing the accordion and performing alongside his brothers
8 at birthday parties, baptisms, and other events, and this passion
9 for music would continue throughout his life; and

10 WHEREAS, Benny graduated from Edcouch-Elsa High School in
11 1969 and then enrolled at The University of Texas--Pan American,
12 but he interrupted his studies in 1970 to enlist in the United
13 States Army; he began his career in the Edcouch-Elsa Independent
14 School District in 1981 as an elementary school music teacher, and
15 two years later he became the founder and director of the
16 Estudiantina program, which focuses on the cultural aspects of
17 music from the Rio Grande Valley; students in his program have
18 performed at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, BorderFest, and
19 various events at The University of Texas--Pan American, as well as
20 for the Al Gore presidential campaign; and

21 WHEREAS, An innovative educator, Benny created the only
22 approved curriculum in Texas for teaching conjunto, and he was
23 inducted into the Texas Conjunto Music Hall of Fame in San Benito in
24 2008; he began serving as the public address announcer for the

1 Edcouch-Elsa High School football team, the Yellowjackets, in 1987
2 and became known as "La Voz of La Maquina Amarilla" for his
3 dedication to the team, the school, and the greater community; and

4 WHEREAS, After retiring from Edcouch-Elsa ISD in 2009, Benny
5 went on to work for the Roland Corporation, which manufactures and
6 distributes electronic musical instruments; in addition, he served
7 as an Elsa municipal court judge; and

8 WHEREAS, In all of his endeavors, Benny enjoyed the love and
9 support of his wife, Irma, and he took great pride in his family,
10 which included four children and seven grandchildren; and

11 WHEREAS, More than 1,500 people gathered to honor Benny at
12 his memorial service, a true testament to the many lives that this
13 beloved Texan forever enriched with his love of music, his
14 commitment to young people, and his devotion to his community; now,
15 therefore, be it

16 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 82nd Texas
17 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the memory of Benigno "Benny"
18 Layton and extend sincere sympathy to the members of his family: to
19 his wife, Irma Vera Layton; to his children, Janice Layton
20 Rodriguez and her husband, Israel, Benigno Layton, Jr., and his
21 wife, Esther, Paul Anthony Layton, Sr., and Armando Rene Layton; to
22 his mother, Santos Villarreal Layton; to his brothers, Antonio and
23 Rene Layton; to his sister, Norfilia Layton Gonzalez; to his
24 grandchildren, Benigno Layton III, Robert Aaron Layton, Ayleen
25 Celest Rodriguez, Israel Rodriguez, Jr., Joleen Jaselle Rodriguez,
26 Paul Anthony Layton, Jr., and Leilani Mikayla Layton; and to his
27 other relatives and friends; and, be it further

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1 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
2 prepared for his family and that when the Texas House of
3 Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Benny
4 Layton.