

1-1 By: Simpson (Senate Sponsor - Eltife) H.C.R. No. 23  
 1-2 (In the Senate - Received from the House April 22, 2013;  
 1-3 April 29, 2013, read first time and referred to Committee on  
 1-4 Administration; May 6, 2013, reported favorably by the following  
 1-5 vote: Yeas 5, Nays 0; May 6, 2013, sent to printer.)

1-6 COMMITTEE VOTE

	Yea	Nay	Absent	PNV
1-7				
1-8	X			
1-9			X	
1-10			X	
1-11	X			
1-12	X			
1-13	X			
1-14	X			

1-15 HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1-16 WHEREAS, During the Great Texas Balloon Race held every  
 1-17 summer, the skies over Gregg County burst with vivid color as hot  
 1-18 air balloon pilots from around the country race these graceful  
 1-19 giants; and

1-20 WHEREAS, This topflight contest originated in 1978 as a  
 1-21 promotion to advertise the grand opening of Longview Mall; the  
 1-22 inaugural event featured 20 balloons and was organized by Dr.  
 1-23 William Bussey, a dentist and renowned hot air balloonist with 29  
 1-24 U.S. and 14 world records, along with Longview Mall managers  
 1-25 Frankie Parson Riggins and Mary LeTourneau; in 1981, Dr. Bussey  
 1-26 pioneered another popular tradition, the balloon glow, a practice  
 1-27 now copied at celebrations the world over; the glow entails firing  
 1-28 the burners of tethered hot air balloons so that they glimmer like  
 1-29 lanterns illuminating the night; and

1-30 WHEREAS, Through the years, the race has changed locations to  
 1-31 accommodate the number of spectators that come to enjoy the  
 1-32 weekend's attractions, which have grown to include special shape  
 1-33 balloons, concerts, arts and crafts, and children's activities;  
 1-34 Gregg County judge Bill Stoudt was instrumental in garnering  
 1-35 support for the race from the beginning, and, in 1989, he figured  
 1-36 prominently in establishing a new fly site at the East Texas  
 1-37 Regional Airport, then known as the Gregg County Airport, where the  
 1-38 race continues to take place to this day; and

1-39 WHEREAS, Valued by individuals and businesses across the  
 1-40 county, the Great Texas Balloon Race is endorsed by the Cities of  
 1-41 Longview, Kilgore, and Gladewater, and each of those cities'  
 1-42 chambers of commerce and visitors bureaus; in addition, hundreds of  
 1-43 local residents volunteer, and tens of thousands of people attend  
 1-44 the race each year, bringing many visitors to East Texas and  
 1-45 significantly benefiting the region's economy; and

1-46 WHEREAS, Dozens of balloons will take to the skies for the  
 1-47 Great Texas Balloon Race in 2013, and because Gregg County was  
 1-48 selected by the Balloon Federation of America to host the U.S.  
 1-49 National Championships from 2012 to 2014, this year will also  
 1-50 showcase the nation's best pilots as they begin their quest for the  
 1-51 world title; and

1-52 WHEREAS, The race's competitions and entertainment have long  
 1-53 been a popular attraction for area residents and visitors alike,  
 1-54 and its significance was formally recognized in 1985 when the  
 1-55 legislature declared August 19-25 as Great Texas Balloon Race Week  
 1-56 and Governor Mark White honored Longview as the Balloon Capital of  
 1-57 Texas by gubernatorial proclamation; and

1-58 WHEREAS, For nearly four decades, skilled hot air balloon  
 1-59 pilots from the Lone Star State and beyond have joined countless  
 1-60 enthusiasts in Gregg County to celebrate the Great Texas Balloon  
 1-61 Race; this cherished tradition has brought majestic beauty,

2-1 thrilling competition, and valuable commerce to the area, and it is  
2-2 indeed deserving of official recognition; now, therefore, be it  
2-3         RESOLVED, That the 83rd Legislature of the State of Texas  
2-4 hereby commemorate the 36th anniversary of the Great Texas Balloon  
2-5 Race and declare Gregg County the Balloon Race Capital of Texas.

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