

By: Miller of Comal

H.R. No. 634

R E S O L U T I O N

1           WHEREAS, For nearly half a century, the music of Merle  
2 Haggard has championed those familiar with the hardships of life,  
3 and the evocative songs of this country music legend have made a  
4 lasting mark on American music and earned him recognition as the  
5 poet of the common man; and

6           WHEREAS, Merle Haggard was born in Oildale, California, in  
7 1937, the son of Dust Bowl migrants from Oklahoma; the loss he felt  
8 at the death of his father set him on a troubled path during his  
9 youth, and he spent time in a number of juvenile detention centers  
10 before ultimately being sentenced to a term in San Quentin State  
11 Prison in 1957; there, he resolved to turn his life around and was  
12 inspired to join the prison band after seeing Johnny Cash perform  
13 for the inmates; and

14           WHEREAS, Following his release in 1960, he began performing  
15 in California clubs with his band, the Strangers, helping to  
16 popularize the rousing, guitar-driven "Bakersfield sound"; in  
17 1966, he had his first number one hit with "I'm a Lonesome  
18 Fugitive," and in the years that followed, he began using his  
19 songwriting skills to acknowledge his turbulent past and to reflect  
20 on the experiences of those close to him; and

21           WHEREAS, Mr. Haggard went on to record nearly 40  
22 chart-topping songs, including the self-penned classics "Hungry  
23 Eyes," about the despair of Great Depression labor camps, "Mama  
24 Tried," describing a son's guilt for being sent to prison, and "Okie

1 from Muskogee," channeling his father's Oklahoma roots for what  
2 would become a patriotic anthem; and

3       WHEREAS, Whether he's singing of the thrill of love, the  
4 bitterness of loss, or the day-to-day grind of the "Workin' Man  
5 Blues," Mr. Haggard has enjoyed critical acclaim in addition to  
6 great popular success; he has won three Grammys and numerous  
7 Academy of Country Music awards, and he was inducted into the  
8 Country Music Hall of Fame in 1994; moreover, his lifetime  
9 achievements were lauded in 2010 with his selection as a Kennedy  
10 Center Honoree; and

11       WHEREAS, Merle Haggard gives voice to the struggles, demons,  
12 and dreams of everyday people, and his extraordinary gifts as a  
13 writer and performer have earned him the respect of his peers and  
14 the admiration of countless fans across the United States and  
15 beyond; now, therefore, be it

16       RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 83rd Texas  
17 Legislature hereby pay tribute to country music legend Merle  
18 Haggard and extend to him sincere best wishes for good health,  
19 continued success, and happiness; and, be it further

20       RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be  
21 prepared for Mr. Haggard as an expression of high regard by the  
22 Texas House of Representatives.