

By: Lucio III

H.R. No. 716

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, Residents of Harlingen are gathering in Austin on
2 March 6, 2013, to celebrate Harlingen Day at the State Capitol; and

3 WHEREAS, From the time in 1904 when Lon C. Hill chose a site
4 alongside the St. Louis, Brownsville, and Mexico Railway as the
5 location for a new town, Harlingen was destined to become a
6 crossroads of commerce; the first train passed through the rugged
7 settlement that railroad workers called "Rattlesnake Junction" on
8 July 4, 1904; tales of Texas Rangers and customs patrol agents
9 taking target practice next to the rail depot soon gave Harlingen
10 its next nickname of "Six-Shooter Junction"; and

11 WHEREAS, Between the 1910s and 1930s, trains brought
12 thousands of Midwestern farmers to Harlingen to set up operations
13 in the fertile Magic Valley, where they found they could grow at
14 least two crops a year, and the city at one point had the largest ice
15 plant in Texas, which worked to keep countless railcars of produce
16 cold as they headed north; the city has also been a state and
17 national center for cotton farming for 60 years, and since 1953, the
18 Harlingen Cotton Committee has ceremonially auctioned the first
19 bale of cotton grown each year in the United States; and

20 WHEREAS, During World War II, the city was home to Harlingen
21 Army Airfield, a facility that grew and evolved into Harlingen Air
22 Force Base; the base eventually became Valley International
23 Airport, the Rio Grande Valley's busiest cargo and passenger
24 commercial airport, which, together with the city's bridge to

1 Mexico and the port that connects it to the Intracoastal Waterway,
2 serves to further underscore the community's importance as a center
3 for trade; and

4 WHEREAS, Also important to Harlingen is the United Launch
5 Alliance plant, which supplies components to the Atlas V rocket and
6 is the second largest taxpayer in the city; employing 200
7 residents, it recently celebrated its 25th anniversary in the
8 community; and

9 WHEREAS, Since 1999, Harlingen has been home to the Regional
10 Academic Health Center, a branch campus of The University of Texas
11 Health Science Center at San Antonio; Valley Baptist Medical Center
12 serves as the RAHC's primary teaching hospital while Su Clinica has
13 been the center's main ambulatory teaching site since 2002;
14 altogether more than 1,000 medical students and 60 internal
15 medicine residents have trained there, many of whom now practice in
16 hospitals and clinics across the Rio Grande Valley; there is strong
17 support for expanding the RAHC into the South Texas School of
18 Medicine, and already the center has benefited from investments of
19 more than \$200 million from UT and an additional \$50 million from
20 the City of Harlingen, VBMC, and Su Clinica; and

21 WHEREAS, Harlingen is also headquarters to the U.S.
22 Department of Veterans Affairs Valley Coastal Bend Health Care
23 System, which provides for the health care needs of veterans in the
24 region; the VA has been one of the RAHC's primary teaching partners,
25 sponsoring internal medical residents and committing to the
26 sponsorship of 25 residents for the proposed medical school; in
27 addition, the VA moved its outpatient clinic and

1 160,000-square-foot ambulatory and surgical facility to Harlingen
2 in order to be close the RAHC; and

3 WHEREAS, Area residents have long understood the importance
4 of education, and the city is home to two outstanding educational
5 institutions, Texas State Technical College and the Marine Military
6 Academy; on the academy's campus, visitors may view Dr. Felix W. de
7 Weldon's full-size plaster model of his famous Iwo Jima memorial in
8 Washington, D.C.; and

9 WHEREAS, In 2013, Harlingen is hosting its 20th annual Rio
10 Grande Valley Birding Festival, one of the premier such festivals
11 in the nation, bringing visitors from around the world; the area's
12 semitropical climate, natural resources, and friendly people make
13 it a destination for travelers, including "winter" Texans and other
14 outdoor enthusiasts; the community's attractions include the mural
15 and heritage trails in the historic downtown district and numerous
16 sports fields and parks, and shoppers from across the state and over
17 the border come to the Harlingen Bass Pro Shop, with its wide array
18 of supplies for hunting, fishing, boating, camping, and other
19 outdoor activities; and

20 WHEREAS, This thriving city of 70,000 is led by mayor Chris
21 Boswell and city commissioners Danny Castillo, Robert A. Leftwich,
22 Michael Mezmar, Basilio "Chino" Sanchez, and Victor Leal, and under
23 their guidance the city's crime rate has dropped consistently from
24 2008 to 2013, including a 20 percent drop in violent and property
25 crimes, making it a safe place to live, work, and play; and

26 WHEREAS, Harlingen is a dynamic community that draws on its
27 rich history even as it works to build an exciting future, and its

1 residents may indeed take great pride in the city they call home;
2 now, therefore, be it

3 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 83rd Texas
4 Legislature hereby recognize March 6, 2013, as Harlingen Day at the
5 State Capitol and extend to the visiting delegation sincere best
6 wishes for an enjoyable and memorable visit.