

By: Turner of Tarrant

H.R. No. 2115

R E S O L U T I O N

1           WHEREAS, The nation lost one of its foremost philanthropists  
2 and progressive thinkers with the death of Bernard Rapoport of Waco  
3 on April 5, 2012, at the age of 94; and

4           WHEREAS, Born in San Antonio on July 17, 1917, "B" Rapoport  
5 was the son of Russian Jewish immigrants David and Riva Rapoport,  
6 who instilled in him respect for hard work, a passion for learning,  
7 and a profound sense of social responsibility; he earned his  
8 bachelor's degree in economics from The University of Texas at  
9 Austin, while working full-time in his uncle's jewelry store; in  
10 1942, he met Audre Newman on a blind date in Waco, and they were  
11 engaged the following day and married within the year; and

12           WHEREAS, This visionary Texan founded the American Income  
13 Life Insurance Company in 1951 and focused on offering low-cost  
14 insurance policies to labor union workers; the enterprise was  
15 extremely successful, and Mr. Rapoport maintained a modest  
16 lifestyle while devoting his considerable financial resources to  
17 charitable organizations and political action; in 1986, he and his  
18 wife created the Bernard and Audre Rapoport Foundation to promote  
19 peace, justice, and education; he was a benefactor of the Rapoport  
20 Academy in Waco, of McLennan Community College, and of MCC's First  
21 Generation College Student Initiative, and as chair of San  
22 Antonio-based AVANCE, which helps young families break the cycle of  
23 poverty, he guided its development into a national organization;  
24 and

1           WHEREAS, Over the years, the Rapoport gave millions to  
2 UT-Austin; they established the Rapoport Endowment for  
3 International and Multidisciplinary Studies in the College of  
4 Liberal Arts, the Bernard and Audre Rapoport Center for Human  
5 Rights and Justice in the School of Law, and an endowed  
6 professorship in health and social policy in the Lyndon B. Johnson  
7 School of Public Affairs; through Rapoport Service Scholarships,  
8 they enabled students to integrate volunteerism with their academic  
9 interests and prepare for careers in community service; and

10           WHEREAS, Mr. Rapoport was appointed to The UT System Board of  
11 Regents in 1991 and served as chair from 1993 to 1997; he advocated  
12 vigorously for academic freedom as well as for increased access for  
13 lower-income students, and under his leadership, a UT campus was  
14 established near working-class neighborhoods in San Antonio;  
15 moreover, he promoted the South Texas Border Initiative, which  
16 built and expanded campuses in the Lower Rio Grande Valley; and

17           WHEREAS, Fiercely committed to independent journalism and  
18 the lively exchange of ideas, he helped sustain the *Texas Observer*  
19 for decades, and he served on the board of its publisher, Texas  
20 Democracy Foundation; he was also a stalwart supporter of the  
21 *Nation*, the American Civil Liberties Union, and the public  
22 television programs of veteran journalist and commentator Bill  
23 Moyers; he underwrote the efforts of a number of nonfiction book  
24 authors and supported such progressive enterprises as the Center  
25 for the Study of Democratic Institutions, the Institute for Policy  
26 Studies, and the Economic Policy Institute; and

27           WHEREAS, Promoting liberal policies in government,

1 Mr. Rapoport was an early fund-raiser for President Bill Clinton  
2 and a longtime friend of both Bill and Hillary Clinton; he was a  
3 close ally of Governor Ann Richards and supported a host of other  
4 Democratic politicians as well, including U.S. Senators Lloyd  
5 Bentsen and Ted Kennedy and U.S. Representative Chet Edwards; truly  
6 a "Capitalist with a Conscience," as he subtitled his  
7 autobiography, Mr. Rapoport accompanied his campaign donations  
8 with admonitions to raise his income taxes; and

9 WHEREAS, His circle included widely read columnists,  
10 powerful national officials, and other influential figures; while  
11 Mr. Rapoport loved to discuss advanced social and economic theory,  
12 he was equally comfortable chatting with the staff and customers at  
13 his favorite local restaurants; he questioned servers about their  
14 education and career plans, advising them to pursue a degree, and it  
15 was not unusual for him to contribute to an acquaintance's college  
16 fund; and

17 WHEREAS, A devoted family man, Mr. Rapoport shared a  
18 fulfilling relationship of 70 years with his wife; he took immense  
19 pride in their son, Ronald, and their treasured granddaughters,  
20 Abby and Emily; and

21 WHEREAS, Until his final days, Bernard Rapoport dedicated  
22 himself to making the world a more just, humane, and caring place;  
23 he changed many lives through his wisdom and generosity, and those  
24 who were fortunate enough to know him will forever remember his  
25 warmth, his wit, and his infinite kindness; now, therefore, be it

26 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 83rd Texas  
27 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the life of Bernard Rapoport and

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1 extend sincere condolences to his loved ones; and, be it further

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