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R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, November 9, 2013, marks the 24th anniversary of the
2 fall of the Berlin Wall, a turning point in 20th century
3 geopolitics; and

4 WHEREAS, In the depths of the Cold War, on August 13, 1961,
5 the communist government of East Germany began building a barbed
6 wire and concrete "Antifaschistischer Schutzwall," or "antifascist
7 bulwark," between East and West Berlin; the official purpose of
8 this barrier was to keep Westerners from entering and undermining
9 the socialist state, but it primarily served to stem mass
10 defections by disillusioned residents of East Berlin; and

11 WHEREAS, East German officials completed the wall in two
12 weeks and eventually replaced the makeshift barrier with a
13 12-foot-tall, 4-foot-wide mass of reinforced concrete topped with
14 an enormous pipe that was nearly impossible to climb over; behind
15 the structure, they established a floodlit no-man's-land called the
16 "Death Strip," which was guarded by vicious dogs, trip-wire machine
17 guns, and soldiers with orders to shoot on sight; and

18 WHEREAS, Determined to free the victims of evil oppression,
19 President Ronald Reagan joined with British Prime Minister Margaret
20 Thatcher and Pope John Paul II in the effort to defeat communism;
21 President Reagan traveled to West Germany and on June 12, 1987, in a
22 heroic speech delivered at the storied Brandenburg Gate, about 100
23 yards from the Berlin Wall, he delivered a stirring challenge to the
24 Soviet leader with the exhortation, "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this

1 wall"; and

2 WHEREAS, At the time, some officials and foreign policy
3 pundits decried President Reagan's words as too bold and
4 provocative, but the speech bolstered the morale of many
5 pro-democracy advocates in the Eastern Bloc; the protests known as
6 the "Peaceful Revolution" broke out in East Germany in September
7 1989, and as more than one million people took to the streets, the
8 communist East German minister of propaganda announced that the
9 border would be opened; thousands of celebrants flooded the
10 checkpoints at the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989, and that
11 weekend, ecstatic East and West Berliners used hammers and picks to
12 knock away pieces of the wall while cranes and bulldozers pulled
13 down section after section; and

14 WHEREAS, The fall of the Berlin Wall not only reunited a great
15 European city for the first time since 1945 but symbolized the end
16 of the Cold War and the triumph of democracy over communism; now,
17 therefore, be it

18 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 83rd Texas
19 Legislature hereby commemorate the 24th anniversary of the fall of
20 the Berlin Wall and encourage all Texans to reflect on the
21 significance of this pivotal event in modern history.