A JOINT RESOLUTION

proposing a constitutional amendment to allow the voters of Bexar County to adopt a charter that restructures and empowers the county government and that may allow the integration of the county government with certain other political subdivisions located wholly or partly in the county.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Article III, Texas Constitution, is amended by adding Section 64A to read as follows:

Sec. 64A. (a) Bexar County may adopt a county charter. The county charter may integrate the county government with other local political subdivisions allowed under this section.

(b) The charter may:

(1) provide for the title, qualifications, term of office, powers, or duties of an office of chief elected official that replaces the office of county judge;

(2) provide for the structure, number of members, qualifications, terms of office, powers, duties, or other features of a governing body that replaces the commissioners court;

(3) modify the powers, duties, or functions of a county official that is established by another section of this constitution, if the charter otherwise continues all of the established functions of county government;

(4) merge the office of an elected county official that is established by another section of this constitution with
the office of another county official, if the charter otherwise continues all of the established functions of both offices; and

(5) provide for the abolition of the office of an elected county official that is established by another section of this constitution, on the approval of a majority of the voters voting on the question in a separate election held at least one year after the initial election on the adoption of the charter.

(c) The abolition of an office under Subsection (b)(5) is effective at the earlier of:

(1) the conclusion of the regular term of the office holder at the time of the election to abolish the office; or

(2) the date the office becomes vacant.

(d) The charter may also integrate the county government and the government of any other municipality, special district or authority, or any other political subdivision, other than a school district, if:

(1) more than one-half of the area of the political subdivision to be integrated is located in the county; and

(2) the integration of political subdivisions includes the most populous municipality in the county.

(e) If Bexar County adopts a charter under this section, the powers and duties of the county are:

(1) the powers and duties established by the charter that are not inconsistent with a constitutional or statutory provision expressly applying to a charter county; and

(2) any additional powers and duties granted by this constitution or general law.
(f) If the charter integrates the county with other local political subdivisions under Subsection (d), the powers and duties of the integrated county government are also the cumulative powers and duties of the political subdivisions that are integrated. The charter may not diminish the powers, duties, and functions of a municipality that is not integrated with the county.

(g) If the charter integrates the county with other political subdivisions, the charter shall transfer to the county all the powers, duties, responsibilities, rights, privileges, assets, obligations, and liabilities of the integrated municipality, special district or authority, or other political subdivision.

(h) If a municipality that is integrated into a county government has extraterritorial jurisdiction outside the county, or if any portion of an integrated municipality, special district or authority, or other political subdivision is located outside the county, the integrated county government's powers and duties outside the county are limited to those powers and duties that the integrated political subdivision would have had in the absence of the governmental integration.

(i) A charter that integrates the county with other political subdivisions must establish distinct service districts in the area of the integrated county government that provide for district taxes that are graduated by area and based on the level of services provided to the service district by the integrated county government.

(j) Except for a constitutional or statutory provision
expressly applying to Bexar County, a charter adopted under this section controls on an issue relating to the structure, powers, duties, functions, or governance of the county.

(k) The legislature, by local law or general law, shall establish the procedures for the appointment or election of a charter commission and for the adoption of a charter under this section. The procedures for appointment or election of a charter commission must include alternative procedures to initiate the creation of a charter commission by action of the commissioners court, by action of the governing body of the most populous municipality in the county, or by petition of residents. The legislative action may include any additional guarantees or other provisions that the legislature considers appropriate to require in a charter to protect minority voting rights. In the case of a charter that integrates the county with other political subdivisions, the legislative action may also include provisions to:

(1) protect the employees of political subdivisions that may become integrated under the county charter;

(2) coordinate the charter with the law governing annexation; and

(3) structure the governing body and the service districts and to allocate the debt service obligations of an integrated county government to ensure equity among the voters and taxpayers of the integrated county government.

SECTION 2. This proposed constitutional amendment shall be submitted to the voters at an election to be held November 3, 2015.
The ballot shall be printed to permit voting for or against the proposition: "The constitutional amendment to allow the voters of Bexar County to adopt a charter that restructures and empowers the county government and that may allow the integration of the county government with certain other political subdivisions wholly or partly in the county."