

By: Canales

H.R. No. 587

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, JoAnn Gama, cofounder and superintendent of IDEA
2 Public Schools, has deservedly been named one of the 2015 Pillars of
3 Success by The University of Texas--Pan American Alumni
4 Association; and

5 WHEREAS, The University of Texas--Pan American Alumni
6 Association honors outstanding graduates as Pillars of Success,
7 highlighting their motivational stories and achievements as
8 positive examples for current and future students; recipients of
9 the award come from a variety of backgrounds and experiences, but
10 they have all shown dedication, integrity, and a commitment to
11 excellence in their specialized professions and in their
12 communities; and

13 WHEREAS, A Houston native, JoAnn Gama graduated from Sam
14 Houston High School in 1993 and attended Boston University on a full
15 scholarship; she earned a master's degree in educational
16 administration from The University of Texas--Pan American in 2003;
17 as part of the Teach for America program, she moved to Donna in 1997
18 and taught fourth and fifth grade English as a Second Language
19 classes; after her first year, she was nominated by her peers as
20 Teacher of the Year; in 1998, she joined with another Teach for
21 America member to found the IDEA Academy as part of the Donna
22 Independent School District; and

23 WHEREAS, Following the academy's success with the district,
24 Ms. Gama applied for a state charter, and in August 2000, the IDEA

1 Academy Charter School opened with 150 students enrolled in fourth
2 through eighth grades; since then, Ms. Gama has been instrumental
3 in developing the IDEA Public School system, which currently
4 educates more than 15,000 students in 30 schools across the Rio
5 Grande Valley and in San Antonio and Austin; several of the schools
6 have garnered significant honors for their students' success, and
7 in 2009, IDEA Public Schools became the first charter to receive the
8 H-E-B Excellence in Education Award as the best school system in
9 Texas; in 2013, IDEA Donna, IDEA Quest, and IDEA Frontier were
10 ranked in the top one percent of all public high schools in the
11 nation; and

12 WHEREAS, Ms. Gama was the winner of the 2009 Peter Jennings
13 Award for Civic Leadership, and she was appointed to President
14 Barack Obama's White House Commission on Educational Excellence for
15 Hispanics in 2010; and

16 WHEREAS, Texas is fortunate to have passionate and engaged
17 educators like JoAnn Gama, and her contributions to the greater
18 good will resonate far into the future; now, therefore, be it

19 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 84th Texas
20 Legislature hereby congratulate JoAnn Gama on being named one of
21 the 2015 Pillars of Success by The University of Texas--Pan
22 American Alumni Association and extend to her sincere best wishes
23 for the future; and, be it further

24 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
25 prepared for Ms. Gama as an expression of high regard by the Texas
26 House of Representatives.