

By: Goldman

H.R. No. 2751

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The life of a towering figure in state and national
2 politics drew to a close with the passing of former United States
3 House speaker Jim Wright of Fort Worth on May 6, 2015, at the age of
4 92; and

5 WHEREAS, Born in Fort Worth on December 22, 1922, James
6 Claude Wright Jr. was the son of James Claude Wright Sr. and Marie
7 Lyster Wright; he graduated from Adamson High School in Oak Cliff
8 and attended Weatherford College before enrolling in The University
9 of Texas at Austin; following Pearl Harbor, he enlisted in the U.S.
10 Army Air Corps and became a bombardier with the 380th Heavy Bomb
11 Group; he flew 30 missions over Japan, and he was awarded the
12 Distinguished Flying Cross with Oak Leaf Cluster; and

13 WHEREAS, After the war, Mr. Wright began working for the
14 National Federation of Small Business in Fort Worth, and he became
15 engaged in politics, helping to found the Young Democrats; at the
16 age of 23, he won election to the Texas House of Representatives
17 from Parker County, and he went on to serve as mayor of Weatherford
18 from 1950 to 1954; and

19 WHEREAS, Mr. Wright was elected in 1954 to the first of 15
20 terms in the United States House of Representatives; as a member of
21 the Public Works Committee, he tirelessly promoted investment in
22 infrastructure, including the Dallas-Fort Worth International
23 Airport, water reservoirs, and Trinity River flood control; he
24 brought millions of federal dollars to Tarrant County for aircraft

1 contracts and for such major projects as the redevelopment of the
2 Stockyards and construction of the Fritz G. Lanham Federal
3 Building; with his namesake Wright Amendment, he promoted the
4 growth of the Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport in the wake
5 of airline deregulation; President John F. Kennedy, in his last
6 speech, said "I know of no other city in the United States that is
7 better represented in the Congress of the United States than Fort
8 Worth"; and

9 WHEREAS, Mr. Wright became house majority leader in 1977, and
10 10 years later, he was elected speaker of the house; deeply
11 committed to international peace, he traveled to the Middle East to
12 prepare the way for the historic 1977 Camp David agreement; later,
13 he mediated a settlement to end the grinding civil war in Central
14 America and bring about democratic elections in Nicaragua; ranked
15 as one of the most powerful speakers in the history of the house, he
16 also guided the enactment of bills on clean water, highways, aid to
17 the homeless, and education benefits for military personnel; and

18 WHEREAS, After leaving public office, Mr. Wright remained
19 very active in civic life; he lectured widely, authored several
20 books, and wrote a weekly column for the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*;
21 he taught a popular course at Texas Christian University, "Congress
22 and the Presidents," and he donated his archives to the
23 institution; he loved to talk to students about politics, their
24 studies, and other topics, and when failing eyesight prompted him
25 to retire in December 2010, he continued to tutor and mentor young
26 people; warm and congenial, he was never too busy to stop and shake
27 hands or give a hug to citizens who approached him; and

1 WHEREAS, Mr. Wright was joined in matrimony to his college
2 sweetheart, Mary "Mab" Lemons, in 1942, and they became the parents
3 of five children, James, Virginia, Kay, Parker, and Alicia; their
4 marriage spanned 28 years; fortunate to find love a second time,
5 Mr. Wright married the former Betty Hay in November 1972, and they
6 shared a fulfilling relationship for over four decades; and

7 WHEREAS, A visionary statesman and highly effective leader,
8 Jim Wright devoted himself to the betterment of his beloved Texas
9 while playing an enormous role in shaping the nation's public and
10 foreign policy, and his myriad accomplishments will continue to
11 resonate in the years to come; now, therefore, be it

12 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 84th Texas
13 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the memory of the Honorable Jim
14 Wright and extend sincere condolences to the members of his family:
15 to his wife of 42 years, Betty Hay Wright; to his children, James C.
16 Wright III, Virginia Sue McGuire, Kay Wright Nelson, and Alicia
17 Marie Carnes; to his sister, Betty Lee Wright; to his 15
18 grandchildren; to his 24 great-grandchildren; and to his other
19 relatives and friends; and, be it further

20 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
21 prepared for his family and that when the Texas House of
22 Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of the
23 Honorable Jim Wright.