

By: VanDeaver

H.R. No. 492

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, February 23, 2017, marks the 100th anniversary of
2 the signing of the Smith-Hughes Act, the first major federal
3 legislation to support the teaching of agriculture and other
4 vocational subjects in high school; and

5 WHEREAS, During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the
6 need for vocational and technical education to augment academic
7 study was increasingly recognized by teachers, agriculturists,
8 home economists, and industry leaders; in 1914, the United States
9 Congress established the Commission on National Aid to Vocational
10 Education, which concluded that federal funding was necessary to
11 ensure the success of such programs; and

12 WHEREAS, Based on the recommendations of the commission,
13 Senator Hoke Smith of Georgia introduced Senate Bill 703 on
14 December 7, 1915, and on February 10, 1916, Representative Dudley
15 Hughes laid out a companion bill, House Bill 11250; Senator Smith's
16 bill enjoyed support from both chambers of Congress as well as from
17 President Woodrow Wilson, who urged Congress to take action on it;
18 and

19 WHEREAS, A diverse range of interest groups, including
20 industrialists, labor unions, and agricultural scientists, were
21 united in their endorsement of the legislation; support for the
22 measure was further intensified by the perception that Germany,
23 then engaged in the Great War, had outstripped America in
24 developing an advanced workforce to sustain its agricultural and

1 industrial might; and

2 WHEREAS, On February 17, 1917, Senate Bill 703--now known as
3 the Smith-Hughes Act--was approved by Congress in a bipartisan
4 vote, and on February 23, President Wilson signed the bill into law;
5 Texas state senator Claude Hudspeth of El Paso subsequently
6 introduced a bill to accept the benefits of the federal act, which
7 was approved by the 35th Texas Legislature on May 8, 1917; and

8 WHEREAS, Today, 15 million young Americans, including some
9 1.2 million Texans, are enrolled in occupational courses in 16
10 cutting-edge career areas; their experiences in those programs are
11 empowering them to succeed in postsecondary education and in the
12 free-market economy, both as employees and as entrepreneurs; in
13 addition, the advent of vocational education has led to the
14 establishment of a range of youth leadership development
15 organizations, including FFA, SkillsUSA, HOSA, and the Future
16 Business Leaders of America, which are preparing their members to
17 become engaged citizens and effective leaders in the work of
18 self-government, the foundation of this constitutional republic;
19 and

20 WHEREAS, In the century since the passage of the landmark
21 Smith-Hughes Act, vocational education has opened the doors of
22 opportunity for countless youth and contributed significantly to
23 the strength and prosperity of this nation; now, therefore, be it

24 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 85th Texas
25 Legislature hereby commemorate the 100th anniversary of the signing
26 of the Smith-Hughes Act and encourage Texans to learn more about the
27 fine work being done by outstanding career and technical teachers

1 in communities across the state.