

By: Hunter

H.R. No. 1597

R E S O L U T I O N

1           WHEREAS, The Honorable L. DeWitt Hale, a distinguished former  
2 member of the Texas House of Representatives, is celebrating his  
3 100th birthday on June 10, 2017, and this momentous milestone is  
4 indeed deserving of special recognition; and

5           WHEREAS, Born in Caddo Mills in 1917, DeWitt Hale grew up in  
6 Farmersville; while still a student at The University of Texas at  
7 Austin, he was elected to represent Collin County in the Texas  
8 House, and at the age of 21, he was the youngest member of the 46th  
9 Legislature; he served one term, from 1939 to 1940, and having  
10 completed his law degree, he joined the Office for Emergency  
11 Management in Washington, D.C., in 1941; during World War II, he  
12 served in the United States Army Air Forces, rising to the rank of  
13 first lieutenant; and

14           WHEREAS, Following his return to civilian life, Mr. Hale  
15 settled in Corpus Christi to practice law, and in 1952, he was  
16 elected to the Texas House from Nueces County; serving in that  
17 office until 1963 and again from 1965 until 1978, he proved himself  
18 a master parliamentarian and persuasive advocate with an extensive  
19 knowledge of the issues of the day; he held many leadership roles,  
20 among them speaker pro tempore, chair of the House Judiciary  
21 Committee, co-chair of the Constitutional Convention Planning  
22 Committee, delegate to the Texas Constitutional Convention of 1974,  
23 and chair of the Convention Judiciary Committee; he led the House  
24 Select Committee on Impeachment that engineered the state's first

1 impeachment since 1923, and he chaired the Committee of the Whole  
2 House, which handled the Articles of Address against a justice of  
3 the Texas Supreme Court; in addition, as chair of the House General  
4 Investigating Committee, he led a probe into the East Texas  
5 slant-hole scandal, a history of illicit drilling that involved the  
6 theft of some \$100 million worth of oil; and

7       WHEREAS, During his legislative tenure, Mr. Hale played a  
8 vital role in the passage of a wide range of significant  
9 legislation; in 1953, he authored a proposition, subsequently  
10 approved by the voters, amending the Texas Constitution to permit  
11 women to sit on juries; he was also instrumental in the adoption of  
12 the Hale-Aiken Committee program for the improvement of public  
13 education, as well as the passage of the Legislative Reorganization  
14 Act of 1961, the Texas Education Code of 1969, and the liquor by the  
15 drink law of 1971; and

16       WHEREAS, This highly effective legislator also succeeded in  
17 securing a number of large projects that improved the quality of  
18 life for his constituents, among them the Wesley Seale Dam, the  
19 Harbor Bridge, the Port Aransas Ferry, and the Corpus Christi State  
20 School; a tireless champion of higher education in Nueces County,  
21 he handled the legislation that transformed the University of  
22 Corpus Christi, now Texas A&M University--Corpus Christi, from a  
23 small private college to a comprehensive four-year institution in  
24 the A&M system; and

25       WHEREAS, Mr. Hale gave generously of his time and expertise  
26 to a host of legal and civic organizations; his contributions  
27 earned him myriad accolades from educators, the State Bar of Texas,

1 and other groups, and he was awarded life membership in the League  
2 of United Latin American Citizens; in 1979, he donated his  
3 voluminous papers to TAMU--CC, where they are archived at the Mary  
4 and Jeff Bell Library; and

5 WHEREAS, Devoted to his family, Mr. Hale shared a rewarding  
6 marriage of more than six decades with his wife, Carol Hale, before  
7 her passing in 2008; he is the father of Janet Hale Wilde and the  
8 late Mary Carol Hale, and he takes great pride in his three  
9 grandchildren, Brandon DeWitt Wilde, Jennifer Wilde, and Thomas  
10 Joseph Wilde; and

11 WHEREAS, DeWitt Hale's legislative accomplishments continue  
12 to benefit his fellow Texans in numerous ways today, and it is truly  
13 a pleasure to join his loved ones in honoring him as he celebrates  
14 100 years of life well lived; now, therefore, be it

15 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 85th Texas  
16 Legislature hereby congratulate the Honorable L. DeWitt Hale on the  
17 occasion of his 100th birthday and extend to him sincere best wishes  
18 for continued happiness; and, be it further

19 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be  
20 prepared for Mr. Hale as an expression of high regard by the Texas  
21 House of Representatives.