

By: Farrar

H.R. No. 1829

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The death of former state representative Lauro Cruz
2 on January 29, 2017, at the age of 83, concluded a remarkable life
3 of service; and

4 WHEREAS, Born in Beaumont on May 20, 1933, Lauro Cruz was the
5 son of Manuel Cruz and Margarita Menchaca Cruz; he grew up in
6 Houston, where he took on adult responsibilities as a boy,
7 selecting and buying produce for the family grocery store; during
8 the Korean War, he enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps, and on his
9 return, he applied for a job with the Houston Metropolitan Transit
10 Authority; he met with significant resistance, but persevered to
11 become the agency's first Mexican American bus driver; and

12 WHEREAS, Mr. Cruz purchased a grocery store in the Sixth Ward
13 while working his way through school; he completed his bachelor's
14 degree in political science at the University of Houston and went on
15 to attend South Texas College of Law; recognizing the need for
16 greater Hispanic representation in the political process, he ran
17 successfully for precinct judge, and he participated in the 1966
18 Farmworkers March; that same year, he won a seat in the Texas House
19 as the first Mexican American legislator elected from Harris County
20 in over a century and a quarter; a tireless champion of minorities
21 and the struggle for social justice, he coauthored the first
22 minimum wage bill in Texas, strove to ensure the rights of farm and
23 migrant workers, and secured the passage of a migrant
24 transportation bill; he was also instrumental in the passage of a

1 measure regulating hazardous substances in the state; and

2 WHEREAS, With a young family to support, Mr. Cruz left the
3 legislature after three terms, and in 1972, he became a special
4 assistant to Governor Dolph Briscoe; he later served as executive
5 director of the Greater South Texas Cultural Basin Commission and
6 led the Texas Good Neighbor Commission; subsequently, he became one
7 of the state's first independent Hispanic lobbyists, and he helped
8 educate young Texans about politics and the Mexican American
9 experience as founder of the Innovation 88 Leadership Program at
10 the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at The University of
11 Texas at Austin, where he taught during the late 1980s and early
12 1990s; in addition, he served as president of the U.S. State
13 Department–affiliated International Hospitality Council; his many
14 accolades included the National Benito Juarez–Lincoln Award for
15 his contributions to the progress of Mexican Americans; and

16 WHEREAS, Mr. Cruz shared a fulfilling marriage of more than
17 61 years with his college sweetheart, Clarice Cruz; he was the
18 father of four treasured children, Chris, Camille, Jerry, and Sat
19 Nam, and he took great pride in his three grandchildren, Lucas
20 Tenbrook and Kasey and Cody Cruz; a man of faith, he was a longtime
21 member of the Lutheran church; and

22 WHEREAS, Deeply committed to building a more just and
23 equitable society, Lauro Cruz set an inspiring example of
24 leadership, and his achievements have helped to better the lives of
25 countless Texans; now, therefore, be it

26 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 85th Texas
27 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the life of the Honorable Lauro

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1 Cruz and extend sincere sympathy to his family and friends; and, be
2 it further

3 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
4 prepared for his family and that when the Texas House of
5 Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of the
6 Honorable Lauro Cruz.