

By: Guerra

H.R. No. 2651

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The State of Texas lost an admired leader in health
2 care and higher education with the death of former University of
3 Texas System regent Dr. Mario E. Ramirez of Rio Grande City on May
4 22, 2017, at the age of 91; and

5 WHEREAS, Born in Roma on April 3, 1926, to Efren and Maria del
6 Carmen Ramirez, Mario Ramirez attended The University of Texas at
7 Austin before accepting early enrollment in the University of
8 Tennessee School of Medicine; he graduated in 1948, and while
9 completing his residency at Shreveport Charity Hospital, he met the
10 love of his life, Sarah Aycock, then a student nurse; they married
11 in 1949 and eventually became the parents of five children, Mario,
12 Patricia, Norman, Jaime, and Roberto; and

13 WHEREAS, Dr. Ramirez founded Roma's first family practice
14 clinic with his wife in 1950; after serving in Japan as a U.S. Air
15 Force physician for two years, he returned to Starr County and
16 established its first hospital in 1958; he made daily house calls
17 over a 50-mile radius and treated many patients who could not afford
18 to pay; in the wake of Hurricane Beulah, as the county's public
19 health service director, he led the relief effort for nearly 14,000
20 refugees; he and one other physician took care of all their health
21 emergencies for two days before outside help arrived; and

22 WHEREAS, Over the course of a half century in family
23 medicine, Dr. Ramirez cared for countless people and delivered
24 thousands of babies; he also took on numerous leadership roles in

1 order to address the needs of medically underserved populations; in
2 1969, he was appointed Starr County judge, and during a tenure that
3 spanned nine years, he was instrumental in the creation of a
4 hospital taxation district and the construction of Starr County
5 Memorial Hospital in Rio Grande City; he was appointed to the
6 development board of the UT Medical Branch in Galveston in 1974, and
7 he mentored a host of physicians as an assistant professor at both
8 the Houston and San Antonio campuses of the UT Medical School; from
9 1989 to 1995, as a member of the UT Board of Regents, he championed
10 education in the Rio Grande Valley and worked to address health care
11 disparities, paving the way for the establishment of a medical
12 school in the region; he served from 1995 to 2007 as vice president
13 for South Texas programs of the UT Health Science Center at San
14 Antonio, and in that role, he developed the Med Ed Program, which
15 has prepared a host of high school students in the Valley and Laredo
16 for careers in health science; and

17 WHEREAS, Dr. Ramirez was the first Hispanic elected
18 president of the Texas Medical Association, and he further served
19 as president of the Texas Academy of Family Physicians; on the
20 national level, he was a member of the National Health Advisory
21 Council, the Ad Hoc Committee on Health Professions, and the board
22 of regents of the Uniformed Services University of the Health
23 Sciences; among myriad accolades, he received the Bicentennial
24 Benjamin Rush Award for Citizenship and Community Service from the
25 American Medical Association, the Family Doctor of the Year Award
26 from the American Academy of Family Physicians, and the
27 Distinguished Alumnus Award from UT Austin; and

1 WHEREAS, Mario Ramirez made a tremendous impact in South
2 Texas and beyond as a physician, a public servant, and a tireless
3 champion of health care access for all, and his remarkable legacy
4 will continue to resonate in the years to come; now, therefore, be
5 it

6 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 85th Texas
7 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the life of Dr. Mario E. Ramirez
8 and extend sincere condolences to all who mourn his passing; and, be
9 it further

10 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
11 prepared for his family and that when the Texas House of
12 Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Dr. Mario
13 E. Ramirez.