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By:  Morrison H.R. No. 583

R E S O L U T I O N

WHEREAS, Joe Braman, a Refugio rancher and businessman, has helped to protect an endangered species by working to curb the crime of rhinoceros poaching in South Africa; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Braman was sought out for his dog training skills by Ivan Carter, founder of the Ivan Carter Wildlife Conservation Alliance, an organization that is working to address the epidemic of poaching in Africa due to the illegal wildlife trade; after journeying to South Africa, Mr. Braman saw firsthand the carnage and suffering that have been inflicted on the country's rhino population, which includes the critically endangered black rhinoceros; and

WHEREAS, Returning to his ranch in Refugio County with a new sense of purpose, Mr. Braman partnered with retired K-9 handler and trainer Esequiel "Zeke" Ortiz to teach a group of coonhounds how to track and apprehend criminal poachers; the task went on to become his full-time passion, requiring him to work with the dogs every day, from the early morning hours to late at night; and

WHEREAS, After a year, 50 of Mr. Braman's coonhounds were deemed fit for the job; the dogs, which are trained to travel in packs of up to 10, are capable of detecting the scent of humans who have crossed through an area several hours ago and miles away, and they are fitted with GPS tracking devices for law enforcement to follow once the pack locates a poacher; Mr. Braman began deploying the dogs to South Africa in 2018, and their efforts have since led to dozens of arrests; and

WHEREAS, Joe Braman has demonstrated remarkable skill, dedication, and perseverance in his work to save some of our planet's most magnificent and vulnerable animals from extinction, and in so doing, he has shown us how the actions of one individual have the power to make a difference; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 86th Texas Legislature hereby honor Joe Braman for his contributions to rhinoceros conservation efforts in South Africa and extend to him sincere best wishes for continued success; and, be it further

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