86R14574 GM-D

By:  Longoria H.R. No. 686

R E S O L U T I O N

WHEREAS, The people of South Texas have lost an esteemed civic leader with the death of former La Joya mayor William Leo on March 17, 2018, at the age of 70; and

WHEREAS, Billy Leo was born in Laredo on May 24, 1947, to Feliz Leo and Leo James Leo, a prominent regional leader who marched with Cesar Chavez and who served as mayor of La Joya; after earning a political science degree at Texas A&I University in Kingsville, Billy Leo enjoyed a successful career in the private sector with a chain of convenience stores known as Leo's Food Mart; while managing the family business, he also forged his own outstanding record of civic engagement and activism; elected to the La Joya school board while still in his 20s, he served from 1974 to 1981 and was board president for two terms; he then served as mayor of La Joya from 1981 to 1986 and as Hidalgo County clerk from 1986 to 1994; elected mayor again in 2003, he continued to serve in that post until 2011; and

WHEREAS, Known as "Mr. Democrat," Mr. Leo held local party meetings at his La Joya store and drew state and national leaders to the area, including Robert Kennedy Jr., Bill Clinton, and his close friend Ann Richards; he was a member of the Democratic National Committee from 1989 to 2000 and served as a delegate to several Democratic National Conventions; in addition, he was active in the Mexican-American Democrats, and he led MAD in the 27th Senatorial District as president; deeply engaged in his community, he was a founder and president of the La Joya Lions Club, a member of the Housing Authority of the County of Hidalgo, and a gubernatorial appointee to the Texas-Mexico Authority and the State Community Development Block Grant program; and

WHEREAS, A beloved role model and mentor to the next generation of leaders in the Rio Grande Valley, Billy Leo dedicated his life to fighting for his community and his political ideals, and he leaves behind a legacy that will continue to inspire all those who knew and loved him; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 86th Texas Legislature hereby pay tribute to the memory of William Leo and extend sincere condolences to the members of his family: to his wife, Dr. Filomena Leo; to his children, Noralisa Leo and her husband, Eduardo Herranz, Michael Leo, Lita Leo, Billy Leo Jr. and his wife, Anne, and Letty Leo; to his five grandchildren; to his siblings, James Leo and his wife, Lydia, Henry Leo, Leo J. Leo Jr. and his wife, Martha, and Nellie Leo; and to his other relatives and many friends; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be prepared for his family and that when the Texas House of Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of William Leo.