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By:  González of El Paso H.R. No. 1945

R E S O L U T I O N

WHEREAS, Rio Vista Farm in Socorro played a central role in an often neglected chapter in our nation's history; and

WHEREAS, Established in 1915 as the El Paso Poor Farm, the site offered shelter to increasing numbers of people, including many neglected children; it hosted a variety of public welfare programs during the Great Depression and provided a temporary base for the Civilian Conservation Corps; from 1951 to 1964, it served as a reception and processing center for the Bracero Program, a massive guest-worker initiative first launched by the U.S. government to remedy farm labor shortages during World War II; and

WHEREAS, More than 80,000 braceros, or manual laborers, passed through Rio Vista Farm annually; they were subjected to humiliating medical and psychological examinations, as well as fumigation with DDT, before being bused to jobs across the country; after fulfilling their contracts, often in harsh circumstances, many of the workers were repatriated; others became U.S. citizens, and their descendants today number in the millions; and

WHEREAS, In another aspect of its history, Rio Vista Farm provided job opportunities for many people born in the United States; citizens were employed in processing the legal documentation required of braceros, as well as in transportation, health care, and other areas; and

WHEREAS, From the early 1980s until the mid-1990s, part of Rio Vista Farm was used by the El Paso County Sheriff's Office for a training academy; eventually a few buildings were repurposed for use as city administrative offices and as the Rio Vista Community Center; the site was designated as a National Treasure by the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 2016, but most of the adobe structures are still in dire need of restoration; and

WHEREAS, Rio Vista Farm provides a window into a vital part of the American experience, and its preservation will allow future generations to more fully appreciate the intrepid spirit of our forebears and the contributions made by the braceros who helped this country during wartime and worked to secure a brighter future; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 86th Texas Legislature hereby recognize the historic significance of Rio Vista Farm in Socorro and commend all those involved in the effort to maintain this site and raise awareness of its importance.