

By: Davis of Harris

H.C.R. No. 121

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, The Baker Institute for Public Policy at Rice
2 University in Houston is marking its 25th anniversary in 2019; and

3 WHEREAS, Founded in 1993, the nonprofit nonpartisan think
4 tank is dedicated to building a bridge between "the world of ideas
5 and the world of action"; it bears the name of James A. Baker III, a
6 native Texan who served as White House chief of staff and secretary
7 of the treasury under President Ronald Reagan and as secretary of
8 state and White House chief of staff under President George H. W.
9 Bush; and

10 WHEREAS, The institute has been led since 1994 by director
11 Edward P. Djerejian; a diplomat under eight administrations, he
12 held such key posts as assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern
13 affairs and ambassador to Syria and Israel; and

14 WHEREAS, In the institute's early years, its research agenda
15 was informed by Rice's geographic proximity to Mexico, the Texas
16 Medical Center, and the global capital of the energy industry;
17 Ambassador Djerejian's expertise led to the creation of the Center
18 for the Middle East, and the institute's focus continued to expand
19 significantly over the years; today, it encompasses 16 research
20 centers and programs, and more than 50 research fellows, scholars,
21 and other staff members work from the Rice campus headquarters,
22 while dozens of faculty members also hold appointments with the
23 center; and

24 WHEREAS, Through research, analysis, and advocacy, the

1 institute's scholars and fellows have sought answers to the world's
2 most daunting policy issues, and their expertise has been sought
3 after by journalists and decision-makers alike; Baker fellows met
4 more than a dozen times last year with representatives from state
5 and federal agencies, as well as with legislators and their staffs,
6 and they testified at state and federal committee hearings;
7 moreover, local, state, and national reporters turn to Baker
8 Institute scholars for informed commentary on and context for the
9 news of the day, and in the last fiscal year, the think tank tallied
10 some 20,000 media citations; and

11 WHEREAS, Recognizing its impact and public engagement, the
12 University of Pennsylvania's Think Tanks and Civil Societies
13 Program has ranked the Baker Institute third among all the world's
14 university-affiliated think tanks; Rice students benefit from the
15 presence of a policy-oriented "thought factory" on campus, and the
16 institute's dynamic, wide-ranging speaker series is a boon to the
17 public; a host of prominent statesmen, diplomats, religious
18 leaders, writers, scientists, and artists have been invited to
19 speak on campus, including Palestine Liberation Organization
20 Chairman Yasser Arafat, Russian President Vladimir Putin, former
21 Israeli President Shimon Peres, former Pakistani President Pervez
22 Musharraf, former South African President Nelson Mandela, and the
23 Dalai Lama; since its inception, the institute has hosted every
24 living former president of the United States; and

25 WHEREAS, For 25 years, the Baker Institute has been deeply
26 immersed in our national conversations, providing scholarly
27 expertise, empirical research, and insights born of firsthand

1 experience on the issues that define our time and shape our world;
2 now, therefore, be it

3 RESOLVED, That the 86th Legislature of the State of Texas
4 hereby commemorate the 25th anniversary of the founding of Rice
5 University's Baker Institute for Public Policy and honor its
6 namesake, former secretary of state James A. Baker III, for his long
7 and distinguished career in public service; and, be it further

8 RESOLVED, That official copies of this resolution be prepared
9 for Secretary Baker and Ambassador Djerejian as an expression of
10 high regard by the Texas House of Representatives and Senate.