

By: Longoria

H.R. No. 686

R E S O L U T I O N

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

4 WHEREAS, Billy Leo was born in Laredo on May 24, 1947, to
5 Feliz Leo and Leo James Leo, a prominent regional leader who marched
6 with Cesar Chavez and who served as mayor of La Joya; after earning
7 a political science degree at Texas A&I University in Kingsville,
8 Billy Leo enjoyed a successful career in the private sector with a
9 chain of convenience stores known as Leo's Food Mart; while
10 managing the family business, he also forged his own outstanding
11 record of civic engagement and activism; elected to the La Joya
12 school board while still in his 20s, he served from 1974 to 1981 and
13 was board president for two terms; he then served as mayor of La
14 Joya from 1981 to 1986 and as Hidalgo County clerk from 1986 to
15 1994; elected mayor again in 2003, he continued to serve in that
16 post until 2011; and

17 WHEREAS, Known as "Mr. Democrat," Mr. Leo held local party
18 meetings at his La Joya store and drew state and national leaders to
19 the area, including Robert Kennedy Jr., Bill Clinton, and his close
20 friend Ann Richards; he was a member of the Democratic National
21 Committee from 1989 to 2000 and served as a delegate to several
22 Democratic National Conventions; in addition, he was active in the
23 Mexican-American Democrats, and he led MAD in the 27th Senatorial
24 District as president; deeply engaged in his community, he was a

1 founder and president of the La Joya Lions Club, a member of the
2 Housing Authority of the County of Hidalgo, and a gubernatorial
3 appointee to the Texas-Mexico Authority and the State Community
4 Development Block Grant program; and

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

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

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