

By: Howard

H.R. No. 787

R E S O L U T I O N

1           WHEREAS, The Lone Star State lost an admired lawmaker with  
2 the passing of James Arthur Turman, former speaker of the Texas  
3 House of Representatives, on February 13, 2019, at the age of 91;  
4 and

5           WHEREAS, Jimmy Turman was born in Fannin County to James  
6 Wesley Turman and Clive Scarborough Turman on November 29, 1927,  
7 and later worked his way through East Texas State Teachers College,  
8 earning bachelor's and master's degrees; he began his career in  
9 education when he was only 19 and worked as a teacher and principal  
10 in Wolfe City before being hired as a junior high school principal  
11 in Paris; after serving with the U.S. Navy during the Korean War, he  
12 settled in Gober; and

13           WHEREAS, This dedicated public servant won election to the  
14 first of four terms in the Texas House of Representatives in 1954;  
15 he drew on his experience as a teacher and school administrator  
16 while serving on the Education Committee, which he chaired during  
17 the 55th Legislature, and the School Districts Committee; he also  
18 chaired the Municipal and Private Corporations Committee and spent  
19 two sessions on the Banks and Banking Committee; during his time as  
20 a legislator, he completed his doctoral degree in educational  
21 administration and psychology at The University of Texas at Austin,  
22 and when he was elected as speaker of the 57th Texas Legislature in  
23 1961, he became the first holder of a doctorate to serve as the  
24 chamber's presiding officer; and

1           WHEREAS, Under the leadership of Speaker Turman, the house  
2 chamber was air-conditioned, and he arranged for the allocation of  
3 private offices in the Capitol to many rank-and-file members for  
4 the first time; he served as chair of the Legislative Audit  
5 Committee, established the State Employees Classification System,  
6 and promoted passage of a bill supporting the University of  
7 Houston; committed to fair remuneration for educators, he secured a  
8 teacher pay raise, and he successfully advocated for better wages  
9 and more reasonable hours for firefighters as well; in addition,  
10 the state's first general sales tax was enacted during his  
11 speakership after he forged an agreement with Governor Price Daniel  
12 that enabled the bill to become law; his involvement in state  
13 politics also included an unsuccessful bid for the office of  
14 lieutenant governor in 1962; and

15           WHEREAS, Speaker Turman began working as an assistant to the  
16 president and as an assistant professor at Texas Woman's University  
17 in 1957, and during his tenure, he established the TWU Foundation  
18 and served as its first director; he went on to join the U.S. Office  
19 of Education and rose to become associate commissioner, the highest  
20 civil service position in the agency; concurrently, he served on  
21 the Education Commission of the States, and President Lyndon  
22 B. Johnson appointed him to the J. William Fulbright Foreign  
23 Scholarship Board; he served in subsequent administrations as  
24 director of the President's National Advisory Council on Extension  
25 and Continuing Education and as a consultant to the President's  
26 Council on Physical Fitness; moreover, he shared his expertise as a  
27 member of presidential task forces on public school desegregation;

1 and

2 WHEREAS, During his time in the nation's capital, Speaker  
3 Turman founded two national educational management consulting  
4 corporations; he later worked as chief of staff for Texas congress  
5 member Jim Mattox and as a liaison to the House Budget Committee; in  
6 his next role, as regional director of refugee resettlement in  
7 Dallas for the Department of Health and Human Services, he helped  
8 immigrants from Vietnam and Cambodia make new homes in the  
9 U.S. following the fall of Saigon; in 1986, he retired from the  
10 civil service and joined the Office of the State Comptroller as a  
11 senior research analyst; he organized Chaparral Mining Corporation  
12 four years later and held the offices of board chair, president, and  
13 CEO with the company; and

14 WHEREAS, During retirement, Speaker Turman traveled North  
15 America in an RV with his beloved wife and best friend, Joanie  
16 Turman, visiting all 49 state capitols across the continental U.S.;  
17 when not on the road, the couple enjoyed residing near their friend  
18 Willie Nelson in the Village of Briarcliff; Speaker Turman was the  
19 father of one son, James A. Turman Jr., who preceded him in death;  
20 and

21 WHEREAS, In recognition of this admired Texan's many  
22 achievements, the Texas Legislature unanimously designated  
23 Farm-to-Market Road 68 in Fannin County as Speaker Jimmy Turman  
24 Road in 2005, and he was honored as a Distinguished Alumnus of Texas  
25 A&M University-Commerce in 2009; and

26 WHEREAS, Through his tremendous dedication to the Lone Star  
27 State and to public education, Jimmy Turman made a positive

1 difference in the lives of countless people, and his contributions  
2 will be remembered and admired for years to come; now, therefore, be  
3 it

4         RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 86th Texas  
5 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the memory of the Honorable James  
6 Arthur Turman and extend sincere condolences to his loved ones: to  
7 his wife, Joanie Turman; to his sister, Mary Ann Reagan; to his  
8 former brother-in-law, Dr. Billy R. Reagan; and to all who mourn  
9 his passing; and, be it further

10         RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be  
11 prepared for his family and that when the Texas House of  
12 Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Speaker  
13 Turman.