

By: Nevárez

H.R. No. 1542

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The strikingly beautiful Big Bend region is one of
2 the treasures of the Lone Star State, and on June 12, 2019, Big Bend
3 National Park will celebrate the 75th anniversary of its
4 establishment; and

5 WHEREAS, Situated along the United States-Mexico border in
6 the southwestern part of Texas, Big Bend National Park includes
7 1,250 square miles of stunning Chihuahuan Desert scenery; the park
8 incorporates a variety of different landscapes within its borders,
9 from the arid beauty of the desert floor to the volcanic peaks of
10 the Chisos Mountains, from the thickets of vegetation along the
11 banks of the Rio Grande to the majestic cliffs of Santa Elena
12 Canyon; and

13 WHEREAS, For millennia, the park has been home to a diverse
14 array of plants and wildlife and today includes such inhabitants as
15 black bears, mountain lions, and bobcats, as well as 450 species of
16 birds and over 1,000 species of plants; moreover, the region's rich
17 history of human habitation extends back thousands of years and
18 encompasses Native Americans and Hispanic and Anglo-American
19 settlers who arrived in the late 1800s and early 1900s; and

20 WHEREAS, The idea of establishing a park in this unique
21 region was conceived by several individuals, including
22 entrepreneur J. O. Langford and newspaper publisher Amon Carter,
23 and the initiative received a major boost through the efforts of
24 Texas State Representatives Everett Ewing Townsend and Robert

1 McAlpine Wagstaff, who in 1933 cosponsored House Bill 771 to
2 establish Texas Canyons State Park; a second bill renaming the
3 preserve as Big Bend State Park was signed into law by Governor
4 Miriam "Ma" Ferguson on October 27 of that year; over the next
5 decade, park supporters privately raised money to purchase
6 additional land, and in 1942, the State of Texas allocated \$1.5
7 million to purchase 600,000 acres from private owners; and

8 WHEREAS, On June 6, 1944--the same day that Allied forces
9 made their D-Day invasion of Europe--Amon Carter presented
10 President Franklin Roosevelt with the deed to the land; a week
11 later, on June 12, 1944, Big Bend National Park was officially
12 established, becoming the first national park in Texas; although it
13 drew only 1,409 people during its first year, that number has grown
14 to more than 400,000 annually, and today, visitors benefit from the
15 park's 100 miles of paved scenic drives, 150 miles of hiking trails,
16 and such amenities as the Chisos Mountain Lodge and multiple
17 visitors centers; and

18 WHEREAS, The abundant ecological, geological, and cultural
19 riches of Big Bend are a source of tremendous pride for all Texans,
20 and Big Bend National Park represents a vital part of our shared
21 legacy; now, therefore, be it

22 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 86th Texas
23 Legislature hereby commemorate the 75th anniversary of Big Bend
24 National Park; and, be it further

25 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
26 prepared for the park as an expression of high regard by the Texas
27 House of Representatives.