

R E S O L U T I O N

1           WHEREAS, Former state senator Joe J. Bernal has devoted his  
2 life to expanding the horizons of opportunity for all Texans; and

3           WHEREAS, The son of Jose and Antonia Bernal, Joe Bernal was  
4 born in San Antonio in 1927 and grew up with eight brothers and  
5 sisters on the city's west side; after graduating from Lanier High  
6 School, he enlisted in the U.S. Army and served as an infantryman in  
7 Manila and Tokyo with the Headquarters Squadron, Pacific Air  
8 Command; he attained the rank of sergeant before receiving his  
9 honorable discharge at the age of 19; and

10           WHEREAS, Senator Bernal attended Trinity University through  
11 the G.I. Bill and earned his bachelor's degree in sociology; after  
12 teaching in the Kosciusko Independent School District for a year,  
13 he went on to serve at Burleson Elementary School in Edgewood ISD  
14 and then Crockett Elementary School in San Antonio ISD; along the  
15 way, he earned a master's degree in education with a minor in social  
16 work from Our Lady of the Lake College, and he was employed as a  
17 social worker by the Inman Christian Center for four years; and

18           WHEREAS, In 1964, Joe Bernal was elected to the Texas House of  
19 Representatives, and he worked tirelessly in behalf of an amendment  
20 to the state constitution that allowed seniors who had lived in the  
21 U.S. for more than 25 years to receive benefits regardless of their  
22 citizenship status; voters in Bexar County sent him to the state  
23 senate in 1966, and over the course of two terms in office, he  
24 dedicated himself to increasing educational access and protecting

1 vulnerable members of society; in 1969, he overcame fierce  
2 opposition to secure passage of the state's first bilingual  
3 education act, and he helped the state obtain federal funding for  
4 bilingual education; he was also instrumental in abolishing a law  
5 against using languages other than English in the classroom;  
6 moreover, he sponsored the bill establishing The University of  
7 Texas at San Antonio and battled tenaciously to pass it, and he  
8 achieved the same success with his bill founding the UTSA dental and  
9 nursing schools; his legislative initiatives further included the  
10 state's first minimum wage law, lesson-planning time for teachers,  
11 state-supported kindergarten programs, and funding for a criminal  
12 justice council; in addition, he chaired the Federal Programs and  
13 Relations, Claims, and Poverty in Texas Committees and led the  
14 Texas House and Senate Mexican American Caucus; and

15       WHEREAS, While making a tremendous impact as a lawmaker,  
16 Senator Bernal was employed as executive director for the Guadalupe  
17 Community Center and then for the Commission for Mexican American  
18 Affairs; he later became director of the Bilingual Cost Analysis  
19 Project of the Intercultural Development Research Association and a  
20 regional director of ACTION, a federal agency that coordinated  
21 volunteer opportunities; and

22       WHEREAS, Senator Bernal completed his doctoral degree in  
23 cultural foundations in education at The University of Texas at  
24 Austin, having written his dissertation on bilingual/bicultural  
25 education; from the early 1980s into the 1990s, he served as  
26 principal of Emma Frey Elementary School in Edgewood ISD and as  
27 assistant superintendent for instructional services for Harlandale

1 ISD; in 1996, he was elected to the State Board of Education, and  
2 over the next decade, he championed bilingual education and fought  
3 to provide classrooms with Spanish-language textbooks and to have  
4 the elementary curriculum translated into Spanish; in addition, his  
5 efforts were crucial in bringing mariachi band competitions into  
6 the University Interscholastic League; twice reelected to the  
7 board, he served as its vice chair from 2001 to 2003 and chaired the  
8 committee on instruction; and

9 WHEREAS, In 2014, Northside ISD named a new campus the  
10 Dr. Joe J. Bernal Middle School; previously, he and his wife,  
11 fellow educator Mary Esther Bernal, received the Lifetime  
12 Achievement Award from the Mexican American Legal Defense and  
13 Educational Fund for their efforts in behalf of the Latino  
14 community; the couple have shared more than six decades of  
15 marriage, and they are the parents of four children, Richard,  
16 Patrick, Bernard, and Rebecca; and

17 WHEREAS, The destiny of a state is inextricably linked to the  
18 quality and equality of its public education system, and through  
19 his unyielding commitment to providing all Texans with a strong  
20 foundation on which to build, Joe Bernal has enriched the lives of  
21 innumerable people; now, therefore, be it

22 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 86th Texas  
23 Legislature hereby honor former state senator Joe Bernal for his  
24 outstanding contributions to the Lone Star State and extend to him  
25 sincere best wishes for the future; and, be it further

26 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be  
27 prepared for Senator Bernal as an expression of high regard by the

H.R. No. 1730

1 Texas House of Representatives.

Martinez Fischer

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Speaker of the House

I certify that H.R. No. 1730 was adopted by the House on May 24, 2019, by a non-record vote.

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Chief Clerk of the House