

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 117

WHEREAS, A distinguished delegation from South Texas is visiting Austin on February 5, 2019, to celebrate Rio Grande Valley Day at the State Capitol; and

WHEREAS, Enjoying a strategic location on the Gulf of Mexico and along the Mexican border, the Rio Grande Valley was an important ranching region when Texas became the nation's 28th state in 1845; over time, the economy shifted from ranching to agriculture, and the Valley became the state's center of citrus and vegetable production; and

WHEREAS, In the 1960s, industry flourished and international trade became increasingly prominent; the region has contributed significantly to the tremendous increase in commerce across the United States-Mexico border; each year, more than 946,000 trucks, 11.7 million cars with 24.3 million passengers, thousands of buses and bus passengers, and 6.2 million pedestrians cross Rio Grande Valley ports of entry; an average of over \$51 billion of commercial trade per year, amounting to more than \$140 million in goods and services per day, flows across the region's 13 land ports of entry; the Rio Grande Valley is an economic powerhouse for the State of Texas, with approximately \$12.5 billion in taxable sales recorded in Reporting Year 2018; and

WHEREAS, The Valley has over 1.5 million residents, and approximately 600,000 of these are individuals under the age of 25; local and state officials have focused on the need to expand access to higher education and health care, strengthen the workforce, increase transportation and ports of entry infrastructure, and increase funding for public education; and

WHEREAS, The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley serves over 28,600 students; the School of Medicine is in its third year of operation and has 155 medical students and 169 medical residents in 10 Graduate Medical Education programs and over 20 patient care sites; and

WHEREAS, The Texas A&M University System recently opened its Higher Education Center in McAllen, which will be linked to the campus in College Station and will offer programs in engineering, technology, biomedical sciences, agriculture, and the laboratory sciences; and

WHEREAS, There are six higher education institutions in the Rio Grande Valley, The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Texas A&M University Higher Education Center, Texas A&M University Health Science Center McAllen, South Texas College, Texas Southmost College, and Texas State Technical College, and they serve a combined student population of over 70,000; and

WHEREAS, The focus for today's special legislative event is to advocate for additional investments in public education and workforce development through industry-driven youth apprenticeship programs in Texas high schools, transportation and port of entry infrastructure, economic and business development, funding for The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley School of Medicine, access to health care and other community services, and securing a Level 1 trauma center; major sponsors include The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Texas A&M University, Texas Southmost College, the City of McAllen, the City of Edinburg, the City of Weslaco, the City of Pharr, the City

of Brownsville, the Port of Brownsville, the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council, the Starr County Industrial Foundation, Willacy County, and the Rio Grande Valley Partnership, as well as several private sector businesses, such as Pathfinder Public Affairs, Atlas, Hall and Rodriguez, IBC Bank, Texas Gas Service, UBER, and Coca-Cola, all of which are promoting greater regional cooperation in the 21st century; and

WHEREAS, A vibrant region with a rich heritage, the Rio Grande Valley is poised to take advantage of tremendous opportunities for continued economic development, and it is indeed most fitting to honor Valley residents for their dedication to building a bright and prosperous future for the area; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 86th Legislature, hereby recognize February 5, 2019, as Rio Grande Valley Day at the State Capitol and extend to all participants sincere best wishes for a productive and enjoyable visit.

Hinojosa, Lucio, Zaffirini

President of the Senate

I hereby certify that the above Resolution was adopted by the Senate on February 5, 2019.

Secretary of the Senate

Member, Texas Senate

Member, Texas Senate

Member, Texas Senate