

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 685

WHEREAS, Latino and Latina elected officials from Texas have distinguished themselves at all levels of government, and their increased participation in public service through the years reflects the vibrant diversity that is synonymous with the Lone Star State; and

WHEREAS, Latino candidates have successfully competed in elections since the early decades of the state's history, and today, Latinos and Latinas have become integral to the political process in Texas; they serve their fellow citizens as city council members and county commissioners, as judges, and as members of the Texas Legislature and the United States Congress, among other elective offices; and

WHEREAS, Though individuals of Latino descent have faced many challenges in gaining a prominent voice in government, out of that struggle has emerged a series of legendary figures in the Texas political landscape; in 1904, Representative José Tomás Canales of Brownsville became the first Mexican American elected to the Texas Legislature in the 20th century, and in 1919, during his fifth term in office, he led a landmark legislative investigation into the violence carried out by members of the Texas Rangers against Latinos; as Latinos took a larger role in politics following World War II, Eligio "Kika" de la Garza was a trailblazer, completing six terms in the Texas House before serving more than three decades in Congress; Latina public officials came to the fore beginning in the 1970s, and in 1977 Irma Rangel became the first Mexican American woman to serve in the Texas House; she went on to be reelected 13 times and was the first female chair of the Mexican American Legislative Caucus; and

WHEREAS, The 86th Texas Legislature stands as a proud example of the increased prominence of Latinos in public office, with Latino and Latina legislators forming a sizable portion of both chambers; among them is another pivotal figure, Judith Zaffirini, who in 1987 became the first Mexican American woman to serve in the Texas Senate; during her long tenure in the upper chamber, she has compiled an unparalleled record of more than 60,000 consecutive votes and has sponsored over 1,000 bills that have passed into law; in addition, she has chaired many Senate committees, including Higher Education, Health and Human Services, and Government Organization; and

WHEREAS, Through their exceptional achievements in public service, Latino officeholders have given voice to their communities while working to improve the lives of all residents of the Lone Star State, and in so doing, they have exemplified the ideals upon which our nation was founded; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 86th Legislature, hereby recognize the contributions of current and former Latino and Latina elected officials and extend to those presently serving sincere best wishes for continued success with their important work.

Menéndez

President of the Senate

I hereby certify that the above Resolution was adopted by the Senate on May 2, 2019.

Secretary of the Senate

Member, Texas Senate