87R30077 BK-D

By:  Metcalf H.R. No. 1950

R E S O L U T I O N

WHEREAS, For more than a century, the Legislative Reference Library has provided invaluable assistance to Texas lawmakers; and

WHEREAS, Signaling to the world that the Texas Legislature early on understood the need for expert assistance from professional library staff and the value of a specialized reference library, leaders of this state reserved a special place at the core of the 1888 Capitol to house this vital resource for current and future generations; the Legislative Reference Library was established on the second floor in the north wing to assist members of the legislature and their staffs, and its resources are also available to the lieutenant governor, the speaker, and their staffs, to the staff of the governor's office, to legislative officers, agencies, and committees, to state agencies and commissions, to librarians and legislators from other states, to members of the press, and to Texas citizens; and

WHEREAS, The tools may change through the decades, but the need for information endures, and the library's electronic data systems currently expedite the delivery of knowledge to the legislative community and the people of Texas in both direct and indirect ways; the creation, compilation, and utilization of information in a reliable and timely fashion are provided today in a manner unimaginable by the legislature in 1888, yet the importance of the library's continued proximity to the seat of Texas government was reaffirmed during the restoration of the Capitol in the 1990s, thus underscoring the intrinsic value of this treasured institution; and

WHEREAS, The effectiveness of the library would not be possible without the talented people who staff it; these individuals provide in-depth analyses of legislation from all 50 states, respond to historical legislative queries, and create ad hoc legislative statistical reports for staff in the speaker's and lieutenant governor's offices; during legislative sessions, the library plays an integral part in the legislative process; staff develop electronic records in the Texas Legislative Tracking System for each bill or resolution filed and furnish real-time information to the legislative community, to executive agencies, and to citizens of this state through such proprietary applications as TLIS and TLO; and

WHEREAS, Stationed on the floor of the house and senate chambers, library staff record critical legislative actions as they occur, and they work closely with the senate and house parliamentarians, the senate and house journal clerks, the chief clerk of the house, the secretary of the senate, and their staffs to ensure that these records are accurate and complete; library staff members are also responsible for assigning and entering subject terms and companion relationships to facilitate legislative research, and they review enrolled legislation for the effective dates of each measure; in addition, the library operates a toll-free bill status hotline for the public; and

WHEREAS, As the statutory custodian of legislative records, the library maintains the most comprehensive physical repository of information relating to the Texas Legislature, including original legislative bill files, historical and current publications of legislative committees, state agencies, and institutions of higher education, and legislative legal resources, journals, law reviews, and periodicals; a circulating collection of materials is also made available to the legislative community; and

WHEREAS, The library has undertaken an ambitious and ongoing project to digitize historical legislative records and information, including the house and senate journals, to ensure that this information is available to scholars and the public to foster better understanding of the history of Texas and the legislature's role in that history; and

WHEREAS, Each business day, the library compiles select articles from newspapers statewide for the legislative community, and it generates weekly listings of important journal articles and monthly listings of newsworthy additions to the library's collection; the library provides accurate and up-to-date legislative information electronically through a number of databases; the Texas Appointment System contains information on members of state councils, boards, and committees appointed by the governor, lieutenant governor, and speaker; the Legislative Archive System holds the only electronic version of original legislative bill files and documentation, while the Index to Sections Affected is the sole source of information detailing the proposed statutory effect of bills; moreover, the library maintains Texas Legislators: Past & Present, highlighting legislative membership information from 1846 to today, as well as a legislative reports database covering that same period, and it archives gubernatorial executive orders, messages, and proclamations; and

WHEREAS, Guided skillfully by director/librarian Mary Camp, the LRL staff includes assistant director/librarian Catherine Wusterhausen, administrative/legislative staff Michelle Martinez, Kali Palmer, and Julia Walden, administrative staff Amber Baade, Donald Brower, Christopher Taylor, and Jay Young, clipping service staff Vincent Cowan, David Wood, and Karen Wright, and librarians Elizabeth Buchanan, Linna Dean, Ali Dzienkowski, Sally Harlow, Melanie Harshman, Mickey Lanning, Karen McBurney, Kaelyn Morice, Ana Sifuentes-Martinez, Brandon Vasquez, Lindsay Wickham, and Ia Wood; and

WHEREAS, These hardworking and dedicated professionals demonstrate an unyielding commitment to excellence as they carry on the long and storied tradition of their agency, and they may take justifiable pride in the important services they provide to the legislature and to the citizens of the Lone Star State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 87th Texas Legislature hereby honor the Legislative Reference Library and extend to the staff members sincere appreciation for their outstanding contributions; and, be it further

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