

By: A. Johnson of Harris

H.R. No. 168

R E S O L U T I O N

1           WHEREAS, More than a decade ago, Harris County began creating  
2 specialty courts that are designed to rehabilitate and reduce  
3 recidivism in juvenile offenders; and

4           WHEREAS, The first of these courts, a mental health program  
5 that was renamed Court 360, was established in January 2009; the  
6 court was intended to address the unique needs of youth with mental  
7 health conditions, but it has since adopted a comprehensive  
8 approach where participants receive individualized guidance in  
9 various areas of their lives, including family relationships,  
10 academic performance, and community engagement; this court is  
11 currently presided over by Judge Dena Fisher; and

12           WHEREAS, The Sobriety Over Addiction and Relapse Court, or  
13 SOAR Court, was created in July 2010; presided over by Judge  
14 Michelle Moore and Associate Judge Eric Andell, it utilizes a  
15 collaborative multidisciplinary model to help juvenile offenders  
16 overcome drug and alcohol dependence; as with Court 360,  
17 participants in the SOAR Court program are provided with an  
18 individualized, research-based treatment plan with the objective  
19 of improving outcomes by promoting healthier family communication  
20 and interaction; and

21           WHEREAS, In August 2011, the county established what would  
22 later be known as the Creating Advocacy Recovery and Empowerment  
23 (CARE) Court; overseen by Judge Leah Shapiro, CARE Court was  
24 developed to assist young women and girls who had been exploited in

1 commercial sex trafficking, but it later began accepting boys,  
2 young men, and transgender youth as well; the program employs a  
3 clinically driven, multidisciplinary team, with a comprehensive  
4 focus on resolving trauma and other underlying issues that  
5 contribute to at-risk and delinquent behavior; and

6 WHEREAS, The newest specialty court, GRIP Court, was founded  
7 in October 2011; officially known as the Gang Recidivism  
8 Intervention Program, the court is presided over by Judge Natalia  
9 Oakes and Associate Judge William Thursland; its purpose is to  
10 reduce gang association by promoting pro-social behaviors,  
11 redirecting youth to healthier alternatives, and improving family  
12 relationships; participants are closely monitored and receive  
13 individualized treatment plans, which include mentorship,  
14 educational assistance, and other means of support; and

15 WHEREAS, Each of these programs has played a vital role in  
16 Harris County's efforts to curb delinquency, tackle the root causes  
17 of criminal behavior, and offer at-risk youth a pathway to a better,  
18 brighter future, and it is a privilege to recognize those who have  
19 devoted their time and expertise to these important goals; now,  
20 therefore, be it

21 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 87th Texas  
22 Legislature hereby honor the alternative juvenile justice courts of  
23 Harris County for their 10 years of invaluable service to the  
24 community and extend to all those involved with these programs  
25 sincere best wishes for continued success.