RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Residents of El Paso were profoundly saddened by the loss of beloved educator Zelene Blancas, who passed away on December 28, 2020, at the age of 35; and

WHEREAS, The daughter of Victor A. Blancas and Gloria Luna, Zelene Blancas was born on November 19, 1985; she grew up with a brother, Mario, and was like a second mother to him, even though she was just four years older; eventually, she became the devoted aunt of one niece, Natalia; she also cherished her two canine "babies," Rocky and Chico; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Blancas majored in bilingual, multilingual, and multicultural education at The University of Texas at El Paso; after completing her bachelor's degree, she went on to earn a master's degree in bilingual and multilingual education from Texas Tech University; and

WHEREAS, A gifted educator with a decade of experience, Ms. Blancas taught first grade at Dr. Sue A. Shook Elementary School, where many of her students were English language learners; she focused on social and emotional development as well as academics, encouraging compassion and positive relationships; fostering a nurturing environment, she let the children choose from a menu of good morning and goodbye salutes, including hugs, handshakes, and high fives, and when she posted a video of them happily sharing such friendly greetings, it touched hearts across the country, receiving more than 22 million views on Twitter; and
WHEREAS, In the wake of the mass shooting in El Paso, Ms. Blancas helped the school heal through a collaboration with Pinksocks Life, and she volunteered with the organization, which promotes kindness and empathy; when her campus switched to remote learning because of the COVID-19 pandemic, she supported her students by delivering care packages to each one; in her free time, she was writing and illustrating a children's book; the Socorro American Federation of Teachers placed a memorial bench and plaque on the Shook Elementary campus in her honor in February 2020; and

WHEREAS, Zelene Blancas brightened the world for all who were fortunate enough to know her, and although she is greatly missed, her warmth, generosity, and optimism will remain a lasting source of inspiration; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 87th Texas Legislature hereby pay tribute to the life of Zelene Blancas and extend sincere sympathy to all who mourn her passing; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be prepared for her family and that when the Texas House of Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Zelene Blancas.