

## SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 423

**WHEREAS**, The Blackwell School Alliance secured designation of the Blackwell School in Marfa as a National Historic Site in October 2022; and

**WHEREAS**, Opened in 1909, in an era of de facto segregation of Mexican Americans, the school served local students until 1965, a year after passage of the Civil Rights Act, when Marfa integrated its schools; the faculty was largely White, and children could be punished harshly for speaking Spanish, even though for some, it was not only their native language, but their only language; the school was supplied with hand-me-down books and other equipment from Marfa Elementary, the school for Whites; and

**WHEREAS**, Alumni of Blackwell School learned in 2006 that the school district planned to tear down or sell the nearly century-old one-room adobe schoolhouse; they began organizing to save the structure, forming the Blackwell School Alliance in 2007; joined by other community advocates, they cleaned up the building and fundraised to make repairs; they went on to seek recognition for the school from the Texas Historical Commission, which was granted in 2010; nine years later, their efforts led to its inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places; and

**WHEREAS**, The members of the alliance have worked tirelessly to document and preserve the school's history, partnering with universities, state agencies, private foundations, the City of Marfa, and individuals; in addition, they have garnered support from elected officials, and in 2021, a bipartisan group of representatives filed the Blackwell School National Historic Site Act; it easily passed both chambers of Congress, and President Joe Biden signed it into law on October 17, 2022, authorizing the designation of the site as a unit of the National Park Service; and

**WHEREAS**, Today, the Blackwell School is one of the very few National Historic Sites devoted specifically to the commemoration of Latino heritage; the original school building functions as a museum and community center, with a replica classroom featuring rows of old desks; moreover, the Blackwell School Alliance has assembled a wealth of artifacts, from trophies, sports uniforms, photographs, and old letters to the wooden paddle once used to discipline children; the site also includes the 1927 Band Hall; and

**WHEREAS**, Through their hard work and many years of grassroots advocacy, the members of the Blackwell School Alliance have ensured lasting protection of an authentic setting to commemorate and interpret the Mexican American experience, the culture of the borderlands, and the sometimes painful history of progress in our society; now, therefore, be it

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**RESOLVED**, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 88th Legislature, hereby recognize April 22, 2023, as Blackwell School Day at the State Capitol and commend the Blackwell School Alliance for its outstanding contributions.

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President of the Senate

I hereby certify that the  
above Resolution was adopted by  
the Senate on April 17, 2023.

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Secretary of the Senate

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Member, Texas Senate