

By: Morales of Harris

H.R. No. 11

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, March 19, 2025, marks the 143rd anniversary of the
2 birth of trailblazing activist Minnie Fisher Cunningham, who played
3 a vital role in securing women's suffrage; and

4 WHEREAS, The daughter of Horatio and Sallie Fisher, the
5 former Minnie Fisher was born on the family farm near New Waverly in
6 1882; she was one of the first women in the state to receive a
7 pharmacy degree but soon discovered that her untrained male
8 colleagues made twice her salary; following her marriage to Beverly
9 "Bill" Cunningham, she became active in social reform efforts in
10 Galveston; she chaired two Women's Health Protective Association
11 committees and was a founding member and then president of the
12 Galveston Equal Suffrage Association; and

13 WHEREAS, Mrs. Cunningham was elected president of the Texas
14 Equal Suffrage Association in 1915; membership grew to 10,000 under
15 her leadership, and her formidable coalition-building and
16 negotiating skills resulted in a bill granting Texas women the
17 right to vote in state primary elections; the National American
18 Woman Suffrage Association recruited her to lobby Congress and
19 President Woodrow Wilson, and she eventually became the group's
20 congressional secretary; after passage of the 19th Amendment in
21 1919, she traveled across the Southwest to rally support for
22 ratification; her shrewdness and determination were instrumental
23 in making Texas the first southern state to ratify the amendment,
24 thwarting an attempt to create a regional bulwark against it; and

1 WHEREAS, A founder and officer of the National League of
2 Women Voters, Mrs. Cunningham successfully championed the nation's
3 first social welfare measure, the Sheppard-Towner Maternity and
4 Infancy Act; back in Texas, she became one of the first American
5 women to pursue a career in party politics, running for the
6 U.S. Senate in 1928 and the governorship in 1944; she was an early
7 inspiration to Eleanor Roosevelt and in turn energetically
8 supported the Roosevelt administration's New Deal initiatives in
9 numerous professional and volunteer capacities, including editor
10 for the Texas A&M University Agricultural Extension Service, senior
11 specialist in the Information Division of the federal Agricultural
12 Adjustment Administration, and acting head of the Women's Division
13 of the Democratic National Committee; and

14 WHEREAS, Mrs. Cunningham returned to New Waverly to run the
15 family farm but remained highly engaged in the progressive
16 movement; in 1954, she helped establish the *Texas Observer*, and six
17 years later, she managed the local headquarters of the
18 John F. Kennedy presidential campaign, which carried Walker
19 County; she died on December 9, 1964, at the age of 82; and

20 WHEREAS, Through her vision, resolve, and extraordinary
21 ability, Minnie Fisher Cunningham contributed enormously to the
22 empowerment of American women, and 60 years after her passing, her
23 accomplishments continue to resonate; now, therefore, be it

24 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 89th Texas
25 Legislature hereby commemorate the 143rd anniversary of the birth
26 of Minnie Fisher Cunningham.