

By: Hughes

S.R. No. 613

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, For 75 years, the Texas Legislative Council has
2 provided professional, nonpartisan support to the Texas
3 Legislature and legislative agencies; and

4 WHEREAS, The council was created by the 51st Legislature in
5 1949 as part of a growing national movement to establish
6 independent fact-finding and advisory agencies to aid the work of
7 state legislatures; the council's governing body--initially led by
8 the acting president of the Texas Senate and the speaker of the
9 House--held its first organizational meeting on October 19 of that
10 year; inaugural executive director John D. Moseley soon took charge
11 of the agency's operations, and council staff members began their
12 duties in the spring of 1950; and

13 WHEREAS, In its early years, the agency completed a number of
14 major research projects, including surveys of higher education and
15 taxation in Texas and an inventory of water problems; it also
16 analyzed proposed legislation and processed hundreds of requests
17 for memoranda, bill drafts, and other materials; the drafting of
18 legislation became a more prominent focus beginning with the 56th
19 Regular Session in 1959, as the council adopted the bill-drafting
20 function that had primarily been handled by the Office of the
21 Attorney General in the years prior; today, the drafting of bills
22 and related legislative documents remains an essential
23 responsibility for the agency and is ably managed by the attorneys
24 and support staff of the TLC legal division; in addition, the

1 division oversees the permanent statutory revision program that
2 eliminates invalid, duplicative, and otherwise ineffective
3 provisions, an initiative that began in 1963; and

4 WHEREAS, The council's oversight of the computer technology
5 used by the Texas Legislature dates back more than a half century;
6 the digital era dawned in the interim between the 62nd Regular
7 Session in 1971 and the 63rd in 1973; TLC staff readied a room at the
8 State Capitol to house mainframe equipment and began the formidable
9 task of applying computerization to the legislative process; the
10 revolutionary developments in information technology in the
11 decades since have made this component of the TLC mission
12 increasingly important, and the information systems division is now
13 the agency's largest; its responsibilities include the maintenance
14 of network infrastructure, the development of applications, and the
15 provision of equipment, software, training, and technical
16 assistance to the legislative community; and

17 WHEREAS, Legislative research was one of the first tasks
18 undertaken by the council, and by the early 1970s, the agency had
19 established a dedicated research division to oversee this
20 multifaceted area; its staff provide policy research and bill
21 analysis services, perform statistical and demographic research,
22 produce resolutions, publications, and mapping materials, and
23 maintain a number of websites; moreover, the division supports the
24 legislature's redistricting responsibilities and works extensively
25 with the RedAppl district modeling computer system; this innovative
26 resource was developed by council computer programmers with input
27 from the agency's legal and redistricting specialists and was

1 launched in its initial form in 1990; and

2 WHEREAS, The processing and delivery of the wide variety of
3 print and electronic materials prepared by the council are managed
4 by the document production division; the council's print shop
5 operations date back many decades, and the agency assumed the
6 document processing responsibilities for the Texas House in advance
7 of the 65th Legislature in 1977; by the early 1980s, the document
8 production division had been established, and today its employees
9 produce thousands of drafts, House official printings, and other
10 documents and publications; in addition to the print shop, the
11 division encompasses the data transcription, proofreading, and
12 document processing personnel that facilitate this essential
13 aspect of the agency's work; and

14 WHEREAS, Over the course of the council's history, staff have
15 operated out of offices in a number of different Capitol Complex
16 locations, and from the 1950s through 1990s, they often resided in
17 the Texas Capitol itself; the "cozy" surroundings that existed in
18 the statehouse in that era were a frequent topic in council reports,
19 with references to the "elbow-to-elbow" working conditions and
20 "cubbyhole" confines of the building; the agency's oft-voiced
21 request for additional room was finally satisfied with the
22 completion of the Robert E. Johnson Building in 2000, which remains
23 the council's home and also houses other legislative support
24 agencies; and

25 WHEREAS, Fittingly, the building is named in honor of the
26 legendary Robert E. Johnson, who served as the agency's executive
27 director during a remarkable 17-year tenure from 1963 to 1980 and

1 also held the office of House parliamentarian; through the years,
2 the council has benefited from the skilled leadership of numerous
3 other executive directors, and today that tradition is continued by
4 Jeff Archer with additional guidance provided by assistant
5 executive director Kimberly Shields, general counsel Jon Heining,
6 and chief legislative counsel Brett Ferguson; Kim Shields also
7 oversees the administration division, which encompasses the human
8 resources, accounting and purchasing, and assurance services
9 sections; the agency operates under the supervision of its
10 governing body, which is composed of the lieutenant governor and
11 the speaker of the House as joint chairs as well as six senators,
12 the chair of the House administration committee, and five other
13 state representatives; and

14 WHEREAS, Since its inception, the Texas Legislative Council
15 has worked tirelessly to ensure that lawmakers have the
16 information, resources, and support they need to most effectively
17 advance the interests of the people of the Lone Star State, and it
18 is indeed fitting that the agency be recognized for its vital
19 contributions; now, therefore, be it

20 RESOLVED, That the Senate of the 89th Texas Legislature
21 hereby commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Texas Legislative
22 Council and extend to all those associated with the agency sincere
23 appreciation for their outstanding record of public service; and,
24 be it further

25 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
26 prepared for the council as an expression of high regard by the
27 Texas Senate.