

By: Hughes, et al.

S.R. No. 628

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The State of Texas lost an esteemed legislator and
2 dear friend to many with the passing of longtime state
3 representative James R. Pitts of Waxahachie on July 20, 2024, at the
4 age of 77; and

5 WHEREAS, Born to Agnes and Roy Pitts in Dallas on January 1,
6 1947, Jim Pitts grew up with an older sister, Rosemary, and
7 identical twin, John; he completed his undergraduate and master's
8 degrees in business administration at Southern Methodist
9 University and earned his law degree from SMU as well; on May 22,
10 1971, he married the former Evelyn Eastham, and they settled in her
11 hometown, Waxahachie; they were blessed with two daughters, Duffy
12 and Ashley, and a son, Ryan; the couple shared a fulfilling
13 relationship until the untimely death of Mrs. Pitts in 2004; and

14 WHEREAS, Mr. Pitts was employed as an associate at the law
15 office of Lynn G. Griffith before opening his own firm in 1984; in
16 addition, he owned Ellis County Title Company and served as board
17 chair and legal counsel; he continued to practice law until shortly
18 before his passing; and

19 WHEREAS, Early in his career, Mr. Pitts joined the Waxahachie
20 Lions Club and Waxahachie Chamber of Commerce; he went on to serve
21 on the chamber's board and became its president in 1991; over the
22 years, he gave generously of his time and talents in numerous other
23 leadership roles, including as director of the Nicholas P. Sims
24 Library and as president of the Baylor Scott & White Medical Board

1 and the Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services board; and

2 WHEREAS, Mr. Pitts made his first foray into politics in
3 1978, winning a seat on the board of the Waxahachie Independent
4 School District, and he ultimately served as a trustee for 14 years
5 and held the office of president; elected to the Texas House in
6 1992, he set a high standard of constituent services; he made
7 himself readily available to area citizens, sought their
8 involvement in problem-solving, and facilitated their access to
9 government services; deeply committed to public education, he kept
10 in close contact with school superintendents; and

11 WHEREAS, Highly regarded for his wisdom and fairness, as well
12 as his financial expertise and commitment to fiscal responsibility,
13 Mr. Pitts was appointed to the House Appropriations Committee; as
14 its chair, he helped guide the budget setting process for nearly a
15 decade; he was also chair of a number of appropriations
16 subcommittees, and he served on a range of other committees; an
17 active champion for his district, he was instrumental in such
18 projects as widening the U.S. Highway 287 bypass, renovating the
19 famed Ellis County Courthouse, and rebuilding the historic Hill
20 County Courthouse after a fire; among numerous accolades, he was
21 named three times to the *Texas Monthly* list of the state's 10 best
22 legislators; the magazine called him "one of the truly great
23 lawmakers of his era"; and

24 WHEREAS, Following 11 terms in office, Mr. Pitts retired from
25 the legislature, but his successors continued to seek his counsel
26 on the appropriations process; he further contributed to public
27 policy discussions as the founder of Jim Pitts Consulting; while

1 working tirelessly for the betterment of the Lone Star State, he
2 always found time for his treasured family; he enthusiastically
3 supported his children's and grandchildren's many activities and
4 enjoyed spending time with them at Cedar Creek Lake and in Park
5 City, Utah; his kind, engaging personality brought him a multitude
6 of friends all across Texas, and he never missed a chance to plan a
7 party and treat guests to a bountiful table of delicious food; and

8 WHEREAS, Jim Pitts made a lasting, positive difference
9 through his legislative achievements and wide-ranging civic
10 endeavors, and although he is greatly missed by all who were
11 privileged to know him, his statesmanship and profound devotion to
12 public service will remain a source of inspiration for years to
13 come; now, therefore, be it

14 RESOLVED, That the Senate of the 89th Texas Legislature
15 hereby pay tribute to the memory of the Honorable James R. Pitts and
16 extend sincere condolences to the members of his family: to his
17 children, Duffy Bloemendal and her husband, Scott, Ashley Pitts,
18 and James Ryan Pitts and his wife, Faith Anne; to his grandchildren,
19 Jackson, Owen, Will, Margaret, Evelyn, and James Reagan; to his
20 brother, John Robert Pitts and his wife, Mary Bain; and to his many
21 other relatives and host of friends; and, be it further

22 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
23 prepared for his family and that when the Texas Senate adjourns this
24 day, it do so in memory of Jim Pitts.