

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center  
87R19318 KSM-D

H.C.R. 67  
By: Schofield et al. (Lucio)  
Administration  
5/26/2021  
Engrossed

### **AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

The many and diverse contributions made by Tejanos—Texans of Spanish, Mexican, African, and indigenous descent—have been fundamental to the history and heritage of Texas for more than three centuries.

Tejano men and women were the founders of the state's oldest permanent settlements, including the cities of San Antonio, Nacogdoches, Victoria, Goliad, and El Paso, and they were the first to name many of our state's waterways and natural features.

Legendary Tejanos of the Navarro, Ruiz, Menchaca, Arocha, and Seguin families played an integral part in the effort to settle Texas and negotiated peace with the Comanches and other indigenous peoples. On April 6, 1813, Tejanos were the first residents to declare for an independent Texas, and at the Battle of Medina that same year, they gave their lives in a bloody engagement with a Spanish royalist army that remains the deadliest clash in the history of Texas. Moreover, in an act that was an important prelude to the Texas Revolution, Tejanos were the first to rise in defense of the Mexican Constitution of 1824, and such prominent figures as José Antonio Navarro and José Francisco Ruiz were signers of the Texas Declaration of Independence in 1836.

Many Tejanos risked their lives and livelihood during the Texas Revolution, and its heroes include Gregorio Esparza and José Toribio Losoya, both of whom died at the Alamo, as well as members of their families, who were some of the few survivors of the battle. Among the others who stepped forward in the fight for independence were the troops led by Plácido Benavides, who fought bravely across South Texas, and the men of Juan Seguín's company, who helped secure the decisive victory at the Battle of San Jacinto. Later, Adina Emilia De Zavala led the effort to preserve historic structures at the Alamo so that the legacy of that battle and the entire revolution could be better appreciated by future generations.

Devoted to the concepts of liberty and equality, numerous Tejanos were early and powerful advocates for free speech, freedom of the press, and public education in Texas. In the 20th century, that tradition was continued by such individuals as the journalist Jovita Idár, who called for women's suffrage and campaigned against lynching, the restaurateur and civic leader Felix Tijerina, who pushed for bilingual education, and attorney John J. Herrera, who won important legal cases related to school segregation, workplace discrimination, and other civil rights issues.

Countless Tejanos have served with great distinction in our nation's military. The Medal of Honor, America's highest military commendation for valor, was awarded to seven Tejanos during World War II, two during the Korean War, and three during the Vietnam War. Physician, activist, and World War II veteran Hector P. Garcia founded the American GI Forum of Texas to champion the rights of former Hispanic service members.

The culture of the Lone Star State is inextricably linked with the contributions of Tejanos. They were the first to introduce rodeos, expert horsemanship, and the raising of longhorn cattle, which became central to the state's western identity. In regard to food, Tejanos combined the flavors and ingredients of Mexico and the United States to create Tex-Mex, the state's most iconic cuisine. Texas music is unimaginable without the contributions of such great Tejano artists as Lydia Mendoza, Flaco Jiménez, Rosita Fernández, and Selena, and the musical styles they

helped popularize range from romantic ballads to corridos that tell stories of adventure and resistance.

Throughout the state's history, Tejano men and women have been champions of social and political progress while exerting a tremendous influence on our way of life. Deeply devoted to Texas, they have overcome injustice and discrimination to play an instrumental role in the epic saga of the Lone Star State, and it is indeed fitting that their contributions be officially honored.

**RESOLVED**

That the 87th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby designate April 6 as Tejano Day, an observance that coincides with the date in 1813 when Tejano leaders issued the first declaration of Texas independence.

That, in accordance with the provisions of Section 391.004(d), Government Code, this designation remain in effect until the 10th anniversary of the date this resolution is finally passed by the legislature.