

SENATE RESOLUTION No. 1826

A RESOLUTION honoring the American GI Forum.

WHEREAS, The American GI Forum is an organization devoted to pursuing the interests of veterans and Hispanics throughout the country. The organization was founded through the efforts of Hector P. Garcia, an army veteran from Corpus Christi, Texas, in 1948. He was inspired to take action when the family of a fellow Hispanic, Felix Longoria, who was killed in action during World War II, was denied service by the only funeral parlor in Three Rivers, Texas. Through the efforts of the newly formed American GI Forum and the assistance of Senator Johnson, Private Longoria was given a hero's burial at Arlington National Cemetery; and

WHEREAS, From service during the Civil War through operation Iraqi Freedom, Hispanic Americans have served with great bravery, and many have made the ultimate sacrifice while serving in the United States army, navy, marine corps, coast guard and air force. The Congressional Medal of Honor has been awarded to 42 Hispanic military heroes, and Hispanics are the largest single ethnic group, in proportion to the number who served, to earn this prestigious award. Their loyalty to their families, church and country are legend and in many instances have been emulated by others; and

WHEREAS, Today the organization has a five figure membership and over 500 chapters throughout the country. It has assisted returning military veterans to obtain educational, medical, housing and other benefits to which they were entitled because of their military service. Today it has broadened its objectives to become an advocate for all Hispanics in social and economic matters; and

WHEREAS, The Forum's motto is: "Education is Freedom and Freedom should be Everybody's Business". The American GI Forum founded the Hispanic Education Foundation to address educational issues of Hispanics and to solicit funding for its Matching Scholarship Program. The National GI Forum is a founder and national cosponsor of SER Jobs for Progress, Inc. This organization has provided counseling and employment training through its local affiliates and has been successful in obtaining contracts nationally through the United States Department of Labor; and

WHEREAS, The American GI Forum of Kansas has seven chapters. From 1994 through 2004 the American GI Forum of Kansas gave \$94,550 in scholarships to college students. Local chapters provide community service with projects such as participating in Memorial Day and Veterans' Day ceremonies, assisting at VA hospitals, tutoring, providing meals for needy families on holidays, assisting in voter registration and serving on organizations addressing issues such as domestic violence, community health and schools; and

WHEREAS, The American GI Forum of Kansas hosted the 1997 National American GI Forum Conference, hosted the 2003 National Mid-Year Conference, celebrated the 50th anniversary of the American GI Forum in Kansas in June 2004 and will host the National American GI Forum Conference in 2006; and

WHEREAS, Affiliated with the national organization are many state GI, women's GI and youth's GI forums who work to achieve the objectives of the national organization: Now, therefore,

*Be it resolved by the Senate of the State of Kansas:* That the Senate recognizes and honors the American GI Forum and finds it most fitting to do so as many of our citizens are celebrating Hispanic Day at the Hill today; and

*Be it further resolved:* That the Secretary of the Senate provide an enrolled copy of this resolution to Elias Garcia, Kansas Hispanic and Latino American Affairs Commission, 900 Jackson Street, Topeka, KS 66612.

Senate Resolution No. 1826 was sponsored by Senator Anthony Hensley.

I hereby certify that the above RESOLUTION originated in the SENATE, and was adopted by that body

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*President of the Senate.*

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*Secretary of the Senate.*