

By: _____

____.C.R. No. _____

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, The Texas Legislative Medal of Honor was established
2 to recognize gallant and intrepid service by a member of the state
3 or federal military forces, and U.S. Army Private Marcelino Serna
4 proved himself a deserving recipient of this prestigious honor with
5 his heroic actions during World War I; and

6 WHEREAS, Born in Chihuahua, Mexico, in 1896, Mr. Serna came
7 to the United States as a young man and spent time in Texas, Kansas,
8 and Colorado; following the United States' entrance into World War
9 I in 1917, he enlisted in the U.S. Army at the age of 20, and, after
10 only three weeks of training, was shipped overseas with the 355th
11 Infantry, 89th Division; when his superior officers in France
12 learned that he was not a U.S. citizen, they gave him the
13 opportunity to return home, but Private Serna chose to stay and
14 fight; and

15 WHEREAS, Private Serna quickly established himself as a
16 remarkable soldier, and on at least two occasions, he demonstrated
17 exceptional resourcefulness and courage; during an engagement near
18 the French town of St. Mihiel, 12 members of his unit were killed by
19 fire from an enemy machine gun, and Private Serna obtained
20 permission from his lieutenant to scout out the gun emplacement on
21 his own; moving through heavy fire, and surviving two rounds that
22 were deflected by his helmet, he tossed four hand grenades into the
23 machine gun nest, killing six of the enemy; he then took the eight
24 survivors captive; and

1 WHEREAS, Shortly thereafter, during the Meuse-Argonne
2 campaign, Private Serna embarked on a second lone scouting mission;
3 he began by wounding a German sniper with a shot from 200 yards,
4 then followed the injured man into a trench; firing and hurling
5 grenades in all directions to make it seem as if he were part of a
6 larger force, he shot three German soldiers immediately, then
7 attacked an enemy dugout, felling 26 more and capturing 24; he
8 single-handedly held the prisoners at gunpoint until other members
9 of his unit arrived; and

10 WHEREAS, Private Serna continued to serve in combat until he
11 was severely wounded on November 7, 1918, just four days before the
12 armistice; while he was recovering in a French hospital, he was
13 presented with the Distinguished Service Cross by General John J.
14 Pershing, commander of the American Expeditionary Forces; in
15 addition to the DSC, the second highest award conferred on a member
16 of the U.S. Army, Mr. Serna received two Purple Hearts, the World
17 War I Victory Medal, the French Médaille militaire, two French
18 Croix de guerre, one with silver star and one with palm, a French
19 Médaille commémorative, the British War Medal, the Italian Croce al
20 Merito di Guerra, and the French Verdun and St. Mihiel Medals; and

21 WHEREAS, After returning to the United States, Mr. Serna
22 settled in El Paso, and in 1924 he became a U.S. citizen; since his
23 passing in 1992, petitions have been put forth on several occasions
24 seeking to have this esteemed gentleman, one of the most decorated
25 Texas veterans of World War I, awarded the Medal of Honor; and

26 WHEREAS, During the 84th Texas Legislature, the Texas
27 Legislative Medal of Honor Committee contingently approved

1 Mr. Serna's nomination for the Texas Legislative Medal of Honor,
2 and in January 2017, Mr. Serna was posthumously awarded the Lone
3 Star Medal of Valor; in September 2016, an international bridge
4 between Texas and Mexico on the border near El Paso was officially
5 renamed the Tornillo-Marcelino Serna Port of Entry; and

6 WHEREAS, Marcelino Serna's extraordinary actions on the
7 battlefield mark him as a soldier of supreme selflessness and
8 valor, and it is indeed appropriate that he be honored with the
9 highest military award granted by the state in which he made his
10 home; now, therefore, be it

11 RESOLVED, That the 85th Legislature of the State of Texas
12 hereby direct the governor of the State of Texas to posthumously
13 award the Texas Legislative Medal of Honor to Marcelino Serna in
14 recognition of his valiant efforts during World War I.