

Veterans Affairs to convey the Thomas T. Connally Medical Center to the State of Texas; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 46

Whereas, the Thomas T. Connally Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center was a fundamental part of the City of Marlin, Texas, for more than 50 years, and its recent closure dealt a significant blow to the community and surrounding area; and

Whereas, the beginning in 1943, the citizens of Marlin organized a campaign to secure their city as the location for a proposed naval medical facility; initially, 31 individual contributors donated \$2,025 to finance their preliminary effort, and two years later, the city raised an additional \$25,000 in small contributions from the local citizenry to purchase 150 acres of land for a new naval hospital; and

Whereas, although Marlin's selection as the site for the hospital had been announced in 1944, and the order approving construction of the new 500-bed facility was signed by President Harry S. Truman on July 1, 1945, congressional funding for the project was omitted from appropriations legislation later that year; and

Whereas, undeterred, the residents focused on attracting a 200-bed Veterans Administration general and surgical hospital and collected additional funds for the purchase of eight acres to donate for the facility; the city's efforts came to fruition when the Marlin Veterans Administration Hospital opened on November 1, 1950, with a staff of 14 physicians, 42 nurses, and two dentists; during its 50 years of operation, the hospital provided hundreds of jobs to area residents, continuing to reward the community's early faith and determination; and

Whereas, in 1992, the facility was renamed the Thomas T. Connally Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center after United States Senator Connally, who championed the city's efforts to have the hospital located in Marlin; regrettably, the medical center has since been closed by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, and there currently are no plans for its reuse despite a recent extensive remodeling; and

Whereas, although the center's closure was a major economic loss to the residents of Marlin, the city's spirit and goodwill have yet to waver; in the aftermath of Hurricanes Rita and Katrina, Marlin opened the Connally Veterans Administration Medical Center to house medically fragile evacuees from the affected areas, but, with that notable exception, the complex has sat empty and will likely be razed if a permanent use for the center cannot be found; and

Whereas, fortunately, the Connally Veterans Administration Medical Center facilities can be easily converted for a number of uses by the state, presenting a practical and beneficial use for the idle buildings; precedent for the adaptation of a Veterans Administration facility to state use was established in 2001 when the United States Congress authorized the conveyance, without consideration, of all real property and improvements associated with the Fort Lyon Veterans Administration Medical Center in Las Animas, Colorado, to the state of Colorado; and

Whereas, elected officials from Falls County and the City of Marlin, as well as many civic leaders, have expressed their support for the reuse of the Connally Veterans Administration Medical Center, and given the City of Marlin's long history with the site and the fact that it would cost more to destroy the center than to convey the facility to the State of Texas, it is only fitting that the state take advantage of this available resource: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the 80th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby respectfully request the Congress of the United States to authorize the secretary of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to convey the Thomas T. Connally Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center located in Marlin, Texas, to the State of Texas; and, be it further

Resolved, that the Texas secretary of state forward official copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the president of the Senate of the United States Congress, to all members of the Texas delegation to the Congress, and to the Secretary of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs with the request that this resolution be officially entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. DORGAN (for himself and Mr. MCCAIN):

S. 2087. A bill to amend certain laws relating to Native Americans to make technical corrections, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mr. FEINGOLD (for himself, Mr. SUNUNU, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. SALAZAR, and Mr. HAGEL):

S. 2088. A bill to place reasonable limitations on the use of National Security Letters, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. NELSON of Florida (for himself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. MIKULSKI, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. KOHL, and Mr. KERRY):

S. 2089. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to reduce the coverage gap in prescription drug coverage under part D of such title based on savings to the Medicare program resulting from the negotiation of prescription drug prices; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. AKAKA (by request):

S. 2090. A bill to protect privacy and security concerns in court records; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. AKAKA (by request):

S. 2091. A bill to increase the number of the court's active judges; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. FEINGOLD, and Mr. OBAMA):

S. 2092. A bill to amend title 11, United States Code, to improve protections for employees and retirees in business bankruptcies; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. LEAHY (for himself and Mr. SANDERS):

S. 2093. A bill to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate a segment of the Missisquoi and Trout Rivers in the State of Vermont for study for potential addition to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. LUGAR:

S. Res. 330. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the degrada-

tion of the Jordan River and the Dead Sea and welcoming cooperation between the peoples of Israel, Jordan, and Palestine; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself and Ms. SNOWE):

S. Res. 331. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that Turkey should end its military occupation of the Republic of Cyprus, particularly because Turkey's pretext has been refuted by over 13,000,000 crossings of the divide by Turkish-Cypriots and Greek Cypriots into each other's communities without incident; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 65

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 65, a bill to modify the age-60 standard for certain pilots and for other purposes.

S. 305

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the names of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. OBAMA) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) were added as cosponsors of S. 305, a bill to amend the Packers and Stockyards Act, 1921, to make it unlawful for a packer to own, feed, or control livestock intended for slaughter.

S. 773

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the names of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. SMITH) and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. BROWNBACK) were added as cosponsors of S. 773, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow Federal civilian and military retirees to pay health insurance premiums on a pretax basis and to allow a deduction for TRICARE supplemental premiums.

S. 790

At the request of Mr. LUGAR, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mrs. HUTCHISON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 790, a bill to amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to permit the simplified summer food programs to be carried out in all States and by all service institutions.

S. 819

At the request of Mr. DORGAN, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. CORKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 819, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to expand tax-free distributions from individual retirement accounts for charitable purposes.

S. 1105

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WEBB) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1105, a bill to provide Federal assistance to States, local jurisdictions, and Indian tribes to prosecute hate crimes, and for other purposes.

S. 1232

At the request of Mr. DODD, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1232, a bill to direct the Secretary of