

- SUBJECT:** Designating May 9 as Willie Velasquez Day
- COMMITTEE:** Border and Intergovernmental Affairs — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 6 ayes — Gonzales, Flynn, Guillen, Moody, Olivo, Raymond
0 nays
3 absent — Flores, Leibowitz, Shelton
- WITNESSES:** For — Lydia Camarillo, Southwest Voter Registration Education Project (SVREP); Luis Figueroa, Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF); Andrew Hernandez, Jesse Romero; Catarina Velasquez; Jane Velasquez; Ralph Velasquez; (*Registered, but did not testify*, Gladys Alonzo)

Against — None

On — Joani Bishop, Comptroller’s Office
- BACKGROUND:** William “Willie” Cardenas Velasquez contributed to the inclusion of Latinos and other minorities in the democratic process through his work as the president and founder of the Southwest Voter Registration Education Project (SVREP). SVREP conducted nearly 1,000 voter registration campaigns in more than 200 cities and Native American reservations and won more than 85 voting rights lawsuits.

On September 29, 1995, President Bill Clinton posthumously awarded Mr. Velasquez the Presidential Medal of Freedom and he became the second Hispanic ever to receive that award.
- DIGEST:** HB 2118 would designate May 9 as Willie Velasquez Day in observance of the birthday of William “Willie” Cardenas Velasquez.

The day would be an optional state holiday. State agencies would remain open at a minimum level, but employees could have a day off with pay in exchange for working on another prescribed holiday falling on a weekday. The bill would specify that the total number of holidays in a year to which a state agency employee was entitled would not be changed.

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The bill would take effect September 1, 2009

NOTES:

The companion bill, SB 2001 by Van de Putte, was left pending in the Senate Administration Committee on May 1.