

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
81R4519 YDB-F

S.B. 495
By: Hinojosa
Administration
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Dr. Hector P. Garcia left an undeniable impact on the State of Texas, the nation, and the world. His service and accomplishments in life were many and included some of the most memorable occasions in recent Texas history. In 1948, Dr. Garcia founded the American GI Forum, aimed at giving Hispanic veterans equal access to the education, job training, and home loans promised by the GI Bill of Rights. Dr. Garcia made national headlines with the group's first big fight, which came after the family of a Hispanic World War II veteran killed in the Philippines was turned away at a Three Rivers funeral home and told to bury him in a segregated cemetery for Hispanics. The doctor contacted state and federal lawmakers and eventually secured a full military burial for the veteran, Private Felix Longoria, in Arlington National Cemetery. The event made the cover of the *New York Times* and marked the launch of the American GI Forum as a civil rights organization. From then until his death in 1996, Dr. Garcia fought for Mexican-American rights, both locally as a respected doctor and in the national arena. Dr. Garcia was an alternate ambassador to the United Nations, the first Mexican-American to serve on the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, and a recipient of the nation's highest civilian honor when he received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1984.

As proposed, S.B. 495 creates a recognition day for Dr. Hector Garcia to ensure that his life work and legacy is preserved for future generations.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter C, Chapter 662, Government Code, by adding Section 662.055, as follows:

Sec. 662.055. DR. HECTOR P. GARCIA DAY. (a) Provides that the third Wednesday of September is Dr. Hector P. Garcia Day in memory of the significant contributions to the Mexican American civil rights movement of Dr. Hector P. Garcia, a distinguished physician and a recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the founder of the American GI Forum, which promotes civil rights protection of Hispanic veterans and all Americans. Provides that Dr. Garcia, a World War II hero, was awarded a Bronze Star medal with six battle stars in recognition of his meritorious service to the United States.

(b) Authorizes Dr. Hector P. Garcia Day to be regularly observed by appropriate ceremonies and activities in the public schools and other places to properly commemorate the importance of the contributions made by Dr. Garcia.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2009.