WHEREAS, Through a persistent decade-long crusade that culminated in changing the U.S. Constitution, Gregory D. Watson of Austin has earned the unique distinction of completing what Founding Father James Madison left unfinished as well as successfully getting the overall course grade for his 1982 University of Texas at Austin government class elevated from a C to an A after the intervention of 35 years; and

WHEREAS, In the spring of 1982, Mr. Watson, then a UT student, was enrolled in a Government 310 course on American government; while researching a term paper on the proposed Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, he happened upon some old constitutional amendments that had been proposed by Congress but not ratified by enough state legislatures to officially become part of the federal Constitution; and

WHEREAS, One such amendment, dated 1789, mandated that any approved congressional pay raise not take effect until after the next biennial election; the measure specifically reads that "No law, varying the compensation for the services of the Senators and Representatives, shall take effect, until an election of Representatives shall have intervened"; only nine states had ratified that measure by 1978, and ratification by three-fourths of the states is required before an amendment to the Constitution can be certified; at the same time, the compensation amendment included no ratification deadline, in contrast to amendments proposed since
the year 1917, when Congress began the practice of including a provision requiring that proposed federal constitutional amendments be ratified by the states within seven years; and

WHEREAS, Inspired to change the focus of his research, Mr. Watson submitted a paper suggesting that unratified constitutional amendments from before 1917, which did not contain the built-in time limit, could still be ratified, even 200 years later, if they received the support of enough states; he further noted in the paper that there continued to be concerns among the American people relative to the methods used by members of Congress to increase congressional salaries; the course instructor and her teaching assistant were not convinced, however, and Mr. Watson received a grade of C for the paper and a final grade of C for the course overall; and

WHEREAS, Shortly afterward, in April 1982, Mr. Watson embarked upon a labor-intensive campaign to prove the thesis of his paper; he began the 10-year process of writing letters to legislators in states across the nation, urging them to consider ratifying the measure, and by May 5, 1992, Alabama lawmakers furnished the pivotal 38th ratification, thus making it the 27th Amendment to the Constitution; since then, eight more states have ratified the amendment--most recently Nebraska in 2016--bringing the total to 46 of the 50 states; and

WHEREAS, Impressed by what she publicly described as Mr. Watson's "heroic effort" to prove the validity of his thesis, his former professor has officially requested that his grade for Government 310 be raised from a C to an A; Mr. Watson was informed
of her decision in March 2017, when he was invited to attend what he thought would be a mere Q and A about his work on the 27th Amendment and unexpectedly found his campaign being recounted in *Pop-Up Magazine*, a live news program performed onstage and resembling a stand-up comedy routine; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Watson has continued to be engaged in federal constitutional amendment issues: in 1995, at his prompting, the Mississippi Legislature symbolically post-ratified the Constitution's 13th Amendment, abolishing slavery; at his urging, the Tennessee General Assembly ceremonially post-ratified the 15th Amendment in 1997, extending the right to vote to former male slaves; and, at his behest, the Texas Legislature, in 2009, formally endorsed the end of poll taxes by post-ratifying the 24th Amendment; furthermore, references to Mr. Watson's constitutional amendment-related activities are chronicled in countless books, newspapers, magazines, law reviews, video and audio recordings, resolutions, and entries in the *Congressional Record*; and

WHEREAS, Gregory Watson's dogged determination resulted in a significant change in this nation's founding document, and he may indeed take great pride in his achievement and in his demonstration of what committed civic engagement can accomplish; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the 85th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby congratulate Gregory D. Watson on receiving a revised grade of A in his 1982 Government 310 class at The University of Texas at Austin--albeit after the intervention of 35 years--and extend to him sincere best wishes for continued success and happiness; and,
be it further

RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be prepared for Mr. Watson as an expression of high regard by the Texas House of Representatives and Senate.

Klick
I certify that H.C.R. No. 145 was adopted by the House on May 25, 2017, by a non-record vote.

I certify that H.C.R. No. 145 was adopted by the Senate on May 26, 2017, by a viva-voce vote.

APPROVED: 6-12-2017

Date