



## **Southwest Voter Registration Education Project**

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### **Texas Declares May 9<sup>th</sup> Willie Velásquez Day!**

Governor Perry signs bill on 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Willie's passing

**(June 15, 2013) San Antonio, Texas.** SVREP and WCVI applaud Governor Perry and the 83<sup>rd</sup> Texas legislature for the passage of bill HB3209 designating a day in observance honoring Willie Velásquez on May 9th. HB3209 takes effect on September 1, 2013.

"We want to thank Governor Perry and the State Legislature for paying homage to Willie Velásquez. Willie had a vision to empower the Latino community. He dedicated his life to increasing Hispanic participation in Texas and the southwest," stated Antonio González, SVREP and WCVI President.

2013 marks 25 years since the untimely passing of William C. Velásquez, founder of Southwest Voter Registration Education Project (SVREP) and the William C. Velásquez Institute (WCVI). HB3209 pays tribute to the legendary voting rights pioneer who helped change the face of Texas. HB3209 was authored by Representatives Alonzo and Menendez and was sponsored by Senator Uresti.

"We want to thank Lt. Governor Dewhurst, Speaker Straus, Representatives Alonzo and Menendez and Senator Uresti whose leadership made it possible for Willie's bill to be signed into law by Governor Perry on June 14th," stated González.

"Willie fought for democracy and an open society. His legacy lives today in the growing clout of the Latino vote," stated Lydia Camarillo, SVREP Vice President.

Born on May 9, 1944, in the west side of San Antonio, Texas, Willie opened SVREP in 1974, to focus on increasing Latino political participation in the American democratic process. Over the next fourteen years Willie organized a massive increase in Latino voting across the southwest principally using the tactic of nonpartisan voter registration and voting rights lawsuits.

"Young Texans will now have the opportunity to learn about one of our state's great civil rights leaders," said Patricia Gonzales, WCVI Vice President.

In 1985, Willie launched Southwest Voter Research Institute (renamed WCVI in 1997) to develop research and policy for the growing cohort of Latino elected officials.

In 1995, Willie was posthumously awarded the Medal of Freedom by President Bill Clinton. In 1996, his name was attached to the US Senate version of the Voting Rights Reauthorization



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and Amendments Act of 1996.

**SVREP** is the largest nonpartisan, nonprofit organization of its kind in the United States committed to the political empowerment of Latino community. Since its inception, SVREP has registered over 2.5 million Latinos, trained over 150,000 Latino leaders; won over 80 voting rights lawsuit and organized in over 250 communities across the US. For more information, see [www.svrep.org](http://www.svrep.org).

**WCVI** is a national non-profit, non-partisan, advocacy and research organization based in San Antonio. WCVI has a long-standing policy of educating Latino and non-Latino leaders (including government officials), the public, and the media on issues of importance to the U.S. Latino community. For more information please visit, [www.wcvi.org](http://www.wcvi.org).

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