

HR 9103

2005

House Resolution

A resolution honoring the memory of former United States Representative William Lehman.

WHEREAS, former United States Representative William Lehman, born in Selma, Alabama, on October 5, 1913, a son of privilege who realized early in life that most people were less fortunate than he, died in Miami Beach on March 16, 2005, a respected, compassionate gentleman who "never lost his common touch," and

WHEREAS, a graduate of the University of Alabama, William "Bill" Lehman moved to Miami in the 1930's, where as a car dealer for many years he also became a public school teacher, began his political career in 1966 as a member of the Dade County School Board, and was elected to Congress in 1972, serving for the next 20 years as a representative from Miami-Dade County, and

WHEREAS, Representative Lehman rose through House ranks to become the powerful chair of the appropriations subcommittee overseeing highways, seaports, and mass-transit systems and, along with Congressmen Dante Fascell and Claude Pepper, made up the Florida delegation, one of the most influential in the House, bringing billions of dollars in federal aid to South Florida, and

WHEREAS, Representative Lehman won the respect of conservative Cuban exiles in 1988 when he went to Cuba and brokered the release of three political prisoners, an effort that followed his 1981 negotiation of the release of a political

HR 9103

2005

29 prisoner in Argentina and his smuggling in 1984 of a synthetic
30 heart valve to a young patient in the Soviet Union, and

31 WHEREAS, admired and loved, hailed as a visionary on racial
32 issues and public transit, Congressman Lehman has left a legacy
33 for thousands in the form of various transit systems serving the
34 Miami-Dade area, dozens of roads and bridges, and Interstates 95
35 and 595, as well as numerous facilities that bear his name,
36 including an elementary school and a research center at the
37 Ryder Trauma Center at Jacksonville Memorial Hospital, and

38 WHEREAS, his example of grace, dignity, courage, and
39 commitment to public service serves as a model for all
40 Floridians, NOW, THEREFORE,

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42 Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the State of
43 Florida:

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45 That the life and contributions of the late Congressman
46 William Lehman are recalled with much honor and gratitude, his
47 death is deeply mourned, and sincere condolences are extended to
48 Mrs. Joan Lehman, his wife of 66 years, to his two sons, Tom and
49 Bill, Jr., and to his eight grandchildren, Justin Dash, Rebecca
50 Geller, Deborah Lehman, John Lehman, Mark Lehman, Tom Lehman,
51 Sean O'Conner, and Matthew Weiner.

52 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be
53 presented to Mrs. Joan Lehman as a tangible token of the
54 sentiments expressed herein.