

House Resolution 641

By: Representative Marin of the 96th

A RESOLUTION

- 1 Honoring the Pagoaga family; and for other purposes.
- 2 WHEREAS, the Pagoaga family is a perfect example of the achievement of the American
3 dream; and
- 4 WHEREAS, the family patriarch, Juan Angel Pagoaga, was born in the Basque Country in
5 1902, an area of the Pyrenees Mountains that straddles the countries of France and Spain; and
- 6 WHEREAS, in 1918, Angel immigrated to Cuba where he began to work vigorously in order
7 to establish himself, beginning work as a stock boy at a textile company and eventually
8 purchasing his own hardware store in Havana in 1950; and
- 9 WHEREAS, Angel met and married Natividad Alvarez in 1937, and in 1939, they were
10 blessed with their only child, Jose Angel Pagoaga; and
- 11 WHEREAS, from the 1920s to the mid-1950s, Cuba's economy thrived and the Pagoaga
12 family were renowned members of the capitalist establishment and its upper class; and
- 13 WHEREAS, upon entering into adulthood, Jose began to study at La Salle University; his
14 father gave him half of the stock in the family's hardware business, Ferreteria Alba, and by
15 21 years of age, Jose was a vice president of the company; and
- 16 WHEREAS, despite the Pagoaga family's success, they were not immune from the effects
17 of the Cuban Revolution, and by 1960, the Castro regime had closed La Salle University and
18 confiscated their business; and

19 WHEREAS, because of their success in the capitalist system, the Pagoaga family, especially
20 Angel, were considered enemies of the state and were prohibited from attending school or
21 working in any business or otherwise providing for themselves; and

22 WHEREAS, the family resorted to trading in the black market, but after years of risking their
23 lives and living under the strict control of Fidel Castro, the Pagoagas applied to leave Cuba
24 and move to the United States through Freedom Flights, a program initiated by President
25 Lyndon B. Johnson that welcomed Cuban exiles to the United States and gave them
26 permission to work; and

27 WHEREAS, on March 9, 1967, three years after applying, a telegram arrived granting Jose's
28 wife, Maria, and their son, Jose, Jr., permission to leave the country, but Jose, Sr., and his
29 second son, Carlos, were denied; and

30 WHEREAS, after clearing up the discrepancy, Jose, Sr., and Carlos were permitted to leave
31 as well, and on March 13, 1967, the Pagoaga family set foot on American soil; and

32 WHEREAS, after spending time in Miami, Florida, they traveled to Atlanta, Georgia, and
33 Jose, Sr., began a job delivering soap samples from door to door; and

34 WHEREAS, he eventually began working as a stock man for Rich's Department Store in
35 downtown Atlanta and continued to work his way up in the company to a management
36 position through the duration of his employment there; and

37 WHEREAS, Maria secured a job at Oxford Industries in the accounting department, where
38 she worked until her retirement in 1988; and

39 WHEREAS, through their exceptional work ethic and unyielding hope, the Pagoaga family
40 managed to become established in the American middle class and were able to welcome the
41 patriarch and matriarch of their family, Angel and Nati, to America in 1969; and

42 WHEREAS, despite the hardships faced by the Pagoaga family, they were able to overcome
43 each obstacle with endurance and courage, and their strong family values exemplify the best
44 in American family life as evidenced by the success of Jose, Sr., and Maria's three wonderful
45 children, Jose, Jr., Carlos, and Ana Maria.

46 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
47 the members of this body honor the Pagoaga family for their rich history, outstanding
48 accomplishments, and stalwart endurance in achieving the American dream.

49 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
50 and directed to make appropriate copies of this resolution available for distribution to the
51 Pagoaga family.