

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

H.C.R. 35
By: Farney et al. (To Be Filed)
Administration
5/13/2015
Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Of all the Lone Star State's unique items of headwear that Texans have used to adorn their heads, perhaps none says "Texan" more fashionably than the Cowboy Hat.

The heritage of the Lone Star State is closely associated with images of cowboys and the western frontier, and these elements are reflected in several of the current Texas symbols, including rodeo, the official state sport, and the longhorn, the state large mammal.

Broad-brimmed hats with high crowns can be seen being worn by nomadic warriors like the Mongolian Horsemen as far back as the 13th century. The hats made their way to Europe where they were adopted by the Spaniards in the 15th and 16th centuries. The Spaniards brought the hats to the New World where the style was embraced by the horsemen and cattle herders of Spanish Mexico called "vaqueros" and blended with other styles such as the "sombrero."

The emergence of the cowboy in the southwestern United States in the 19th century secured the cowboy hat's place in history. The hats varied in style and material while maintaining a wide brim and high crown. The wide brim provided the face, neck, and shoulders of the wearer shade from the sun and cover from the rain while enduring the elements on a ranch or cattle drive.

The modern cowboy hat's development is credited to John B. Stetson, who crafted a hat by hand out of felt made from animal skins in 1865. The hat became known as the "Boss of the Plains" and this style of hat was popularized through the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The cowboy hat continued to gain notoriety both for its utility to the wearer and for its fashionable appeal. It became common to see presidents, governors, singers and musicians, movie stars, athletes, and the average Texan wearing a cowboy hat. The hat even became a required item of a Department of Public Safety Trooper's uniform and an approved part of the Texas Ranger's uniform.

An essential piece of clothing for a cowboy on a cattle drive, a Texas Trooper on duty, or a fashion accessory that can be personalized by shape and material, the cowboy hat reflects the individualism that is so much a part of the Texan identity, elegant in its appearance while maintaining practicality in its function. Classy, yet sensible, modern and esteemed, the cowboy hat has stood the test of time, while enduring the elements, cattle drives, and modern fashion trends and continuing to exhibit a sense of style and dignified appearance.

The cowboy hat symbolizes both the state's iconic western culture and the uniqueness of its residents, and it is indeed appropriate that this stylish and dignified apparel receive special legislative recognition.

H.C.R. 35 designates the cowboy hat as the official State Hat of Texas.

RESOLVED

That the 84th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby designate the cowboy hat as the official State Hat of Texas.