

Whereas, In the late 1960s, Willie Galvan, a U.S. Army veteran, relocated to California from Victoria, Texas where early in his adult life he helped Mexican Americans purchase homes in previously restricted areas, helped launch Hispanic owned businesses, and assisted individuals in accessing their GI Bill privileges, breaking down barriers and enabling access to resources that had long been denied; and

Whereas In 1973, he began his lifelong journey of education by enrolling at UC Santa Barbara, earning his BA in Political Science along with a Certificate in Criminal Justice. Furthermore, he secured a Vocational Teaching Credential from UC Berkeley. While at UCSB, Willie met and married Helen Rivas. Together they have raised 3 boys, 3 girls, over 30 grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren; and

Whereas, Willie's commitment to our youth was highlighted after the 1979 Peppertree shootings when he helped create recreational opportunities for our Evans Park youth by installing handball courts and other programs, including establishing the PRIDE Gym (People's Responsible Involvement Develops Esteem) on Russell Street. One of Willie's boxers, Andrew Maynard won a gold medal at the 1988 Olympics in Seoul; and

Whereas, Willie's passion for justice and fairness drove him to establish numerous chapters of the American GI Forum, whose mission it is to combat discrimination against veterans of Mexican American descent. Through Willie's advocacy, the American GI Forum has awarded over a half million dollars in scholarships to over 500 local students; and

Whereas, the AGIF Education Foundation, which Willie oversees, has significantly expanded, now operating five programs totaling over a million dollars, with six more set to begin in the coming year. This expansion has created job opportunities for 37 individuals and facilitated access to affordable Internet services. Through the AGIF Family Assistance Program, approximately 700 veterans and their families have received emergency funds for clothing, food, transportation, medical needs, and lodging;

Now, therefore, be it ordered and resolved that this Board of Supervisors wishes to commend Willie Galvan for dedicating his life to serving his country and advocating relentlessly for the youth and veterans of his community.

Passed and adopted by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Barbara, State of California, this 7th day of November 2023 by a unanimous vote of all members present.