

OUTLOOK

COMING MONDAY
■ In a year marked by partisan acrimony over economic and social issues and growing public unease with multiple military engagements overseas, we seem to have forgotten our greatest strength lies in the ultimate unity of Americans.

EDITORIALS | COMMENTARY | OPINION | LETTERS TO THE EDITOR | POLITICAL CARTOONS | VOICES

THE 51st STATE?

Puerto Rico's gain could be loss for Texas

■ An addition would lead to subtraction

By DUDLEY L. POSTON JR.

PRESIDENT Barack Obama visited Puerto Rico last month, the first time a sitting U.S. president has visited the island since John F. Kennedy was there in 1961. A friendly crowd welcomed Obama at the airport in San Juan, and he was soon discussing the decades-old question about the status of Puerto Rico. Should the island become the 51st state of the U.S., or remain a commonwealth? Around half of the island's voters favor statehood, almost half want the commonwealth status to continue, and very few desire independence.

Puerto Rico has been part of the U.S. since 1898 and its people Please see **STATEHOOD**, Page B9



LYNNE SLADKY: AP

FOR STATEHOOD: A man holding Puerto Rican and American flags sings the U.S. national anthem during a rally in favor of statehood in Puerto Rico.

SCIENCE

Houston can lead in biotech

■ City has resources to excel in the field

By JOHN MENDELSON, M.D.

EVERY year, thousands of patients from around the world travel to the Houston area for life-saving medical care. Houston is home to the Texas Medical Center, the world's largest medical complex, but the benefit extends beyond hands-on patient care. Thanks to the area's major hospitals and universities, Houston is one of the top regions in the world for medical research. People every-

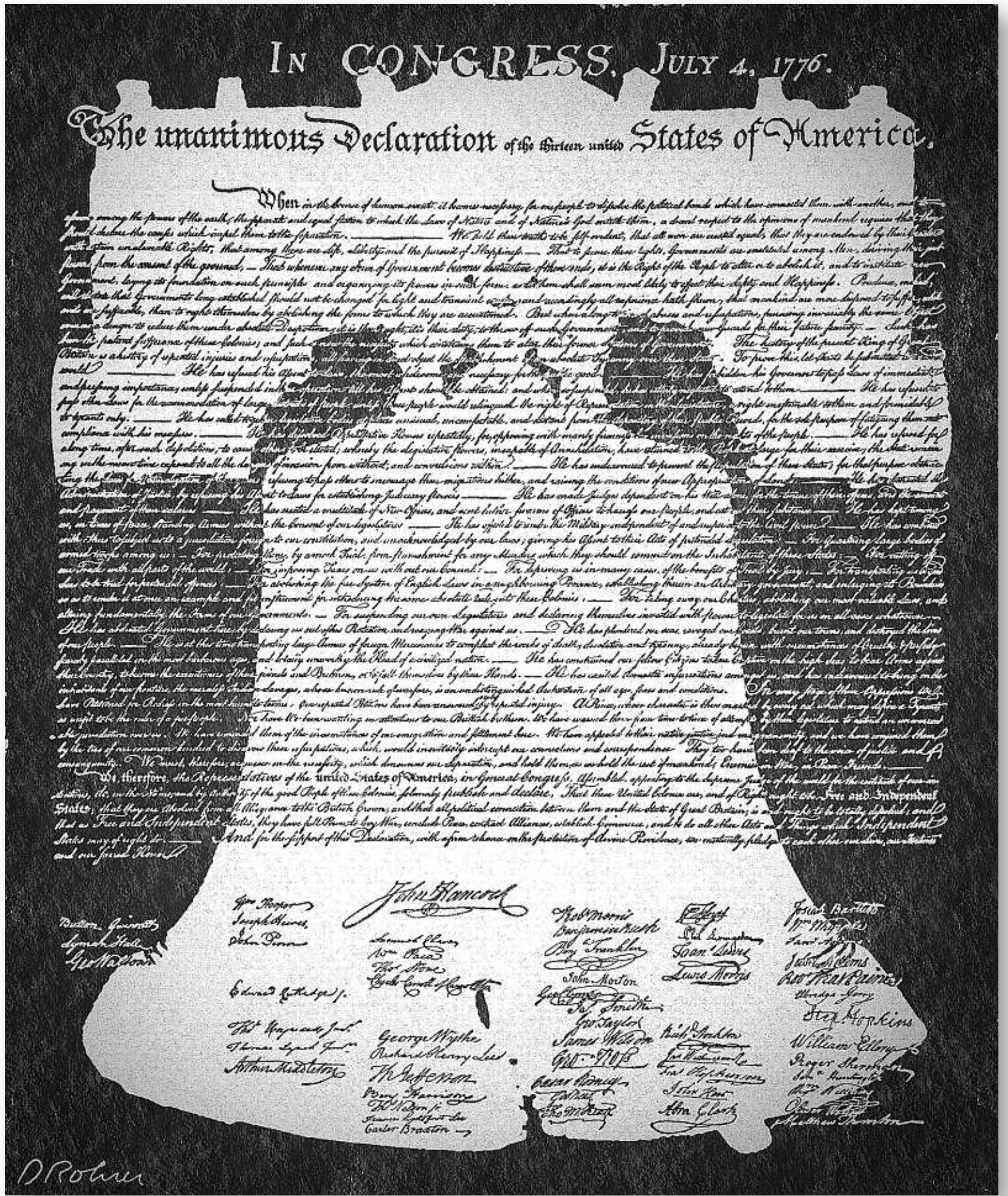
Please see **BIOTECH**, Page B9



CHRONICLE FILE

BIOTECH BUSINESS: Kristy Reece, an associate scientist with Bacterial BarCodes, works at the Houston biotechnology company's facility on North Stadium Drive.

INDEPENDENCE DAY



FOUNDING FATHERS CHANGED HISTORY

Elegantly simple Declaration of Independence established the guiding principles for what has become the greatest nation on Earth

By DAVID PATTON

TO our national shame, a recent study reveals that most American students do not know the purpose of the Declaration of

Independence. Like many holidays, its meaning is lost in the very celebration. The years of debates and collaborations among our Founding Fathers, which culminated in a sweltering Philadelphia hall on July 4, 1776, changed history. Of diverse personal backgrounds, from independent colonies with different regional interests, and with no historical model to follow, these men declared something new in the course of man — the belief that all men are created equal and that life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are unalienable rights. Already at war with Britain as colonies but not yet declaring independence, the signers' 56 signatures were death warrants unless victory was achieved. None faltered.

Great Britain considered the 13 colonies and the people in them to be subjects. But while King George collected taxes and imposed his sovereignty upon them with a strong hand, the colonists had no representation in Parliament. Taxation without representation and other harsh regulations rankled those in the new world — the Sugar Act, the Currency Act, the Stamp Act and the Quartering Act in turn generated deep resentment. A Continental Congress was formed to create a unifying voice. A decade of discontent grew more intense as evidenced by the famous Boston Tea Party in 1773. Resistance led to military occupation by British troops, including the removal of the colonial government in Massachusetts and in its place governance by a British general. In the environment leading to the Declaration of Independence, political rebellion erupted into open warfare. In April 1775, the Battles of Lexington and Concord marked the first formal military conflict, as immortalized by Ralph Waldo Emerson:

"By the rude bridge that arched the flood,
Their flag to April's breeze unfurled,
Here once the embattled farmers stood,
And fired the shot heard round the world."

To some the die was cast. To others, there was still hope of repairing the tear with England. The Continental Congress began meeting to decide the question of compromise or separation. The king made no offer of conciliation, and by June 1776 momentum had swung toward independence. A Committee of Five consisting of John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, Ben Franklin, Robert Livingston and Roger

Sherman was appointed to draft a formal resolution. The committee asked Jefferson to put its collective thoughts on paper, which he presented to Congress on June 28. Until July 2 there was not unanimous agreement that independence should be declared, and even then New York abstained (joining the others a week later). But on that day, 12 colonies voted affirmatively to cast off the yoke of British rule and form a new nation. Over the next two days edits were made to Jefferson's draft, mostly the deletion of controversial provisions on which there was no consensus. On July 4 the delegates reached agreement on the final words of the document that declared independence and created the United States of America based upon those wonderfully expressed ideals.

The Declaration of Independence is elegantly simple. The guiding principles of the greatest nation on Earth are engrossed on a single piece of parchment only 24 and one-fourth inches by 29 and three-fourths inches. The original is still on display for all the world to see. It is what we stand for. At a time when men were governed by kings without the consent of the majority of the governed, our forefathers chose to recognize that men are born with certain unalienable rights that no government may deny — and 235 years later we reap the fruits of liberty. We are a free people because they backed their genius with their blood.

Patton is a partner and co-chair of the energy practice for Locke Lord Bissell & Liddell in Houston.

BIOTECH: Houston has resources to be a leader in science field

CONTINUED FROM PAGE B8 where have benefited from research-based discoveries made — or inspired — by physicians and scientists in this field during the past few decades.

I believe the potential in the Houston area for expansion and commercialization in the field of biotechnology parallels — and may even surpass — the promise for commercializing research discoveries I observed in San Diego more than 25 years ago as an academic researcher.

Many of the Houston area's resources are comparable or superior to those available in other leading biotech regions. The region captures more than \$1.8 billion in annual support for academic research and development. This is conducted at Rice University, Texas A&M University, Baylor College of Medicine, the University of Houston, three University of Texas System institutions (UT M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, UT Health Science Center and The University of Texas Medical Branch), Texas Southern University and NASA's Johnson Space Center. Our region also is home to 150 life science companies, which have far lower aggregate annual expenditures. Experienced management talent exists and inexpensive real estate on which to expand facilities abounds, but Houston has fewer major biotech companies compared with other regions with comparable university research programs.

Key research leadership areas include: oncology, genomics, cardiovascular medicine, neuromedicine, metabolic disease, biodefense and emerging infectious disease, nanotechnology and informatics.

Although our academic science is outstanding, we cannot apply discoveries to benefit the most people until we convert them into products, such as a drug, an instrument, a device or a technique. And Houston, despite its impressive track record, struggles to attract the biotechnology venture capital and start-up companies essential to fueling the types of economic growth and scientific innovation that currently exist in Boston, Silicon Valley and San Diego. There is room for our academic institutions and community leaders to help build more bridges between university laboratories and corporate research.

Texas lawmakers and government leaders have taken important steps to narrow this gap. Since 2005, the Texas Emerging Technology Fund has allocated more than \$197.2 million in funds to 133 early-stage companies, and \$173 million in grant matching and research superiority funds to Texas universities. The state-funded Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas has awarded \$382 million in cancer research, commercialization and prevention grants since 2010. The business community is another important contributor; groups such as BioHouston, for which I serve as vice chair, function as matchmakers for innovators and venture capital.

In September, I will change roles at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, where I have had the privilege of serving as president and working with incredibly talented researchers, doctors and staff for the past 15 years. Following a sabbatical at Harvard and MIT this fall, I will return to the M.D. Anderson faculty as the co-director of the new Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan Institute for Personalized Cancer Therapy. I also will become the L.E. and Virginia Simmons Fellow in Health and Technology Policy at the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy at Rice University. My new roles will give me a chance to focus on the broader world of biomedical research and the best ways to create public policies that facilitate collaborative scientific discovery involving academia and companies.

As our regional biotechnology industry develops, it will drive growth in many other economic sectors: law, finance, design, construction, consulting and housing, among others. In the

past 100 years, the Houston economy has repeatedly reinvented itself to answer the needs of one emerging industry after another — cotton, oil, energy and medicine are examples. These transitions have not been easy, but each new industry has generated tremendous economic development in Houston. The biotech revolution will do the same, and I look forward to helping accelerate its growth.

Mendelsohn is the president of The University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, named the top cancer hospital in the nation by U.S. News & World Report's "America's Best Hospitals" survey. He also has significant experience in the laboratory; his research during two decades helped pioneer the development of cancer therapies that target the aberrant genes, gene products and cell-signaling pathways that cause the disease.



MAYRA BELTRAN : CHRONICLE

CANCER DRUG: Atul Varadhachary holds a vial of Talactoferrin at the Agennix office. The Houston biotech firm received approval to move forward with Phase III clinical trials for its lung cancer drug.

STATEHOOD: Gain for Puerto Rico could mean a loss for Texas

CONTINUED FROM PAGE B8 have been citizens of the U.S. since 1917. Residents of Puerto Rico may vote in United States presidential primaries, and they send delegates to the national conventions of the Democratic and Republican parties. But they do not vote in presidential elections, and they do not have official representation in the U.S. House of Representatives or in the Senate. If Puerto Rico became the 51st state, then, of course, its

people would be allowed to vote in presidential elections and they would have formal representation in the Senate and House.

A White House task force recently recommended that Puerto Rico conduct a plebiscite in the next year and a half to decide whether to remain as a commonwealth or to become a part of the U.S. On his visit there, President Obama promised he would support what the Puerto Ricans desire. Statehood has its

benefits, both for Puerto Rico and, to a certain degree, for Obama and the Democrats. Puerto Ricans living in the U.S. tend to vote Democratic in presidential elections, particularly in New York where the bulk of the 4.6 million mainland Puerto Ricans live. But there are more than 800,000 Puerto Ricans living in Florida, and the Puerto Rican voters there went for Bush in 2004 and for Obama in 2008.

It is time to ask if Puerto Rico becomes the 51st state of the United States, how many seats in the U.S. House will Puerto Rico receive, and, more importantly, which U.S. states will lose seats to Puerto Rico. Since it is unlikely that the House will increase its number of seats beyond 435, seat assignment is a zero-sum game. If a new state is added, there will not be an increase in the number of House seats. One exception to this rule occurred with the admission of Alaska and Hawaii in the late 1950s. For one session of Congress there were 438 seats (one for Alaska and two for Hawaii). However, with the results from the next census in 1960, the House reverted back to its basic number of 435 seats. I doubt that this will occur again, that is, that Congress will allow a temporary increase of more seats for Puerto Rico prior to the 2020 census, and then revert back to 435 seats after the new (2020) census data are issued.

I have used 2010 census data to answer the above questions. The U.S. Census Bureau has already determined the distribution of House seats based on data from the 2010 census. I have taken this listing of the 385 seats for the 50 states (remember that every state automatically gets assigned a seat before the census data come into play) and have recalculated the apportionment distribution and the so-called 2010 priority values for Puerto Rico. I first added Puerto Rico to the 50 states and gave each of the now 51 states its automatic first seat. I then allocated the remaining 384 seats (that is, seat 52 through seat 435) using the Equal Proportions method, the approach that is used to allocate House seats on the basis of the population size of each state. Puerto Rico would receive an additional four seats, beyond its automatic first seat, for a total of five. Specifically, after receiving its first seat, it will then receive the 128th seat, the 209th seat, the 294th seat and the 378th seat. And according to my application of the Equal Proportions method to the 2010 population data from the Census Bureau, the five states that would lose representatives if Puerto Rico is added as the 51st state are Florida, Washington, Texas, California and Minnesota. Without Puerto Rico as a new state, the 2010 census data show that Texas gains four new seats, Florida two, Washington one, and California and Minnesota none. If Puerto Rico is added as a new state, Texas will only gain three new seats, Florida one, Washington none and California and Minnesota will each lose a seat.

The Congress has the final authority regarding the admission of a new state. Most assume that if Puerto Rico submits a petition for statehood, the House and Senate would pass a resolution authorizing statehood. But I really wonder if the passing of a resolution will be that easy. It will be interesting to see if the senators and representatives from the five states that will lose seats, especially the Republican-voting Texas, and the swing-state of Florida, would favor such a resolution. Seat assignment in the U.S. House is a zero-sum situation. If Puerto Rico (or, for that matter, Washington, D.C.) becomes a state, some of the 50 states must necessarily lose seats. The next few years could well be interesting ones with respect to the kinds of political and demographic issues raised here.

Poston is a demographer and a professor of sociology in the College of Liberal Arts at Texas A&M University in College Station.



BRENNAN LINSLEY : AP

IN PUERTO RICO: President Barack Obama waves to a crowd gathered inside a hangar at the Muniz Air National Guard Base, shortly after his arrival in San Juan, Puerto Rico, last month.

METRO

Getting around town by bus is not so simple

Houston needs to expand public transportation options

By JOANNA ZHENG

DON'T get me wrong; Houston is a great city. It's big, it's vibrant and sometimes people even remember to turn on their signals before swerving across three lanes of freeway. There's always something to do, no matter what part of town you're in, and great burger joints and ethnic eateries dot the landscape like powdered sugar swimming in a syrupy pool atop a slice of French toast. But the city's one great drawback is that by virtue of its characteristic sprawling layout, a car is virtually indispensable. For the hapless few who find themselves without one, Houston suddenly turns from roomy playpen into terrifying jungle.

Living within the inner loop dramatically improves the odds of being able to find a workable bus route. At 8:15 every morning, I rush to the bus stop to make the 8:25

a.m. bus, which can come anytime between 8:20 a.m. and not at all (as it did once, leaving myself and three other riders stranded on the sidewalk to await the next bus at 9 a.m.) Halfway through the route, I hop off the bus to wait for the transfer at a stop just before the Heights. Although waiting in the sticky morning heat for 10 or 15 minutes can be a pain, especially for a young, coffee-less intern on Monday morning, I am well aware that without the bus, I would have no other way of getting to work.

There are very few other young people on the buses, and for the first few days I was the object of curious stares and puzzled looks from the other regulars. Most of them are middle-aged or elderly minorities, and I would bet good money that there are some who have been making this commute every day for more years than I've been alive. The bus driver waves and smiles to them when they get on, and pauses at their stops without any signal as a matter of course. There is a certain camaraderie that exists in this small world of public transportation, a world I'm happy to be part of, if only for the summer.

But there are certainly im-



CHRONICLE FILE

REFLECTIONS ON PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION: Getting around Houston without an automobile can be a challenge.

provements that can be made to the Metro system. A recent study released by the Brookings Institution rates Houston as number 72 out of 100 major U.S. metropolitan areas in ability of its residents to access jobs via public transportation. Only about 44 percent of working-age residents live near a bus stop, and only 33 percent of jobs in the city (15 percent in the suburbs) are accessible within 90 minutes. Public transportation seems to be the "poor man's option," and despite the great environmental and financial benefits it brings, very few residents are willing to take advantage of the system. One native Houston friend half-jokingly informed me that I probably knew the bus system better than people who had lived here their entire lives.

The challenge, then, is to

expand both the use and the access of Houston's public transportation. The city, in conjunction with several community development nonprofits, is planning to use a \$3.75 million federal Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant to do just that. The groundwork has been done, and the energy and commitment that characterizes change are there. Maybe in a few summers, the next batch of interns will be able to cruise effortlessly through the city courtesy of new and improved bus systems. Until then, I'll just work on trying to get the bus driver to remember my stop without a signal.

Zheng, a member of the Yale University Class of 2014, is interning at a Houston company this summer.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY METRO

LIFE ON THE BUS: A summer intern finds it's not that easy getting around Houston using the city's public transportation options.