

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 674

WHEREAS, A postage stamp honoring Cesar E. Chavez, one of America's foremost champions of social justice, is being unveiled by the United States Postal Service on April 24, 2003, in San Antonio, Texas; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Chavez gained national renown as a founder and longtime leader of the United Farm Workers of America, AFL-CIO, an organization that fused advocacy for farm laborers with activism for civil rights; and

WHEREAS, Born March 31, 1927, near Yuma, Arizona, and later raised in California, Mr. Chavez spent much of his youth as a migrant laborer; as a Latino and a farmworker, he learned firsthand about the indignities of second-class citizenship and the unhealthy working and living conditions endured by those who tended the fields; and

WHEREAS, After serving in the United States Navy from 1944 to 1946, Cesar Chavez returned to California, and in 1948, he married Helen Fabela; four years later he became a community organizer for the Community Service Organization, a Latino civil rights group that carried out most of its work in urban areas, and by the late 1950s, he had become its national director; and

WHEREAS, When in 1962 the group declined to organize California farmworkers, Mr. Chavez and his colleague Dolores Huerta left the organization to found the National Farm Workers Association, a forerunner of the United Farm Workers; their fledgling union gained national prominence just three years later when it came to the support of workers who were striking California's grape growers; in addition to assuming leadership of the strike, Mr. Chavez launched a successful, nationwide consumers' boycott of nonunion grapes; and

WHEREAS, By the end of the five-year-long strike, the United Farm Workers had organized all of the California table-grape industry and negotiated the first collective bargaining agreements between American farmworkers and corporations; in 1975, Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers further succeeded in securing the passage of California's Agricultural Labor Relations Act, the first law in our nation's history granting farmworkers the right to unionize and bargain collectively; other accomplishments under Cesar's leadership included the establishment of a farmworkers' medical plan, pension plan, and credit union, as well as the National Farm Workers Service Center, Incorporated, whose projects included the development of affordable housing, health clinics, cooperatives, and a retirement home; and

WHEREAS, Throughout his life, Cesar Chavez sought to advance La Causa, the movement, through such nonviolent means as strikes, pickets, and boycotts; on several occasions, he also undertook lengthy fasts to draw public attention to the farmworkers' struggle; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Chavez continued to lead the United Farm Workers until his death on April 23, 1993; more than 50,000 people from across the country gathered to mourn him at his funeral, indicative of the far-reaching impact he had made on American society; and

WHEREAS, Since that time, numerous schools, streets, scholarships, monuments, buildings, and parks have been named in his memory, and a number of our country's cities have initiated annual celebrations in tribute to his life; several states, including Texas, have declared his birthday, March 31, a state holiday; in 1994, Mr. Chavez was posthumously awarded the nation's highest honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom; and

WHEREAS, Cesar Chavez chose to devote his life to the pursuit of social and economic justice through nonviolent means, and his courage and steadfastness in this great work brought improved health, greater security, and hope for a brighter future to countless people; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 78th Legislature, hereby celebrate the issuance of the Cesar E. Chavez stamp by the United States Postal Service and join others throughout our nation in honoring the life of this revered American.

Barrientos
Van de Putte

President of the Senate

I hereby certify that the above Resolution was adopted by the Senate on April 24, 2003.

Secretary of the Senate

Member, Texas Senate

Member, Texas Senate