

By: Chavez

H.R. No. 540

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, A passionate advocate for social justice and civil
2 rights for the poor and disenfranchised, Cesar Chavez was a true
3 American hero, and the anniversary of his birth on March 31, 2009,
4 provides a fitting opportunity to remember and honor his many
5 contributions; and

6 WHEREAS, Born in 1927 near Yuma, Arizona, Cesar Chavez was 10
7 years old when his family lost their farm in the Great Depression
8 and became migrant farmworkers; throughout his youth and into his
9 adulthood, Mr. Chavez traveled across the Southwest, laboring in
10 the fields and vineyards and attending more than 30 different
11 schools by the time he was in the eighth grade; and

12 WHEREAS, After serving in the U.S. Navy for two years, he
13 returned home to marry Helen Fabela, whom he had met while working
14 in the vineyards of central California; settling with his wife in
15 the East San Jose barrio of Sal Si Puedes, he returned to farming to
16 support his young family; and

17 WHEREAS, Witnessing firsthand the hardships and injustices
18 of farmworker life, Mr. Chavez joined the Community Service
19 Organization, a prominent Latino civil rights group, in 1952; while
20 with the CSO, he coordinated voter registration drives and
21 conducted campaigns against racial and economic discrimination; in
22 the late 1950s and early 1960s, he served as the CSO's national
23 director; and

24 WHEREAS, Determined to create an organization that would

1 protect and serve farmworkers, he resigned from the CSO in 1962,
2 leaving the security of a regular paycheck, and moved with his wife
3 and eight children to Delano, where he founded the first successful
4 farmworkers union in American history; originally called the
5 National Farm Workers Association, the organization later became
6 known as the United Farm Workers of America; and

7 WHEREAS, For more than three decades, Mr. Chavez led this
8 groundbreaking organization by effecting change through peaceful
9 tactics such as fasts, boycotts, strikes, and pilgrimages; his
10 union's efforts influenced and inspired millions of Americans,
11 forging a diverse national coalition of students, middle-class
12 consumers, religious groups, and minorities in a hard-won struggle
13 to achieve fair wages, medical coverage, pension benefits, humane
14 living conditions, and perhaps most important, dignity and respect
15 for the hundreds of thousands of farmworkers across the country;
16 and

17 WHEREAS, In 1991, this second-generation American received
18 the Aguila Azteca award, the highest award Mexico can bestow on a
19 person of Mexican heritage, and in 1994, a year after his death on
20 April 23, 1993, his widow accepted the Presidential Medal of
21 Freedom, America's highest civilian honor, on behalf of her late
22 husband; since his death, communities across the nation have chosen
23 to pay homage to Mr. Chavez by naming schools, parks, streets, and
24 libraries, as well as scholarships and awards, in his honor; and

25 WHEREAS, His motto in life, "si se puede," or "it can be
26 done," embodies the legacy that Cesar Chavez has left for the
27 world's benefit, and his principles of equality, justice, and

1 dignity for all Americans remain as essential and as relevant today
2 as they were when he began his important life's work; now,
3 therefore, be it

4 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 81st Texas
5 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the life of Cesar Chavez on March
6 31, 2009, Cesar Chavez Day, and encourage all Texans to reflect on
7 and celebrate the extraordinary achievements of this inspiring
8 humanitarian.