

By: Alonzo

H.R. No. 59

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 provides a fitting  
4 opportunity to remember and honor his many contributions; and

5           WHEREAS, Born on March 31, 1927, near Yuma, Arizona, Cesar  
6 Chavez was 10 years old when his family lost their farm in the Great  
7 Depression and became migrant farmworkers; throughout his youth and  
8 into his adulthood, Mr. Chavez traveled across the Southwest,  
9 laboring in the fields and vineyards and attending more than 30  
10 different schools by the time he was in the eighth grade; and

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

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

23           WHEREAS, Determined to create an organization that would  
24 protect and serve farmworkers, he resigned from the CSO in 1962,

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

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

16 WHEREAS, In 1994, a year after his death on April 23, 1993,  
17 his widow accepted the Presidential Medal of Freedom, America's  
18 highest civilian honor, on behalf of her late husband; since his  
19 death, communities across the nation have chosen to pay homage to  
20 Mr. Chavez by naming schools, parks, streets, and libraries, as  
21 well as scholarships and awards, in his honor; and

22 WHEREAS, His motto in life, "si se puede," or "it can be  
23 done," embodies the legacy that Cesar Chavez has left for the  
24 world's benefit, and his principles of equality, justice, and  
25 dignity for all Americans remain as essential and as relevant today  
26 as they were when he began his important life's work; now,  
27 therefore, be it

1           RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 85th Texas  
2 Legislature hereby recognize the month beginning March 31, 2017, as  
3 Cesar Chavez Farmworker Appreciation Month and encourage all Texans  
4 to reflect on and celebrate the extraordinary achievements of this  
5 inspiring humanitarian.