

1 A MEMORIAL

2 HONORING AND REMEMBERING THE LIFE AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF
3 CESAR CHAVEZ.

4
5 WHEREAS, Americans across the country will pause on
6 March 31, 2017, Cesar Chavez day, to pay tribute to the
7 inspiring life and achievements of the founder and long-time
8 leader of the united farm workers of America on the
9 anniversary of his birth; and

10 WHEREAS, Cesar Estrada Chavez was born in 1927 near
11 Yuma, Arizona, and was raised in California and spent much of
12 his youth as a migrant laborer; and

13 WHEREAS, as a Latino and a farm worker, Cesar learned
14 firsthand about the indignities of second-class citizenship
15 and the unhealthy working and living conditions endured by
16 those who tended the fields; and

17 WHEREAS, after serving in the United States navy from
18 1946 to 1948, Cesar return to California, and, in 1948,
19 married Helen Fabela; and

20 WHEREAS, four years later, Cesar became a community
21 organizer for the community service organization, a Latino
22 civil rights group that focused most of its work in urban
23 areas, and by the 1950s, Cesar had become its national
24 director; and

25 WHEREAS, in 1962, when the community service

1 organization declined to organize California farm workers,
2 Cesar and his colleague, Dolores Huerta, left the
3 organization to found the national farm workers association,
4 a forerunner of the united farm workers; and

5 WHEREAS, the fledgling union gained national prominence
6 just three years later when it offered support to workers who
7 were striking against California's grape growers; and

8 WHEREAS, in addition to assuming leadership of the
9 strike, Cesar launched a successful nationwide consumer's
10 boycott of nonunion grapes; and

11 WHEREAS, by the end of the five-year strike, the united
12 farm workers had organized all of the California table-grape
13 industry and negotiated the first collective bargaining
14 agreement between American farm workers and corporations; and

15 WHEREAS, in 1975, Cesar and the united farm workers
16 succeeded in securing the passage of California's
17 Agricultural Labor Relations Act, the first law in United
18 States history to grant farm workers the right to unionize
19 and bargain collectively; and

20 WHEREAS, numerous other gains achieved under Cesar's
21 leadership included the establishment of a farm workers'
22 medical plan, pension plan and credit union, as well as the
23 national farm workers service center, whose projects have
24 included the development of affordable housing, health
25 clinics, cooperatives and a retirement home; and

1 WHEREAS, over the course of his life, Cesar sought to
2 advance la causa, the movement, through nonviolent means such
3 as strikes, pickets and boycotts; and

4 WHEREAS, on several occasions, Cesar undertook lengthy
5 fasts to draw public attention to the farm workers' struggle;
6 and

7 WHEREAS, Cesar continued to lead the united farm workers
8 until his death on April 23, 1993; and

9 WHEREAS, more than fifty thousand people came from
10 throughout the nation to mourn him at his funeral, indicating
11 the far-reaching impact he had made on American society; and

12 WHEREAS, since the time of Cesar's death, numerous
13 schools, streets, scholarships, monuments, buildings and
14 parks have been named in his memory; and

15 WHEREAS, a number of United States cities have initiated
16 annual celebrations in tribute to his life, and several
17 states have declared his birthday, March 31, a state holiday;
18 and

19 WHEREAS, in 1994, Cesar was posthumously awarded the
20 nation's highest honor, the presidential medal of freedom;
21 and

22 WHEREAS, Cesar chose to devote his life to the pursuit
23 of social and economic justice through nonviolent means, and
24 his courage and steadfastness in his great work brought
25 improved health, greater security and hope for a brighter

1 future to countless people;

2 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE
3 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the life and significant
4 accomplishments of Cesar Estrada Chavez be honored and
5 remembered; and

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial
7 be transmitted to the New Mexico center on law and
8 poverty.

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