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SENATE MEMORIAL 73

**53RD LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2017**

INTRODUCED BY

Richard C. Martinez

A MEMORIAL

HONORING AND REMEMBERING THE LIFE AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF CESAR CHAVEZ.

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

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

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

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1           WHEREAS, after serving in the United States navy from 1946  
2 to 1948, Cesar return to California, and, in 1948, married  
3 Helen Fabela; and

4           WHEREAS, four years later, Cesar became a community  
5 organizer for the community service organization, a Latino  
6 civil rights group that focused most of its work in urban  
7 areas, and by the 1950s, Cesar had become its national  
8 director; and

9           WHEREAS, in 1962, when the community service organization  
10 declined to organize California farm workers, Cesar and his  
11 colleague, Dolores Huerta, left the organization to found the  
12 national farm workers association, a forerunner of the united  
13 farm workers; and

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

17           WHEREAS, in addition to assuming leadership of the strike,  
18 Cesar launched a successful nationwide consumer's boycott of  
19 nonunion grapes; and

20           WHEREAS, by the end of the five-year strike, the united  
21 farm workers had organized all of the California table-grape  
22 industry and negotiated the first collective bargaining  
23 agreement between American farm workers and corporations; and

24           WHEREAS, in 1975, Cesar and the united farm workers  
25 succeeded in securing the passage of California's Agricultural

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1 Labor Relations Act, the first law in United States history to  
2 grant farm workers the right to unionize and bargain  
3 collectively; and

4 WHEREAS, numerous other gains achieved under Cesar's  
5 leadership included the establishment of a farm workers'  
6 medical plan, pension plan and credit union, as well as the  
7 national farm workers service center, whose projects have  
8 included the development of affordable housing, health clinics,  
9 cooperatives and a retirement home; and

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

13 WHEREAS, on several occasions, Cesar undertook lengthy  
14 fasts to draw public attention to the farm workers' struggle;  
15 and

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

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

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

24 WHEREAS, a number of United States cities have initiated  
25 annual celebrations in tribute to his life, and several states

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1 have declared his birthday, March 31, a state holiday; and  
2 WHEREAS, in 1994, Cesar was posthumously awarded the  
3 nation's highest honor, the presidential medal of freedom; and  
4 WHEREAS, Cesar chose to devote his life to the pursuit of  
5 social and economic justice through nonviolent means, and his  
6 courage and steadfastness in his great work brought improved  
7 health, greater security and hope for a brighter future to  
8 countless people;  
9 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE  
10 OF NEW MEXICO that the life and significant accomplishments of  
11 Cesar Estrada Chavez be honored and remembered; and  
12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be  
13 transmitted to the New Mexico center on law and poverty.