

By Senator Hill

1-398-06

1 Senate Resolution

2 A resolution recognizing March 31, 2006, as

3 "Cesar Chavez Day."

4

5 WHEREAS, Cesar Estrada Chavez improved the lives and

6 working conditions of millions of migrant workers and other

7 laborers in America through his inspired leadership of the

8 farm labor movement over a period of 50 years, and

9 WHEREAS, born on March 31, 1927, near Yuma, Arizona,

10 Chavez witnessed firsthand, as a child, the devastation of the

11 Great Depression and was just 10 years old when his family

12 lost their farm and began to attempt to support themselves as

13 migrant workers, and

14 WHEREAS, as Chavez grew up, the Chavez family followed

15 the crops in California, along with approximately 300,000

16 other migrant farm workers in that state, living in temporary,

17 overcrowded, and unsanitary quarters having few supports for

18 health, education, or well-being, and

19 WHEREAS, after serving in the U.S. Navy in the Pacific

20 during World War II, Chavez returned to America to work in the

21 fields with his family and soon met and married Helen Fabela,

22 a woman who shared his social conscience and longing to see

23 improvements in the working and living conditions of migrant

24 workers, and

25 WHEREAS, together they began teaching Mexican farm

26 workers how to read and write in order to prepare them for the

27 test for becoming American citizens, hoping that, with

28 citizenship, migrant workers would become more willing to

29 organize to achieve their rights as workers, and

30 WHEREAS, Chavez's inspired career as a migrant labor

31 leader began with his recruitment in 1952 into Saul Alinsky's

1 | Community Service Organization, which held meetings to urge
2 | migrant farm laborers to register to vote and later to inspire
3 | them to form a union, and

4 | WHEREAS, 10 years later, appalled at the lack of
5 | progress and the continuing exploitation of migrant workers,
6 | Chavez left his own job to devote himself full-time to union
7 | organizing and 6 months later convened 300 union members in
8 | Fresno, California, the first meeting of the National Farm
9 | Workers Union, and

10 | WHEREAS, a decade of dramatic struggle lay ahead for
11 | the small union, requiring the tactics of strikes and boycotts
12 | and leading to violence by strike-breakers and to repeated
13 | arrests and jailings of Chavez and other union members, and

14 | WHEREAS, throughout these struggles Chavez called for
15 | nonviolence on the part of union members, and meanwhile public
16 | outrage at the spectacle of the farm workers' treatment and
17 | their struggles grew throughout the 1970s, and

18 | WHEREAS, public officials, religious leaders, and
19 | ordinary citizens from across America flocked to California to
20 | march in support of the farm workers union while millions of
21 | Americans supported the workers by supporting the boycotts,
22 | and

23 | WHEREAS, gradually progress was made for migrant
24 | workers, in large part due to the visionary leadership of
25 | Cesar Chavez, who continued to serve their cause - and
26 | additionally the causes of a safe food supply and of equality
27 | for racial minorities - until his death in 1993, and

28 | WHEREAS, the vision, leadership, and personal sacrifice
29 | of Cesar Estrada Chavez; his lifelong commitment to human
30 | rights, social justice, and nonviolence; and his success at
31 | building the migrant workers and farm labor movements to

1 | become the United Farm Workers of America call for our
2 | respect, appreciation, and recognition, NOW, THEREFORE,

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4 | Be It Resolved by the Senate of the State of Florida:

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6 | That March 31, 2006, is recognized as "Cesar Chavez
7 | Day" in the State of Florida.

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