DENVER CITY COUNCIL

Proclamation

Proclamation No. 24-0351
Cesar Chavez Day

WHEREAS, Cesar Estrada Chavez was born on March 31st, 1927 on a small farm near Yuma, Arizona, and joined the migrant stream with his family at an early age; and

WHEREAS, During the Great Depression, Cesar Chavez' father lost his small farming business, and the family joined some 30,000 farm workers, following the crops from Arizona to Texas to California into Colorado; and

WHEREAS, Cesar Chavez left school following the 8th grade to work in the fields and vineyards of the Southwest to help support his family; and

WHEREAS, in 1944, at the young age of 17, Cesar Chavez joined the Navy and served this country honorably, and the USNS Cesar Chavez (T-AKE-14), a Lewis and Clark-class dry cargo ship, is the first ship operated by the United States Navy to be named for Cesar Chavez; and

WHEREAS, farm workers suffered from racial discrimination and exploitative working conditions, Cesar Chavez dedicated his life to improving the plight of farm workers through struggle, sacrifice and self-denial; and

WHEREAS, Cesar Chavez with Dolores Huerta in 1962 created the National Farm Workers Association, which later became the United Farm Worker of America (UFW), that would bring justice to farmworkers that had been denied the right to build a union; therefore, had no collective bargaining rights throughout history, winning equal rights and fair treatment against scrupulous growers; and

WHEREAS, it is socially just to recognize Dolores Huerta, along with many other women farm workers who created a unique voice for women farmworkers; and

WHEREAS, September 16, 1965 marked the day that Filipino and Mexican farm workers officially joined forces to strike and picket together for farm labor justice; and

WHEREAS, Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta, led a strike of California grape pickers to demand higher wages and called for boycott against grapes and lettuce; and

WHEREAS, Chavez and the UFW believed in the principles of nonviolence, practiced by Mahatma Ghandi and Martin Luther King, using tactics such as pilgrimages, boycotts, marches, strikes, and fasts to lead a successful 5-year boycott against agribusiness, developing a national movement; and

WHEREAS, in 1975 Cesar Chavez and the work of the UFW resulted in California Agricultural Labor Relations Act, a groundbreaking law that protected farmworkers and ensured them the right to unionize; and

WHEREAS, in 1994, President Bill Clinton posthumously awarded Cesar Chavez the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian honor in the United States; and

WHEREAS, in 1991, Mexico awarded Cesar Chavez the Aztec Eagle, Mexico's highest award presented to people of Mexican heritage; and

WHEREAS, on April 23, 1993 Cesar Chavez died peacefully in his sleep in San Luis, Arizona; and

WHEREAS, Cesar Chavez was an inspiration to millions of Americans to seek out social justice and civil rights for the poor and disenfranchised across the world.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER:

Section 1. That Monday, March 27th be recognized as Cesar Chavez Day.

Section 2. That the Clerk of the City and County of Denver shall affix the seal of the City and County of Denver to this proclamation and that a copy be transmitted to the Cesar Chavez Peace and Justice Committee.

PASSED BY THE COUNCIL March 18, 2024

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PRESIDENT