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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, Born to immigrant parents, Cesar Chavez
3 encountered wretched migrant camps, corrupt labor contractors,
4 meager wages for backbreaking work, and bitter racism; he later
5 helped change those conditions for millions of workers across
6 the U.S.; and

7 WHEREAS, Cesar Chavez was introduced to labor organizing in
8 1952 when an activist priest recruited him to be an organizer
9 for the Community Service Organization; he soon took on the
10 position as national director of the organization but resigned
11 in 1962 to devote his time to organizing a union for farm
12 workers; and

13 WHEREAS, Angered by his childhood that consisted of picking
14 cotton and grapes and enduring poverty and prejudice, Cesar
15 Chavez co-founded the National Farm Workers Association in
16 1962; and

17 WHEREAS, Cesar Chavez's leadership and nonviolent tactics
18 included the Delano, California grape strike, which began in
19 September 1965; his fasts and the 340-mile march from Delano to
20 Sacramento focused national attention on the problems of farm
21 workers; the marchers wanted California to pass laws that would
22 permit farm workers to organize into a union and allow

1 collective bargaining agreements; and

2 WHEREAS, The first union contracts required rest periods,
3 clean drinking water, hand washing stations, and protective
4 clothing to prevent pesticide exposure; the contracts were
5 signed in 1966 but were followed by more years of conflict; in
6 1968, Cesar Chavez began a fast that lasted 25 days to protest
7 the increasing advocacy of violence within the union; on July
8 29, 1970, 26 Delano-area growers formally signed contracts
9 recognizing the United Farm Workers, bringing peace to the
10 vineyard; and

11 WHEREAS, On August 8 1994, Cesar Chavez's family received a
12 Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Bill Clinton in
13 his honor; President Clinton recognized him for facing
14 formidable and often violent oppositions with dignity and
15 nonviolence; and

16 WHEREAS, Cesar Chavez devoted his life to making a change
17 for the working class; he fought for equal pay and better
18 working conditions; therefore, be it

19 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
20 HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
21 we declare March 31, 2019 and March 31, 2020 as "Cesar Chavez
22 Day in Illinois" in order to commemorate his selfless fight to

1 ensure the dignity of workers and their ability to unionize and
2 collectively bargain in the United States.