



HR0079

LRB102 11932 ECR 17268 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, Throughout history, farmworkers had been denied a
3 decent life in the fields and communities of our agricultural
4 valleys; they were considered essential to the State's biggest
5 industry, but only as long as they remained exploited and
6 submissive; and

7 WHEREAS, Farmworkers had tried but failed so many times to
8 organize the giant agribusiness farms that most observers
9 considered it a hopeless task; and

10 WHEREAS, Farm labor contractors played favorites with
11 workers by selecting friends first and sometimes accepting
12 bribes; child labor was rampant, and many workers were injured
13 or died in easily preventable accidents; the average life
14 expectancy of a farmworker was 49 years; and

15 WHEREAS, By the early 1960s, things were beginning to
16 change beneath the surface thanks to grassroots organizations
17 that attempted to represent and organize farmworkers; within
18 another fifteen years, more than 50,000 farmworkers were
19 protected by union contracts; and

20 WHEREAS, In 1962, a young Chicano named César Estrada
21 Chávez founded The National Farm Workers Association; the son

1 of a family of extremely poor farmworkers, he had risen
2 through the ranks of the grassroots Community Service
3 Organization to become its national director; and

4 WHEREAS, César Chávez worked with communities to solve
5 problems through organizing and direct action; from his base
6 in Delano, he traveled for three years from town to town in the
7 central valleys of California to meet with groups of
8 farmworkers in their homes and to tirelessly build an
9 organization that he hoped would one day become an effective
10 union; and

11 WHEREAS, César Chávez spent a great deal of his life
12 promoting and leading boycotts of preying companies and
13 organizations; this eventually led to legislation changes and
14 collective bargaining agreements aimed at guaranteeing field
15 workers the right to more humane working conditions and the
16 right to unionize; and

17 WHEREAS, Because of individuals like César Chávez and his
18 undeniable duty of selfless service, farm work has evolved,
19 not only in the State, but throughout the agricultural global
20 community; this has enhanced the lives and life expectancy of
21 all farmworkers alike; therefore, be it

22 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE

1 HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
2 we declare March 31, 2021, the birth date of César Estrada
3 Chávez, as Farmworkers Awareness Day in order to help raise
4 awareness of these often forgotten bastions of the economy and
5 remind us to be thankful for their hard work; and be it further

6 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
7 delivered to the Governor's Office and all members of the
8 Illinois General Assembly.