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SENATE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, César Chávez was born to immigrant parents on
3 March 31, 1927 on a farm near Yuma, Arizona; in the late 1930s,
4 his family lost their farm and became migrant workers in
5 California; he quit school after the 8th grade in order to help
6 support his family by working in the fields full time; and

7 WHEREAS, From a young age, César Chávez encountered
8 wretched migrant camps, corrupt labor contractors, meager
9 wages for backbreaking work, and bitter racism; he later
10 helped improve those conditions for millions of workers across
11 the U.S.; and

12 WHEREAS, César Chávez was introduced to labor organizing
13 in 1952 when community organizer Fred Ross recruited him to
14 the Community Service Organization; he soon took the position
15 of national director for the organization but resigned in 1962
16 to devote his time to organizing a union for farm workers; and

17 WHEREAS, Driven to improve the working conditions he
18 experienced as a child, César Chávez co-founded the National
19 Farm Workers Association in 1962, which would later become the
20 United Farm Workers of America (UFW); and

21 WHEREAS, César Chávez's leadership and nonviolent tactics

1 were utilized during the Delano, California grape strike,
2 which began in September 1965; his fasts and the 340-mile
3 march from Delano to Sacramento focused national attention on
4 the problems of farm workers; the marchers wanted California
5 to pass laws that would permit farm workers to organize into a
6 union and allow collective bargaining agreements; and

7 WHEREAS, The first union contracts required rest periods,
8 clean drinking water, hand washing stations, and protective
9 clothing to prevent pesticide exposure; the contracts were
10 signed in 1966 but were followed by more years of conflict; in
11 1968, César Chávez began a fast that lasted 25 days to protest
12 the increasing advocacy of violence within the union; on July
13 29, 1970, 26 Delano-area growers formally signed contracts
14 recognizing the UFW, bringing peace to the vineyard; and

15 WHEREAS, After a hard-fought battle with the California
16 state government and various growers, the United Farm Workers
17 of America and César Chávez managed to pass the landmark
18 Agricultural Labor Relations Act of 1975, which guaranteed
19 California farm workers the right to organize and bargain with
20 their employers; and

21 WHEREAS, César Chávez passed away in his sleep on April
22 23, 1993 after devoting his life to making a change for the
23 working class by fighting for equal pay and better working

1 conditions; and

2 WHEREAS, On August 8 1994, César Chávez posthumously
3 received a Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Bill
4 Clinton in recognition of the formidable and often violent
5 oppositions he faced with dignity and nonviolence; and

6 WHEREAS, Today, the United Farm Workers of America
7 continues its vigilant protection of its many union members;
8 the UFW remains strong, a fact that would certainly make César
9 Chávez proud; therefore, be it

10 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL
11 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we declare March 31,
12 2022 as "César Estrada Chávez Day" in the State of Illinois in
13 order to commemorate his selfless fight to ensure the dignity
14 of workers and their ability to unionize and collectively
15 bargain in the United States; and be it further

16 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
17 presented to the family of César Chávez as a symbol of our
18 great esteem and respect.