

**(Without Reference to File)**

## ASSEMBLY THIRD READING

AB 2156 (Rivas and Limón)

As Amended March 20, 2026

2/3 vote. Urgency

**SUMMARY**

This bill would designate March 31 as "Farmworkers Day," a state holiday, and require the Governor to annually proclaim March 31 as "Farmworkers Day."

**Major Provisions**

- 1) Changes Section 6700 of the Government Code that designates specific days as holidays in this state to declare that March 31, shall be known as Farmworkers Day.
- 2) Deletes the requirement that the Governor proclaim March 31 as Cesar Chavez Day and instead requires the Governor to proclaim March 31 as Farmworkers Day.
- 3) Contains an urgency clause.
- 4) Adds Coauthors.

*EXISTING LAW:*

- 1) Recognizes various state holidays including: January 1st (New Year); Third Monday in January (Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day); February 12th (Lincoln Day); Third Monday in February (Washington Day); March 31st (Cesar Chavez Day); April 24 (known as "Genocide Remembrance Day"); The 15th day of the month of Kartik in the Hindu lunar calendar of each year (known as "Diwali"); Last Monday in May (Memorial Day); June 19, (known as "Juneteenth"); July 4th; September 9 (Admission Day); Fourth Friday in September (Native American Day); Second Monday in October (Columbus Day); November 11th (Veterans Day); December 25th; Good Friday from 12 noon until 3 p.m. (Section 6700, Gov. Code)
- 2) Entitles state employees to the following holidays: January 1, the third Monday in January, the third Monday in February, March 31, the last Monday in May, July 4, the first Monday in September, November 11, Thanksgiving Day, the day after Thanksgiving, December 25, the day chosen by an employee pursuant to Section 19854. Gov. Code ("Personal Holiday"), and every day appointed by the Governor of this state for a public fast, thanksgiving, or holiday. (Section 19853 (a), Gov. Code)
- 3) Authorizes a state employee to elect to receive holiday credit to observe their religion, culture, or heritage, among other provisions, including those relating to collective bargaining. (Section 19853.2, Gov. Code)
- 4) Provides the Governor shall annually proclaim March 31 as "Cesar Chavez Day." (Section 6717 Gov. Code)

## COMMENTS

The measure is scheduled to take effect immediately before the 2026 holiday. The bill would rename the current César Chávez state holiday to Farmworkers Day, following a recent New York Times investigative article detailing allegations of sexual abuse and misconduct against Chávez during his leadership in the farmworker movement. Supporters of the change note that this bill will shift recognition from an individual to the broader farmworker movement.

*Farmworkers in California.* With approximately \$50 billion in annual agricultural revenue, California is the leading agricultural state in the United States. The state produces more than 350 commodities, including about one-third of the nation's vegetables and nearly two-thirds of its fruits and nuts.

According to the Center for Farmworker Families, between one-third and one-half of all farmworkers in the United States reside in California—an estimated 500,000 to 800,000 farmworkers. The Salinas Valley, often referred to as the "Salad Bowl of the Nation," alone employs more than 50,000 farmworkers. However, this number may be significantly higher due to the challenges of accurately tracking immigrant farmworker populations.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, agriculture is one of the most dangerous industries in the nation. Common risks include exposure to extreme weather conditions, health issues related to pesticide exposure affecting both farmworkers and their children, and injuries from farm equipment. Despite working in such hazardous conditions, farmworkers often receive minimal benefits and protections.

### **According to the Author**

The author states that "The farmworkers rights movement has been rooted in the lasting values of dignity and justice. To honor the movement's rich California history and the steadfast dedication behind it, we are putting forward legislation to designate the following 2026 state holiday in California as Farmworkers Day."

### **Arguments in Support**

CFT — A Union of Educators & Classified Professionals writes, "Farmworkers are an essential workforce. They feed not only our communities across the state but the entire nation with essential food. Food is harvested in treacherous heat conditions, or without regard to air quality from fires or pesticides. Workers fought for union contracts requiring basic human needs such as rest periods, toilets in the fields, clean drinking water, hand washing facilities, protective clothing against pesticide exposure, banning pesticide straying while workers are in the fields, outlawing DDT [dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane] and other dangerous pesticides, lengthening pesticide re-entry periods beyond state and federal standards, and requiring the testing of farm workers on a regular basis to monitor for pesticide exposure. For these reasons, it is incredibly appropriate to recognize the work, the struggle, and the humanity of farmworkers with a state holiday."

### **Arguments in Opposition**

None on file

## FISCAL COMMENTS

This bill is keyed non-fiscal by Legislative Counsel.

**VOTES**

Votes are not relevant.

**UPDATED**

VERSION: March 20, 2026

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