

Date of Hearing: March 18, 2025

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT, SPORTS, AND TOURISM

Christopher M. Ward, Chair

ACR 12 (Quirk-Silva) – As Introduced January 9, 2025

SUBJECT: Fernando Valenzuela Day

SUMMARY: This measure would designate November 1, 2025, as Fernando Valenzuela Day.

Specifically, **this resolution**, as propose to be amended, makes the following legislative findings:

- 1) Fernando Valenzuela was born on November 1, 1960, in Etchohuaquila, a small town within the municipality of Navojoa, Sonora, Mexico. He was the youngest of 12 children born to Avelino and Maria Valenzuela, who were humble farmers who worked the land with the help of their children and were of Mayo indigenous ancestry. In 1981, Valenzuela married Linda Burgos, a schoolteacher from Mexico and had four children: Fernando Jr., Ricardo, Linda, and Maria Fernanda. Fernando Jr. eventually played in the San Diego Padres and Chicago White Sox organizations.
- 2) Valenzuela began the 1981 Major League Baseball season as a last-minute replacement, making history as the first rookie to start Opening Day for the Los Angeles Dodgers, and delivered a dominant performance with a five-hit shutout against the Houston Astros. He capped his rookie season with eight consecutive wins, a World Series triumph over the New York Yankees, and an unprecedented achievement as the first and only player in Major League Baseball to win both the National League Cy Young Award and Rookie of the Year in the same season.
- 3) “Fernandomania” emerged from the admiration of the Latino community for Valenzuela, electrifying Dodger Stadium and every ballpark on the nights he took the mound. As a Mexican-born sensation for the Los Angeles Dodgers, Valenzuela’s journey transcended sports, becoming a powerful symbol of hope and pride within the Latino community.
- 4) Valenzuela, the six-time All-Star, won 141 regular-season games with the Los Angeles Dodgers from 1980 to 1990, including his no-hitter against the St. Louis Cardinals on June 29, 1990, at Dodger Stadium. In 331 games as a Dodger, the master of screwball had a 3.31 ERA with 29 shutouts, 107 complete games, and 1,759 strikeouts in 2,348 2/3 innings, also holding the title as the all-time leader among Mexican-born pitchers in wins (173), strikeouts (2,074), innings pitched (2,930), complete games (113), and shutouts (31).
- 5) After retiring from Major League Baseball in 1997, the pitching legend eventually found his way into the broadcasting booth at Dodger Stadium in 2003, and spent the rest of his life giving analysis in Spanish to a whole new generation of fans.
- 6) Valenzuela became a United States citizen on July 22, 2015, at a ceremony in downtown Los Angeles. Following Valenzuela’s naturalization, President Obama appointed him a special ambassador for citizenship and naturalization, promoting the rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of citizenship among eligible lawful permanent residents.

- 7) Valenzuela remained deeply engaged with the Los Angeles Dodgers' community efforts, working to make a lasting impact and engage with communities across Los Angeles County. In 2014, he brought holiday joy to patients at Children's Hospital Los Angeles by distributing toys and taking photos with their families. In 2021, he visited the Long Beach Convention Center shelter for migrant children, where he shared his immigrant experience, played Wiffle ball with them, and, speaking in Spanish, offered comfort and encouragement—making the children feel seen and valued during a difficult time.
- 8) As a former Dodgers player, Valenzuela was a dedicated supporter of the Los Angeles Dodgers Foundation (LADF), actively participating in initiatives that uplifted the community. He joined LADF at multiple Dodgers Dreamfield unveilings, helping to create safe spaces for youth to play and grow. Additionally, he supported LADF's mission by attending key fundraising events, including the Blue Diamond Gala and Dodgers All-Access, demonstrating his commitment to making a lasting impact both on and off the field.
- 9) Valenzuela's nickname, "El Toro," symbolized strength, determination, and an indomitable spirit—qualities he exemplified throughout his lifetime.
- 10) The Legislature of the State of California hereby designates November 1, 2025, as Fernando Valenzuela Day to highlight the positive impact his legacy created in the Latino and Hispanic community.

FISCAL EFFECT: None. This measure is keyed nonfiscal by the Legislative Counsel.

COMMENTS:

- 1) Author's Statement. According to the author, "Fernando Valenzuela was a baseball legend. He was a groundbreaking force who shattered barriers and gave voice to those who had been overlooked. His impact went far beyond the field, inspiring generations and changing the way we see both the game and our communities. Honoring him today is a recognition of the enduring legacy he has left on all of us."

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

There is no support on file.

Opposition

There is no opposition on file.

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