

Date of Hearing: June 24, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION

Blanca Rubio, Chair

SB 1394 (Gonzalez) – As Amended June 11, 2026

SENATE VOTE: 33-0

SUBJECT: State holidays: Cesar Chavez Day: Farmworkers Day

SUMMARY: This bill amends existing statutory provisions to remove references to Cesar Chavez Day, replacing them with the designation of Farmworkers Day for purposes of holiday schedules and employee benefits. This bill further modifies the statutory date for Farmworkers Day, replacing March 31 with August 6, as specified. Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Establishes August 6, known as “Farmworkers Day” as a state holiday.
- 2) Removes the designation of March 31 as Cesar Chavez Day for purposes of holidays on which community colleges and public schools are authorized to close, and instead would authorize community colleges and public schools to close, if the governing board agrees, on August 6, known as Farmworkers Day.
- 3) Revises statutory references and provisions applicable to state employees, certain community college employees, and public-school employees to recognize August 6 as Farmworkers Day, as specified.
- 4) Requires the Governor to annually proclaim August 6 as Farmworkers Day.
- 5) Repeals a provision in current law that requires the Governor to issue an annual proclamation recognizing August 26 as California Farmworker Day.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes the holidays of the state as: Every Sunday; January 1; Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (the third Monday in January); Lunar New Year (date corresponding with the second new moon following the winter solstice, or the third new moon following the winter solstice should an intercalary month intervene); Lincoln Day (February 12); the third Monday in February; Farmworkers Day (March 31); Genocide Remembrance Day (April 24); Diwali (the 15th day of the month of Kartik in the Hindu calendar each year); the last Monday in May; Juneteenth (June 19); July 4; the first Monday in September, Admission Day (September 9); Native American Day (the fourth Friday in September); Columbus Day (the second Monday in October); Veterans Day (November 11); December 25; Good Friday (from 12 noon until 3 p.m.); and every day appointed by the President or Governor as a public fast, thanksgiving, or holiday, as provided. (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 and day after; December 25; the day chosen by an employee as a 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) Allows a state employee to elect to receive eight hours of holiday credit for the Lunar New Year, Genocide Remembrance Day, Juneteenth, Native American Day, and Diwali in lieu of receiving eight hours of personal holiday credit. (Section 19853(e), Government (Gov.) Code.)
- 4) Authorizes certain state employees 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.)
- 5) Establishes the day for observance of a state holiday when the holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday. (Section 6701, Gov. Code.)
- 6) Provides a community college may close on March 31, known as “Cesar Chavez Day,” if the governing board, as described, agrees to close the community college for that purpose. (Section 79020, Education Code)
- 7) Provides public schools may be closed on March 31, known as “Cesar Chavez Day,” or the appropriate Monday or Friday following or preceding that date, if the governing board, pursuant to a memorandum of understanding, as described, agrees to close schools for that purpose. (Section 37220.5, Education Code)
- 8) States the Governor shall annually proclaim March 31 as “Farmworkers Day.” (Section 6717, Gov. Code.)

FISCAL EFFECT: This bill is keyed fiscal by Legislative Counsel.

COMMENTS:

Purpose of the bill. According to the author, “California’s Farmworkers, the essential workers who feed the nation, sustain our state’s agricultural industry, and fuel our economy, deserve a holiday that appropriately recognizes and celebrates their achievements. Moving Farmworkers Day from March 31 to August 6 aligns the holiday with National Farmworker Appreciation Day, which was designated by President Bill Clinton in 1994. This day already recognizes Farmworkers’ indispensable contributions, celebrates their resilience and sacrifice, and reminds us of the continuing importance of ensuring dignity, safety and fairness for those who work in our fields. What better way to salute our most vital workers than by redesignating their named holiday to this nationally recognized day of honor.”

What problem does this bill solve? According to information provided by the author’s office, “In March 2026, the Legislature passed AB 2156 (Rivas), which renamed Cesar Chavez Day as Farmworkers Day. The change was made following a New York Times investigative report that outlined a series of allegations against César Chávez describing a pattern of sexual abuse and misconduct during his time as leader in the farmworker movement. Supporters noted that the bill shifted recognition from an individual to the broader farmworker movement. Due to time constraints and the need for continuity, the holiday remained on March 31, while consideration of an alternative date was deferred. This bill revisits that issue by establishing a date that more appropriately recognizes and celebrates California’s farmworkers.

SB 1394 seeks to change Farmworkers Day from March 31 to August 6. This date corresponds to the National Farmworkers Appreciation Day, which was officially designated by President Bill Clinton in 1994. Designating Farmworkers Day on a date already recognized nationally to

honor farmworkers is a fitting way to celebrate the thousands of essential workers who sustain California's agricultural industry. It recognizes their indispensable contributions, celebrates their resilience and sacrifice, and reminds us of the continuing importance of ensuring dignity, safety and fairness for those who work in our fields. As highlighted in Governor Newsom's Proclamation declaring Farmworkers Day, California is home to over one-third of all farmworkers in the United States, and these workers quite literally feed the nation. As the country's largest agricultural state, California produces one-third of the nation's vegetables and nearly two-thirds of its fruits and nuts. As the proclamation notes, "We are the fourth-largest economy in the world because farmworkers make it possible."

Though only eight states recognized Cesar Chavez Day in some form, most either repealed the governing statute or renamed the holiday as Farmworkers Day.

Background.

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.

National Farmworker Appreciation Day. August 6 is observed as Farmworker Appreciation Day in the United States, a day dedicated to recognizing the essential contributions of the nation's agricultural workforce. The observance has roots in the farmworker labor movements of the 1960s, which sought to improve wages, working conditions, and labor protections for agricultural workers. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and agencies like the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services utilize this day to promote health, safety, and workplace rights.

Farmworkers are essential to planting, cultivating, and harvesting the crops that sustain the country's food supply. In 2022, an estimated 2.6 million farmworkers were employed in the United States, and in 2023 their labor contributed more than \$203 billion to the national economy. The day also raises awareness of the demanding and often hazardous conditions many agricultural workers face, including long hours, exposure to extreme weather, and workplace safety risks. Ultimately, the observance honors the millions of agricultural workers whose labor sustains the nation's food system and supports communities across the country.

Related legislation. AB 1841 (Ramos) of 2026. This bill would entitle all state employees to a holiday on the fourth Friday in September, known as "Native American Day," in lieu of that day as an elective holiday under existing law, upon determination by the California Department of Human Resources that sufficient funds exist to provide the holiday for all state employees. (Senate Committee on Governmental Organization)

AB 2017 (Haney) of 2026. This bill would add Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha to the list of state holidays, and authorizes public schools to close and state employees to take a certain type of leave in recognition of those holidays. (Senate Committee on Governmental Organization)

AB 2294 (Ta) of 2026. This bill would designate April 14, a state holiday, as Sylvia Mendez Day. Additionally, the bill exempts Sylvia Mendez Day from being a judicial holiday, as specified. (Pending on the Senate floor)

Prior legislation. AB 2156 (Rivas), Chapter 7, Statutes of 2026. Deleted the designation of March 31 as Cesar Chavez Day and instead designated March 31 as Farmworkers Day. The bill also deleted the requirement that the Governor proclaim March 31 as Cesar Chavez Day and instead requires the Governor to proclaim March 31 as Farmworkers Day.

SB 984 (Polanco), Chapter 213, Statutes of 2000. Established a paid holiday for state employees each March 31, which would be designated as "Cesar Chavez Day."

SB 1373 (Torres, Chapter 1011, Statutes of 1994. Required the Governor to annually proclaim March 31 as Cesar Chavez Day, and included March 31, known as Cesar Chavez Day, in the list of state holidays.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

None on file

Opposition

None on file

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