Office of Senate Floor Analyses
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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Bill No: SB 1394
Author: Gonzalez (D), et al.
Amended: 8/19/26
Vote: 21

SENATE NATURAL RES. & WATER COMMITTEE: 7-0, 4/7/26
AYES: Becker, Seyarto, Allen, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Grove, Stern

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: 7-0, 4/20/26
AYES: Cervantes, Seyarto, Cabaldon, Dahle, Grayson, Richardson, Wahab

SENATE FLOOR: 33-0, 5/22/26
AYES: Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Choi, Cortese, Dahle, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Grove, Jones, Laird, Limón, McGuire, McNerney, Menjivar, Ochoa Bogh, Pérez, Reyes, Richardson, Rubio, Seyarto, Smallwood-Cuevas, Strickland, Umberg, Valladares, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener
NO VOTE RECORDED: Allen, Alvarado-Gil, Becker, Hurtado, Niello, Padilla, Stern

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 79-0, 8/30/26 – See last page for vote

SUBJECT: State holidays: Cesar Chavez Day: Farmworkers Day

SOURCE: Author

DIGEST: This bill amends existing statutory provisions to remove references to Cesar Chavez Day and replaces them with the designation of "Farmworkers Day" for purposes of holiday schedules and employee benefits. Additionally, this bill changes Farmworkers day from March 31 to April 10, as specified.

Assembly Amendments delete the previous contents of the bill and instead remove references to Cesar Chavez day in various statutory provisions and replaces them with "Farmworkers Day." Additionally, amendments change Farmworkers Day from March 31 to April 10, as specified.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

1) Recognizes various state holidays including:
   a) January 1st (New Year);
   b) Third Monday in January (Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day);
   c) February 12th (Lincoln Day);
   d) Third Monday in February (Washington Day);
   e) March 31st (Farmworkers Day);
   f) April 24, known as "Genocide Remembrance Day";
   g) Last Monday in May (Memorial Day);
   h) June 19, known as "Juneteenth;"
   i) July 4th;
   j) September 9 (Admission day);
   k) Fourth Friday in September (Native American Day);
   l) Second Monday in October (Columbus Day);
   m) November 11th (Veterans Day);
   n) December 25th;
   o) Good Friday from 12 noon until 3 p.m.
2) Specifies that if the above holidays are in conflict with the provisions of a memorandum of understanding, the memorandum of understanding shall be controlling without further legislative action.
3) Designates August 26 of each year as California Farmworker Day and requires the Governor to annually proclaim August 26 as California Farmworker Day.
4) Adopts state holidays as judicial holidays, with certain exceptions, including Admission Day and Columbus day.

This bill:

1) Establishes April 10, 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 April 10, known as Farmworkers Day.

3) Revises statutory references and provisions applicable to state employees, certain community college employees, and public-school employees to recognize April 10 as Farmworkers Day, as specified. If this bill conflicts with a provision of a collective bargaining agreement entered into by a public school employer and an exclusive bargaining representative before January 1, 2027, those amendments shall not apply until the expiration or renewal of that collective bargaining.

4) Requires the Governor to annually proclaim April 10, instead of March 31, as Farmworkers Day, and repeals the proclamation of August 26 as California Farmworkers Day.

5) Includes language to avoid chaptering issues with AB 1841 (Ramos), AB 2017 (Haney), and AB 2294 (Ta).

Background

Author's Statement. According to the author's office, "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 April 10 aligns the holiday with a historic event for the farm labor movement, the end of the Delano Grape Strike March in 1966. Designating Farmworkers Day on a date with immense historical significance to the farmworker labor movement honors our state's tireless farmworkers. 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."

AB 2156 (Rivas, Chapter 7, Statutes of 2026). In March 2026, the Legislature passed AB 2156 (Rivas Chapter 7, Statutes of 2026), 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 continuity, the holiday remained on March 31, while consideration of a different 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 April 10. This date corresponds to a historic event for the farm labor movement, the end of the Delano Grape Strike March. Marchers travelled from Delano to Sacramento from March 17 to April 10 in 1966. Over 300 miles, the once modest march grew from 70 striking farmworkers to over 10,000 supporters. By the end of the march the first contract with grape growers was signed by farmworkers.

New York Times Investigation. On March 18, 2026, the New York Times published the results of an investigation 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. According to the report, Chávez allegedly abused at least two young girls in the 1970s. One account describes inappropriate contact when the young girl was around 12 years old, followed by rape at age 15. Another young girl described repeated sexual encounters over several years starting when the girl was about 13 years old.

Among the most significant accounts are allegations from Dolores Huerta, co-founder of what eventually became the Farmworkers Union, who issued a public statement in response to the report by The New York Times. In her statement, Dolores Huerta confirmed that she experienced sexual coercion by Chávez in the 1960s. She described that Chávez exerted power and control over her in ways that led to nonconsensual encounters resulting in two pregnancies. Dolores Huerta framed her experience in terms of survival rather than victimhood, stating that she now understands herself “as a survivor” of abuse and coercion, and emphasizing that power dynamics and loyalty to the farmworker movement contributed to her decision not to report earlier. In her own words, Dolores Huerta wrote:

> I have never identified myself as a victim, but now I understand that I am a survivor – of violence, sexual abuse, of domineering men who saw me, and other women, as property, of things to control. The knowledge that he hurt young girls sickens me. My heart aches for everyone who suffered alone and in silence for years. There are no words strong enough to condemn those deplorable actions [Chávez] did. Cesar's actions do not reflect the values of our community and movement. The farmworker movement has always been bigger and far more important than any one individual I have kept this secret long enough. My silence ends here.

Advocate Response. Following these allegations, advocates have emphasized that listening to survivors, believing their accounts, and offering meaningful support can play a critical role in the healing process. In public statements, the Rape, Abuse, & Incest National Network (RAINN), describes the allegations as "grave and deeply distressing" noting that when prominent figures are accused of such profound betrayals of trust, the effects can reverberate across entire communities and may retraumatize survivors of sexual violence.

RAINN further underscored and reminded the public that there is no "right' time or "standard way" for a survivor to come forward. The organization emphasized that survivors, "cite personal or family reasons for not disclosing rape, and others are deterred by the stigma they perceive within their community or because they fear the outcome of reporting. The calculus is even harder when the person who committed the rape is such a prominent figure, which can lead survivors to fear they will not be believed or will be blamed for bringing down someone who is admired in their community. Ultimately, we need to trust survivors to make the decision that is right for them."

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

According to the Center for Farmworker Families, between one-third to one-half of all farmworkers in the United States reside in California, or approximately 500,000-800,000 farmworkers. The Salinas Valley, the "Salad Bowl of the Nation," employs more than 50,000 farmworkers. However, this number could be much higher given the difficulty with tracking data on immigrant farmworkers. Approximately 75% of all farmworkers in California are undocumented. Roughly, one-third of farmworkers are women.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor statistics, agriculture is considered one of the most dangerous industries in the nation. Common injuries involve exposure to the elements, health-related symptoms related to pesticide exposure in both farmworkers and their children, and farm equipment injuries. Even though farmworkers work in one of the most dangerous industries, they receive very little benefits and protections.

Related/Prior Legislation

AB 2156 (Rivas, Chapter 7, Statutes of 2026) designates March 31 as Farmworkers Day and requires the Governor to annually proclaim March 31, as Farmworkers Day.

AB 268 (Kalra, Chapter 358, Statutes of 2025) added Diwali to the list of state holidays, and authorizes public schools and state employees to take certain type of leave in recognition of Diwali, as specified.

SB 721 (Hueso, Chapter 496, Statutes of 2021) designates August 26 of each year as California Farmworker Day and requires the Governor to annually proclaim August 26 as California Farmworker Day.

AB 1655 (Jones-Sawyer, Chapter 753, Statutes of 2022) adds June 19, known as "Juneteenth," to the list of state holidays and authorize state employees to elect to take time off with pay in recognition of Juneteenth, as specified.

AB 1801 (Nazarian, Chapter 761, Statutes of 2022) added April 24, known as "Genocide Awareness Day," to the list of state holidays and authorize community colleges and public schools to close on April 24, known as "Genocide Awareness Day," as specified. Additionally, the bill would authorize state employees to elect to take time off with pay in recognition of "Genocide Awareness Day," as specified.

AB 2596 (Low, Chapter 792, Statutes of 2022) repealed provisions requiring the Governor to annually proclaim the Lunar New year, and instead recognized the Lunar Year as a state holiday and authorizes state employees, with specified exceptions, to elect to receive eight hours of holiday credit for the Lunar New Year in lieu of receiving eight hours of personal holiday credit, as specified.

AB 2644 (Reyes, Chapter 130, Statutes of 2018) requires the Governor to annually proclaim April 10 as Dolores Huerta Day, set apart that date as a date having special significance, and encouraged all public schools and educational institutions to conduct exercises remembering the life of Dolores Huerta.

AB 7 (Bonta, Chapter 29, Statutes of 2015) requires the Governor to annually proclaim October 25 as Larry Itliong Day, designated that date each year as having special significance, and encouraged all public schools and educational institutions to conduct exercises remembering the life of Larry Itliong and the contributions he made to the state.

AB 1973 (Hernandez, Chapter, Statutes of 2014) established the Fourth Friday in September as a state holiday known as Native American Day.

AB 1953 (Baca, Chapter 637, Statutes of 1998) renamed "American Indian Day" to "Native American Day" and authorized the State Board of Education to adopt a model curriculum guide related to "Native American 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) requires 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.

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: No

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee, costs of an unknown, but potentially significant amount, in excess of $150,000, across school districts and community college districts by entitling classified employees to a paid holiday on Farmworkers Day, subject to a memorandum of understanding (MOU), instead of Cesar Chavez Day (General Fund). Although this bill does not increase the total number of holidays for a classified employee, this bill would impact those districts that previously celebrated Cesar Chavez Day and opt to celebrate Farmworkers Day or not replace the holiday, necessitating changes through the bargaining process.

For example, the California Community Colleges (CCC) notes that August 6 generally falls outside of the academic calendar, as summer sessions usually end prior to the date and fall sessions usually begin after the date, so districts are not

likely to designate Farmworkers Day as a local holiday. Impacted districts would need to update MOUs to reflect holiday changes, resulting in workload costs in the low thousands of dollars per district, and certain districts may not be able to comply with this bill until current MOUs expire. There are 73 community college districts and over 900 school districts in California. Additionally, CCC notes that many colleges have set their calendars well in advance of the start of the school year and estimates minor costs to update guidance and other documents related to college holidays.

Additionally, minor and absorbable costs to the California Department of Human Resources (CalHR) to update calendars, policies, informational materials, and collective bargaining references to reflect the new holiday date for state employees. It is unknown whether shifting the state holiday from May to August would impact staff workload pressures across state agencies, as the date change may result in more or less efficiencies depending on each agency's operational needs.

Similarly, likely minor and absorbable costs to the Judicial Council to make conforming updates, as existing law requires the courts to close for the March 31 judicial holiday.

SUPPORT: (Verified 8/24/26)

California School Employees Association

OPPOSITION: (Verified 8/24/26)

None received

Assembly Floor 79 0 0 SB 1394 Gonzalez Senate Third Reading By Celeste Rodriguez
Ayes: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Chen, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Flora, Fong, Gabriel, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Johnson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

Noes:
No Vote Recorded:

Prepared by: Felipe Lopez / G.O. / (916) 651-1530
11/13/26 16:09:23

****** END ******