
THIRD READING

Bill No: SR 29
Author: Arreguín (D) and Cervantes (D), et al.
Introduced: 3/6/25
Vote: Majority

SUBJECT: César Chávez Day

SOURCE: Author

DIGEST: This resolution calls upon all Californians to observe César Chávez's birthday, March 31, as a day of public service.

ANALYSIS: This resolution makes the following legislative findings:

- 1) César Estrada Chávez recognized that for many people, spanning many generations and many ethnicities, the path to a better life frequently begins in the fields. For many farmworkers, the American Dream means a life of self-sacrifice, hard work, and perseverance.
- 2) In San Jose, César Chávez was introduced to the social teachings of the Catholic Church and trained in community organizing strategies and tactics. César Chávez and Fred Ross, an organizer for the Community Service Organization (CSO), established CSO chapters across California and Arizona during the 1950s, helping Latinos register to vote, pushing for basic public services and infrastructure in the barrios, peacefully battling police brutality and racial discrimination, and creating the most effective Latino civil rights group of its era.
- 3) In 1962, after failing to convince the CSO to let him organize farmworkers, César Chávez resigned from the only decent paying job he ever held and moved his wife and eight children to Delano, California. There, with \$1,200 in life savings that was soon gone, César Chávez, his family, and close friends began building the National Farm Workers Association, which later became the United Farm Workers of America (UFW).

- 4) In 1965, in a partnership with a union of Filipino American farmworkers, César Chávez organized a major strike against grape growers in California. The following year César Chávez led an unprecedented 340-mile march, from Delano to Sacramento, that placed the farmworkers' plight before the conscience of the American people. Supporters carried slogans with the words "HUELGA" (strike) and "VIVA LA CAUSA" (long live our cause), advocating for improved compensation and labor conditions. Later efforts resulted in the enactment of California's historic Agricultural Labor Relations Act of 1975, the first and still the only law in the nation to "encourage and protect" the right of farmworkers to organize and bargain with their employers.
- 5) César Chávez successfully increased public awareness of farmworker working conditions. To many Californians, the farmworkers' struggles are an issue from the past, a belief reflected by the fact that farmworker suffering typically takes place in remote areas far from cities, thereby rendering farmworkers invisible to our society. The fruits and vegetables that we enjoy in our daily lives are produced by farmworkers who often endure long hours of backbreaking work and still face challenges such as inadequate enforcement of pesticide, safety, and labor protection laws in the fields.
- 6) In 2000, the Legislature passed, and Governor Gray Davis signed into law, Senate Bill 984 (Chapter 213 of the Statutes of 2000), to create the first annual state holiday in the country on César Chávez's birthday, March 31. Under that law, the State Board of Education also created a statewide curriculum on César Chávez and encourages schools across the state to engage teachers and students in service learning projects as a way of honoring the legendary farm labor and civil rights leader.

This resolution calls upon all Californians to learn from César Chávez's life and his mission of nonviolence, social justice, and selfless service to others.

Related/Prior Legislation

SR 69 (Menjivar, 2024) – Adopted in Senate.
HR 78 (Calderon, 2024) – Adopted in Assembly.
SR 20 (Padilla, 2023) – Adopted in Senate.
HR 23 (Soria, 2023) – Adopted in Assembly.
SR 71 (Limón, 2022) – Adopted in Senate.
HR 97 (Reyes, 2022) – Adopted in Assembly.
SR 17 (Gonzalez, 2021) – Adopted in Senate.
HR 29 (Arambula, 2021) – Adopted in Assembly.

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

SUPPORT: (Verified 3/17/25)

None received

OPPOSITION: (Verified 3/17/25)

None received

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3/19/25 15:14:30

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