

Whereas

Whereas, on March 31, 1927, Cesar Estrada Chavez was born in his family's adobe home near Yuma, Arizona; during his childhood, Chavez and his family suffered injustice when they were swindled out of their home through a dishonorable business deal, learning in the process that "The love for justice that is in us is not only the best part of our being, but it is also the most true to our nature;" and

Whereas, Cesar Chavez and his family continued to suffer injustice, becoming migrant farm workers and working in the fields up and down the San Joaquin Valley in California; Chavez dropped out of school after eighth grade when his father was injured in an accident and could no longer work, becoming a full-time farm worker himself;

Whereas, after serving his country in the United States Navy, Cesar Chavez went to work in the lumber industry and again as a migrant farm worker; it was while working that he became friends with Father Donald McDonnell, a Roman Catholic Priest who introduced Chavez to union organizing and nonviolent teaching, and Fred Ross, a community organizer who hired Chavez as an organizer for the Community Service Organization to register voters; and

Whereas, in 1962, Cesar Chavez founded the National Farm Workers Association with his wife, Helen Fabela, and Dolores Huerta, working to organize and provide services, including life insurance and a credit union, to improve the lives of migrant farm workers; and

Whereas, on May 3, 1965, the National Farm Workers Association held its first strike with a group of rose grafters, demanding increased wages; after four days, a wage increase was agreed upon and the strikers returned to work, and with the success of this strike, Cesar Chavez's reputation grew; and

Whereas, in September 1965, Cesar Chavez and the National Farm Workers Association, which primarily consisted of Mexican farm workers, decided to back the Delano Grape Strike, which was initiated by the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee, a group led by Larry Itliong and made up predominantly by Filipino farm workers; Chavez—together with Itliong and Dolores Huerta—grew the strike and attracted national attention, leading to support from the United Auto Workers under Walter Reuther, the Student Non-Violence Coordinating Committee—one of the main organizers of the Civil Rights Movement—and then-Senator Robert F. Kennedy, who held three congressional hearings on the plight of migrant farm workers and toured their places of work; and

Whereas, the successful advocacy of both organizations together led to their consolidation as the United Farm Workers (the UFW), a union made stronger with the combined advocacy

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for both Mexican and Filipino farm workers; the UFW were able to grow their national support by leading a boycott against grapes and the grocery stores that continued to sell them; eventually, the strike ended in 1970 with 26 growers signing contracts with the UFW, leading to increased wages, job benefits such as paid vacation days and health insurance, and improved working conditions; and

Whereas, Cesar Chavez, a devout Roman Catholic who rarely missed mass, combined union organizing and nonviolence teaching with Catholic social teaching to create a movement that not only was strategic in its efforts, but engaged in religious imagery, pilgrimages, prayer, fasting, and masses to meet the cultural and spiritual needs of a people who struggled for better working conditions and above all, a better life; and

Whereas, Cesar Chavez continued to work after the Delano Grape Strike, leading further UFW strikes and expanding the UFW to other states, including Oregon, and fought for better legal protections for migrant farm workers, leading to the passage of the California Agricultural Relations Act of 1975, which made California the first state in the country to enshrine the right to collective bargain for farmworkers. Today, 10 states, including Oregon, have enshrined into law the right of farmworkers to collective bargain; and

Whereas, after his death on April 23, 1993 in Yuma, Arizona, Cesar Chavez remains a folk hero among Latinx Americans for his work meeting the needs of migrant farm workers in the San Joaquin Valley of California and elsewhere, while continuing to inspire labor and community organizers all around our country; today, schools, libraries, parks, and streets are named after Cesar Chavez—including our own Cesar Chavez Blvd—and many places also celebrate Cesar Chavez on his birthday;

Now, therefore, I, Ted Wheeler, Mayor of the City of Portland, Oregon, the “City of Roses,” do hereby proclaim March 31, 2021 to be

Cesar Chavez Day

In Portland and encourage all residents to observe this day.

Proclaim March 31, 2021 to be Cesar Chavez Day
(Proclamation introduced by Mayor Wheeler and
Commissioners Hardesty and Rubio)

Filed March 23, 2021

MARY HULL CABALLERO
Auditor of the City of Portland

By *Keelan McClymont*
Deputy

Commissioners voted as follows (Yea or Nay)

Rubio -
Ryan -
Hardesty -
Mapps -
Wheeler -