

an American hero, a role model, and an inspiration to many Americans. In this Congress I have reintroduced H. Res. 76, a resolution urging the establishment of a national holiday for Cesar Chavez. This resolution was introduced and supported by the United Farm Workers of America, Cesar E. Chavez Foundation, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, and many other of my fellow colleagues. We are urging for a holiday to honor Cesar's memory and educate our youth and community about this remarkable yet humble leader who paved the way for many of us.

Cesar Chavez is a true American hero. He carried the torch for justice and freedom. He was a beacon of light for many of us Latinos in the community. His legacy will live on in our hearts and hopes and in our dreams. To quote him, *si se puede*, yes, it can be done.

This is the same cry we hear today, a cry of justice and equality and opportunity for all to have the American Dream here in the United States. Cesar represents the true essence of hope for many of us. From humble beginnings, Cesar was born near Yuma, Arizona, grew up in a migrant labor camp, and fought against the exploitation of workers at an early age.

In 1944, Cesar joined the United States Navy and honorably served his country as a veteran. With great courage and passion, he fought to preserve the principles of freedom and equality. He used this same courage and passion to stop the exploitation of workers.

Cesar was a trailblazer. In the early 1960s, he founded the United Farm Workers to gain nationwide attention of the exploitation of grape farmers, a too often forgotten labor force. He led his organization to increase protection for workers; to increase health and safety standards; to ban child labor from the field; to win fair wage guarantees; to fight against employment discrimination and the sexual harassment of female workers.

Cesar's dedication to social justice meant great sacrifices. This year marks the 40th anniversary of his famous public 25-day hunger strike calling for nonviolence. Cesar organized the farm workers to stand together and in one loud voice say, "From this day, we demand to be treated like men and we should be respected as human beings. We are not slaves. We are not animals. We are not alone."

I was lucky enough to be part of his funeral, attended by over 50,000 people. I also had the pleasure of meeting with Cesar Chavez on many occasions in the Inland Empire.

In his memory, the State of California in September of 1994 enacted a law designating March 31, Cesar's birthday, as a State holiday. However, Cesar's light reaches beyond California and across ethnic barriers and across income levels across our Nation. Ten States officially celebrate Cesar's birthday as a holiday. This month his

legacy will be remembered publicly all across the Nation in over 25 States and over 35 cities. These nationwide actions are about respect, *respeto*.

For this reason, I continue to call for the respect of a great man, a trailblazer who changed the world by using nonviolence. Cesar taught us that all workers deserve respect and dignity. Cesar, a common man with uncommon vision; a humble leader that forged together national coalitions of students, middle-class consumers, religious groups, minorities and others.

The significance and impact of Cesar's life transcends any one cause or struggle. In 1994 he was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian honor in America. And yet we should have a holiday for him.

His slogan, *si se puede*, yes, it can be done, still rings in the hearts of many Latinos and non-Latinos that it can be done and never give up because you can achieve whatever you want.

Yes, I say *si se puede*, one day Cesar Chavez will be honored, respected and remembered throughout this Nation with a holiday. This is only the beginning. Nationwide we are raising awareness of a great man who has honored our Nation, who has served our country and sacrificed himself for the betterment of others. We will keep his legacy alive.

CESAR CHAVEZ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SOLIS) for 2 minutes.

Ms. SOLIS. I thank the Speaker and I am very privileged this morning to pay special tribute and honor to the legacy of Cesar Estrada Chavez. Chavez dedicated his life to championing the rights of farm laborers and all working people and he did it through nonviolence. Recently I returned from a trip with the Speaker to India where I visited a memorial to Mahatma Gandhi and I recall that moment thinking about the nonviolence that was also expressed by Cesar Chavez in his movement to fight for dignity and respect for poor people, for people that were being oppressed.

Like Gandhi, Chavez believed that nonviolence is one of the most powerful tools to achieve change, including social and economic justice. Chavez was a follower also of Martin Luther King, Jr. believing in the power of prayer and spirituality. I have been inspired by the works of Cesar Chavez and also by the cofounder of the United Farm Workers, Dolores Huerta, and with that had introduced a resolution in this House to pay tribute to Dolores Huerta, one of the highest ranking members of the UFW. Yet until this day, we have not been able to bring that resolution up and I wonder why. And I ask the question—why can't this House also pay tribute to a strong leader, a female, who represents the workers? Also with that in mind, I intro-

duced legislation, the Cesar Estrada Chavez Study Act, H.R. 359, that did pass out of this House, that would for the first time authorize the Department of Interior to study public lands important to the life and history of Cesar Chavez through the National Park Service. Right now that bill has made its way out of the House and is over at the Senate. I would ask that the Senate Members there take action on the bill as soon as possible.

We should be grateful and never forget the accomplishments and achievements of Cesar Chavez to improve civil rights for every single American and those individuals who work and toil in the fields. Let us not forget the fruits and vegetables that we receive on our table come from those very farm workers here who may not even today have the same protections that Cesar Chavez worked so hard for.

CESAR CHAVEZ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA) for 2 minutes.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I rise with my colleagues today to remember a great American on his birthday. Cesar Chavez was born 83 years ago and would have been 83 years old yesterday. He devoted his entire life to the betterment of this Nation and to its people. He gave voice to the voiceless. In working with the farm workers, in organizing their union, in fighting for their dignity, respect and equal treatment on the job, he worked for farm workers who were not considered equals in any sense. He gave voice to the voiceless.

And in these times when we see these disturbing trends going on in our Nation, where even on the floor of this great people's hall we hear disturbing trends where people are marginalized, demonized, dehumanized because of who they are and the circumstances of their life, these disturbing trends should remind us of Cesar's legacy. His legacy was not about creating a situation where people are treated less than but creating a society where people were treated as equals, with respect and with dignity. Cesar insisted on the best for us and on the best in us. He insisted on a sense of faith about the future and our families and our Nation. He insisted on tolerance, that we as human beings should understand and respect each other and with that respect comes understanding and with that respect comes a better nation.

He insisted on equality, that all humans are created equal under our Constitution, all people are created equal under our Constitution, and he fought his entire life to make that value a reality for all of us.

So when we celebrate his birthday and we celebrate his legacy, let us not forget that Cesar's legacy is a living legacy, a legacy that calls upon us day