



CITY COUNCIL
CHRIS HOLDEN
COUNCILMEMBER
DISTRICT 3
April 28, 2003

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Councilmember Chris Holden

RE: CONSIDERATION OF THE DESIGNATION OF CESAR CHAVEZ DAY AS A CITY HOLIDAY OR DAY OF CELEBRATION

I recommend that the City Council declare March 31 as a Day of Celebration in Pasadena in honor of Cesar Chavez, and ask that the City Council direct staff to begin meeting with the City's unions, asking them to join the City Council in this celebration by converting an existing floating holiday to Cesar Chavez Day.

In 1962, Cesar Chavez founded the National Farm Workers Association, which later became the United Farm Workers AFL-CIO, the first successful farmworkers' union in the United States. Under Mr. Chavez' leadership, the UFW was the first organization to win collective bargaining rights for farm workers, and at its peak in the 1980's, the UFW's labor agreements covered approximately 80,000 workers in California, Arizona and Florida. Mr. Chavez rallied millions of supporters to farmworker causes, and forged a national coalition of unions, religious groups, students, minorities, and consumers that together pursued issues of social justice.

The late Senator Robert Kennedy called Cesar Chavez, "One of the heroic figures of our time." As a testimony to his lifelong contributions to humanity, in 1994, Mr. Chavez was posthumously awarded the highest civilian award from the United States, the Presidential Medal of Freedom. In 2000, SB 984 was signed by Governor Gray Davis, recognizing the accomplishments of Cesar Chavez and establishing a paid holiday for state employees and participating public schools.

I recommend that the City of Pasadena join the State of California in celebrating Mr. Chavez as one of the most important civil rights leaders in our nation's history. By converting an existing floating holiday into an observed holiday, the City will not incur additional direct costs.

Respectfully submitted,

CHRIS HOLDEN
Councilmember