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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2011

SENATE RESOLUTION

HONORING CÉSAR ESTRADA CHÁVEZ (1927-1993)

Introduced By: Senators Pichardo, Nesselbush, Tassoni, Crowley, and Pinga

Date Introduced: March 31, 2011

Referred To: Recommended for Immediate Consideration

1           WHEREAS, César Chávez, born in Yuma, Arizona, on March 31, 1927, grew up in a  
2 series of migrant labor camps in Arizona and California. After serving in the Navy from 1944 to  
3 1945, he returned to migrant farm work; and

4           WHEREAS, While working with the Community Service Organization (CSO) in San  
5 Jose, California, César Chávez led voter registration drives, helped Chicanos with immigration  
6 problems, and organized CSO chapters in other cities. In 1962, when the CSO refused to create a  
7 farm workers' union, he resigned; and

8           WHEREAS, During that same year, Chávez began to organize the National Farm  
9 Workers' Association and, by 1965, 1,700 families enrolled. Always practicing non-violent  
10 tactics borrowed from Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, Chávez invited arrest or fasted to call  
11 attention to his struggle with the growers; and

12           WHEREAS, In September 1965 Chávez's union joined migrant Filipino grape pickers on  
13 a strike against the growers that lasted into the 1970s. Under his leadership, the union organized  
14 boycotts of non-union farm products; and

15           WHEREAS, In 1966, the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial  
16 Organizations (AFL-CIO) chartered the United Farm Workers' Organizing Committee with  
17 Chávez as president; and

18           WHEREAS, Chávez became a contemporary American hero and is an inspiration to all  
19 who value the basic American ideals of justice, equality, and freedom; and

20           WHEREAS, Chávez advocated for non-violent social reform in protecting the

1 environment and the rights of the consumers. Ultimately, he forged an extraordinary and diverse  
2 national coalition of students, middle-class consumers, trade unionists, religious groups, women,  
3 and minorities, including Latinos, Filipinos, Jews, Native Americans, African Americans, and  
4 gays and lesbians; now, therefore be it

5           RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations  
6 hereby honors the legacy of this extraordinary and courageous American labor leader who forever  
7 changed the lives of farm workers in America; and be it further

8           RESOLVED, That this Senate proclaims that March 31<sup>st</sup> will be celebrated as "César  
9 Chávez Day" in the State of Rhode Island; and be it further

10           RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and he hereby is authorized and directed to  
11 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the Center for Hispanic Policy and Advocacy  
12 and Progreso Latino.

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