

## 1 HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, Cesar Estrada Chavez was born on March 31, 1927,  
3 on a small farm near Yuma, Arizona; at an early age he began  
4 his life as a migrant farmer, after his father lost their  
5 land during the depression; the family traveled across the  
6 Southwest laboring in fields and vineyards; in the eighth  
7 grade, young Cesar Chavez quit school to help support his  
8 family on a full-time basis; and

9 WHEREAS, In 1945 Cesar Chavez joined the United States  
10 Navy serving in the Pacific Theater at the end of World War  
11 II; he met his wife, Helen Fabela, while working in the  
12 Delano vineyards and they were married in 1948; the family  
13 settled in the East San Jose barrio of Sal Si Puedes (get out  
14 if you can); and

15 WHEREAS, In 1952 Cesar Chavez met Fred Ross, an organizer  
16 for the Community Service Organization (CSO); within several  
17 months, Cesar Chavez became an organizer for CSO,  
18 coordinating voter registration drives, battling racial and  
19 economic discrimination against Chicano residents, and  
20 organizing new chapters of the CSO across California and  
21 Arizona; he went on to serve as national director of the CSO  
22 in the late 1950's and early 1960's; after failing to  
23 convince the CSO to commit to helping migrant farm workers in  
24 organizing, he quit his job and founded the National Farm  
25 Workers Association (NFWA); and

26 WHEREAS, The NFWA, with 1,200 member families, joined an  
27 AFL-CIO sponsored union in a strike against Delano growers in  
28 September of 1965; in 1966 the two unions merged to form the  
29 United Farm Workers (UFW); in 1968 Cesar Chavez conducted a  
30 25-day fast to reaffirm the UFW's commitment to non-violence;  
31 the boycott against grape growers convinced them to sign  
32 contracts with the UFW in 1970, but after renegotiations in

1 1973, the growers signed contracts with the Teamsters,  
2 causing a walkout by 10,000 farm workers in California; and

3 WHEREAS, Cesar Chavez called for a worldwide boycott; by  
4 1975 a poll showed that 17 million Americans supported the  
5 boycott; the boycott forced growers to support the 1975  
6 Agricultural Labor Relations Act; in 1982 George Deukmejian  
7 was elected Governor of California; under his leadership the  
8 farm labor board ceased to enforce laws and Cesar Chavez  
9 called for another boycott in 1984; in 1988 he conducted a  
10 36-day "Fast for Life" to protest the pesticide poisoning of  
11 farm workers; and

12 WHEREAS, In 1991 Cesar Chavez received the Aguila Azteca  
13 (The Aztec Eagle), the highest award given by Mexico,  
14 presented to people of Mexican heritage who have made major  
15 contributions outside of Mexico; on April 23, 1993, Cesar  
16 Chavez passed away, with more than 40,000 people  
17 participating in his funeral; in 1994 he posthumously  
18 received the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President  
19 Bill Clinton, becoming the second Mexican-American to receive  
20 the award; and

21 WHEREAS, In 1994 the family of Cesar Chavez and the  
22 officers of the United Farm Workers created the Cesar E.  
23 Chavez Foundation to "inspire current and future generations  
24 by promoting the ideals of Cesar Chavez's life"; therefore,  
25 be it

26 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
27 NINETY-SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that  
28 we declare March 31, 2001, and each March 31 thereafter, to  
29 be Cesar Chavez Day in the State of Illinois in memory of  
30 this great leader of the United States farm workers movement;  
31 and be it further

32 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be

1 presented to a representative of the United Farm Workers and  
2 the family of Cesar Chavez.