



NEWS RELEASE
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Contact: Juana Silverio
(202) 376-7700

U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Observes Cesar Chavez Day

Washington, DC -- Today, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights along with all Americans observes Cesar Chavez Day. Cesar Chavez is a civil rights icon, an American who stood for non-violent advocacy of farm worker rights and inclusion. Mr. Chavez's family lost their farm during the Great Depression and as a result became migrant workers. Mr. Chavez's personal experience as a migrant worker exposed him to the harsh realities of working in the fields where there was no one to give voice to their plight. He went on to organize Mexican-Americans to register to vote and speak out nationally for workers' rights through the formation of the United Farm Workers Union.

Mr. Chavez's words continue to ring true today: "Once social change begins, it cannot be reversed. You cannot un-educate the person who has learned to read. You cannot humiliate the person who feels pride. You cannot oppress the people who are not afraid anymore."

Commission Chairman Martin R. Castro stated: "Cesar Chavez's movement and his legacy have grown to not only encompass the rights of farm workers, but to the civil rights of all. His non-violent advocacy for the recognition of the rights and dignity of all persons stands as guidepost for the work that remains for us today to ensure that all Americans' civil rights are protected."

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The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is an independent, bipartisan agency charged with advising the President and Congress on civil rights matters and issuing a federal civil rights enforcement report. For information about Commission's reports and meetings, visit <http://www.usccr.gov>.