

ONE HUNDRED FOURTH LEGISLATURE

SECOND SESSION

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION 486

Introduced by Mello, 5.

WHEREAS, Cesar Chavez was born on March 31, 1927 on a family farm near Yuma, Arizona; and

WHEREAS, when he was still a young boy, Cesar Chavez's family lost their farm during the Great Depression. Cesar began working with his family as a migrant farm worker, and after eighth grade he quit school to work full-time and help support his family; and

WHEREAS, as a young man, Cesar Chavez went on to serve for two years in the United States Navy. When he was discharged he returned to California and married Helen Fabela, with whom he had eight children; and

WHEREAS, as early as 1949, Cesar Chavez began advocating for civil rights and labor rights for farm workers in California, campaigning for fair wages and better working and living conditions, and fighting the use of child labor; and

WHEREAS, in 1952, he joined the Community Service Organization, where he worked to encourage voter registration and voting among the Latino community and opposed discrimination against Latinos in East Los Angeles. In 1958, he became the national director of the organization; and

WHEREAS, in 1962, Cesar Chavez co-founded the National Farm Workers Association with Dolores Huerta, which would later expand nationally to become the United Farm Workers of America (UFW); and

WHEREAS, Cesar Chavez followed the examples of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi by leading non-violent protests and boycotts and organizing strikes within the Latino and Filipino communities, resulting in a successful five-year strike by grape-pickers that gained national attention; and

WHEREAS, Cesar Chavez's national and international campaigns led the abolition of the Bracero Program, raised wages for farm workers, led to better

working conditions for laborers, created health care coverage for farm workers, brought attention to discrimination faced by farm workers, led to the ban of the short-handled hoe as an unsafe tool, and resulted in collective bargaining agreements that covered tens of thousands of farm workers across the nation; and

WHEREAS, Cesar Chavez used fasting as a peaceful tactic to bring attention to the plight of farm workers in the United States. In 1968 and 1972 he fasted for over three weeks, and in 1988 he fasted for over five weeks to protest the effects of pesticide use on farm workers and their children; and

WHEREAS, Cesar Chavez passed away on April 23, 1993 at the age of 66. More than 50,000 people attended his funeral in California where he was laid to rest at the UFW headquarters in Keene, California; and

WHEREAS, on August 8, 1994, Cesar Chavez was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Bill Clinton. Several portraits and pictures of Chavez now reside in the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C.; and

WHEREAS, the legacy of Cesar Chavez continues to inspire millions worldwide to work for labor rights, human rights, and civil rights.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA, SECOND SESSION:

1. That the Nebraska Legislature joins numerous states and communities by designating March 31, 2016 as Cesar Chavez Day in Nebraska.

2. That the Nebraska Legislature recognizes the accomplishments and service of farm workers in Nebraska.

3. That Nebraskans are encouraged to participate in community service projects to celebrate Cesar Chavez's life and work.