

2017-J1396

Senate Resolution No. 1396

BY: Senator ALCANTARA

MEMORIALIZING Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim March 31, 2017, as Cesar Chavez Day in the State of New York

WHEREAS, Our nation is a symbol of democracy, peace, freedom and justice born out of the many men and women who have fought for and died to preserve it; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim March 31, 2017, as Cesar Chavez Day in the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Cesar E. Chavez, of humble origins, and of Mexican parentage, was born in Yuma, Arizona, on March 31, 1927, and was raised on his family's farm; due to a bad business deal, they had to sell their farm; and

WHEREAS, On May 19, 1970, the California Rural Legal Assistance (CRLA) reached an understanding to not form or attempt to form any agriculture worker's union; CRLA recognized that its function was to serve the rural poor, not as union organizers, advisors, or negotiators, but as a law firm concerned with legal matters; and

WHEREAS, Therefore, with respect to those class matters involving farm work employment, including wages and fringe benefits, pesticides, discrimination against union workers, field conditions, working conditions, farm pollution problems, water, farm labor contractors, green card and illegal entrant, agriculture employers and agri-business, and subsidies, CRLA agreed to consult before any action was taken; and

WHEREAS, Five years later, the California Agricultural Labor Relations Act (CALRA), a landmark statute, enacted by the State of California, became law on June 5, 1975, establishing collective bargaining for farm workers in that state; this agreement was reached on May 19, 1975, on a compromise bill; and

WHEREAS, Cesar Chavez was known for his keen leadership style, his non-violent stance, and his constant struggle to protect the rights of farm workers in California and throughout the United States; and

WHEREAS, Between 1952 and 1962, Cesar Chavez worked for the Community Services Organization; when they refused to organize farm workers in 1962, he left and co-founded the United Farmers Union with Dolores Huerta; the bylaws were approved by the AFL-CIO in 1966; and

WHEREAS, Cesar Chavez represents, for many people, a humble role model and at the same time, demonstrates powerful convictions; his boycotts of grapes and other products raised consciousness about the life and struggles of farm workers, their needs and desires for a quality of life and education; and

WHEREAS, Cesar Chavez's motto, "Si Se Puede" translated "Yes We Can," is a reflection of this commitment; and

WHEREAS, Like Mahatma Ghandi and Martin Luther King, Jr., Cesar

Chavez believed in and carried out his struggle adhering to the principles of non-violence; his many acts of protest and, particularly, fasting served to unify the workers, alert America to the dangers of pesticides and stimulate the conscience and support of many in our Nation; and

WHEREAS, On May 19, 2011, the United States Navy named a ship in memory of Mexican-American activist Cesar Chavez who served the United States Navy from 1944-1946, after which he became a leader in the American Labor Movement and co-founded the National Farm Workers Association; and

WHEREAS, The family of the State of New York commemorates and honors Cesar Chavez as a champion of democracy and human rights; his legacy remains in the hearts and minds of many, but not nearly as much as in the workers and members of the United Farm Workers of America, which he founded and has, since his death on April 23, 1993, grown from 20,000 members to approximately 27,000 members; and

WHEREAS, It is fitting that New York, with a history rich in campaigns and battles for civil, labor and human rights, joins in honoring a great leader -- Cesar E. Chavez; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim March 31, 2017, as Cesar Chavez Day in the State of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York.