



State Senator
TINA MAHARATH

3rd District

Sponsor Testimony
Senator Tina Maharath
Senate Bill 82
Transportation, Commerce and Workforce Committee
Date

Good morning Chairman McColley, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Transportation, Commerce and Workforce Committee. Thank you for allowing me to present Senate Bill 82, which will designate March 31st as “Cesar E. Chavez Day” in Ohio. SB 82 will honor the humanitarian contributions that Cesar E. Chavez made to this nation, including his organizing of farm workers to campaign for safe and fair working conditions, reasonable wages, decent housing, and the outlawing of child labor.

Cesar Chavez was born on March 31, 1927. After losing their land during the Great Depression, his family moved from Yuma, Arizona, to Northern California for work as migrant farm workers. As a worker in the field, Chavez was met with low wages, racism, corrupt contractors and uninhabitable migrant camps. His experience in the field motivated his advocacy and organizing work. In 1962, Chavez founded the National Farm Workers Association and became perhaps the world’s best known Latino American civil rights activist. His commitment to nonviolent organizing campaigns helped to widen support for farmers among the general public and serves as a model for us to this day.

Chavez dedicated his life to protecting the rights of farm workers and improving their labor conditions through new laws and regulations. The work that he achieved during his lifetime drastically changed the safety and welfare of farm workers. In 1973, he was awarded the Jefferson Award for Greatest Public Service Benefiting the Disadvantaged for his efforts and in 1994 President Clinton awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Since 2014, Cesar Chavez Day has been recognized as a U.S. federal commemorative holiday. Recognition of this day helps to promote public service. At the state level, California, Arizona, Colorado, Michigan, New Mexico, Texas, Utah and Wisconsin all observe Cesar Chavez Day. It is time for Ohio to join these states and recognize an American icon that fought tirelessly for the rights of the underprivileged and less fortunate.

Chairman McColley and members of the committee, I ask for the favorable passage of SB 82 and I would be happy to answer any questions you have at this time.