



PALOMA AGUIRRE
CHAIR PRO TEM
SUPERVISOR, FIRST DISTRICT
SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA ITEM

DATE: March 24, 2026

29

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT

RENAMING CÉSAR CHÁVEZ DAY AS FARMWORKERS DAY AT THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO, ADOPTION OF A RESOLUTION CALLING ON THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA AND THE UNITED STATES FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO RENAME CÉSAR CHÁVEZ DAY AS FARMWORKERS DAY, AND A-72 WAIVER (DISTRICTS: ALL)

OVERVIEW

In the mid twentieth century, agricultural laborers organized in the face of entrenched exploitation to demand fair wages, safe working conditions, and the basic dignity owed to every worker. Their efforts transformed labor standards and challenged systems that had long denied visibility and power to the workers who sustained the agricultural economy. This movement reshaped expectations of fairness and helped establish that labor rights are inseparable from human rights.

Across California and neighboring regions, farmworkers built a movement grounded in courage, sacrifice, and collective action. They organized strikes, led boycotts, and built alliances despite facing retaliation and systemic discrimination. Their persistence forced a national reckoning and secured protections that continue to shape labor standards today. The legacy of this movement endures as a model for how collective action can drive lasting change.

History must remember that this movement was never the work of a single individual. It was built by a diverse coalition of Mexican, Filipino, and other immigrant communities united in common cause. Women were not only essential as organizers and strategists but were often the backbone of the movement including leading campaigns, shaping strategy, and sustaining the work in the face of both external opposition and internal inequities that too often minimized their contributions. Additionally, Filipino farmworkers played a central role in the early organizing that sparked broader action. These contributions have too often gone unrecognized. An honest account of this history requires recognizing that collective struggle, not the efforts of a single individual, lead to sustained progress.

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At a time when women and girls across the country continue to come forward with experiences of sexual violence and abuse, exclusion, and stripping of rights, it is critical that public institutions move beyond symbolic acknowledgment and take meaningful steps to elevate women's experiences and leadership. The farm worker movement is a powerful example of how women, particularly women of color, have driven transformative change while too often being denied full recognition. This moment calls for a deliberate correction of that imbalance.

Among the leaders who embodied this collective spirit is Dolores Huerta, whose leadership was foundational to the success and direction of the farm worker movement and whose contributions exemplify the role women played in building and sustaining this historic struggle. As a co-founder of the United Farm Workers, she helped lead organizing efforts, negotiations, and national campaigns that improved wages and working conditions for thousands of people. She played a key role in the national grape boycott and helped build alliances that brought the struggle of farmworkers into the national consciousness. Her advocacy extended to advancing gender equity and expanding civic participation among historically marginalized communities. She endured personal sacrifice, including arrest and serious injury, yet remained steadfast in her commitment to nonviolence and justice. Her leadership demonstrates how women were not secondary figures in this movement. They were central drivers of its success. Recognizing this truth is essential to ensuring that public honors reflect not only the outcomes of the movement, but the full diversity of those who made those outcomes possible.

Recent allegations regarding César Chávez demand a direct and principled response, particularly in a moment when communities are calling for greater accountability around gender-based harm and the misuse of power. Silence or avoidance is not acceptable in a moment when communities across the nation are confronting the realities of sexual violence gender-based harm, and long-standing patterns of minimizing or dismissing the experiences of women. Public honors reflect our collective values and when credible concerns related to harm arise, it is necessary to reevaluate which individuals we elevate and why. Truthful representation of history requires that recognition align with our commitment to justice and the dignity of those impacted by harm.

The work of building a more just society is ongoing, and it requires actively centering the leadership, dignity, and safety of women not only in policy, but in the symbols and narratives we elevate as a society. This is especially true for women of color who continue to face systemic inequities and disproportionate harm. Advancing justice involves making deliberate choices about who we honor and uplift. Representation in public commemorations shapes cultural values and signals whose contributions are worthy of recognition.

This item directs the Chief Administrative Officer to take decisive action to rename César Chávez Day to Farmworkers Day through changes to the County Administrative Code and Compensation Ordinance. This item also calls on the State of California and the United States federal government to rename César Chávez Day to Farmworkers Day. This change is necessary to more accurately reflect the collective spirit of the farm worker movement, to elevate the leadership of women

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workers who were foundational to its success, and to ensure that public honors are aligned with our shared commitment to equity, accountability, and justice.

This item is being submitted as a late agenda item due to the need for a prompt response to recent public allegations involving César Chávez, which emerged after the standard board letter docket deadline.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

CHAIR PRO TEM PALOMA AGUIRRE

1. Waive Board Policy A-72 Agenda and Related Process, Section 2.C.2.ii, which establishes required timelines for review when preparing a Board Letter.
2. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to return to the Board on April 21, 2026 with an ordinance amending the County Administrative Code and the Compensation Ordinance to rename César Chávez Day as Farmworkers Day.
3. Adopt a Resolution entitled: “CALLING ON THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA AND THE UNITED STATES FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO RENAME CÉSAR CHÁVEZ DAY AS FARMWORKERS DAY”
4. Direct the CAO to send a letter to appropriate State and federal officials calling for the renaming of César Chávez Day as Farmworkers Day.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

This action advances equity by recognizing the full and inclusive history of the farm worker movement and aligning public honors with values of accountability and representation. Renaming the holiday as Farmworkers would shift recognition from a single individual to the collective struggle led by a diverse coalition of workers and organizers. By affirming a more accurate and inclusive representation of the farm workers movement, this action promotes cultural equity and ensures that public recognition reflects the diversity of those who have driven social progress. By shifting away from a single-individual framework, this action helps correct gender imbalances in public recognition and affirms the County’s commitment to ensuring that women’s leadership is visible, valued, and centered in how history is honored.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

This action supports the County of San Diego’s commitment to equity and community wellbeing. By recognizing the collective contributions of diverse farm worker communities and elevating women’s leadership within the movement, this item aligns with County goals to support marginalized populations and strengthen community trust.

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FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this board action. There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

N/A

BACKGROUND

In the mid twentieth century, agricultural laborers organized in the face of entrenched exploitation to demand fair wages, safe working conditions, and the basic dignity owed to every worker. Their efforts transformed labor standards across the agricultural economy and challenged systems that had long denied visibility and power to the workers who sustained it. This movement was not only about labor rights, but about human rights, and it reshaped the moral expectations placed on employers, institutions, and government.

History must remember that this movement was never the achievement of any single individual. It was built by a diverse, multicultural coalition that included Mexican, Filipino, and other immigrant communities who stood together in common cause. Women were vital to these efforts, serving as organizers, negotiators, and strategists whose leadership sustained and expanded the fight for justice. Additionally, Filipino farmworkers were instrumental in initiating labor actions that catalyzed the broader movement, and their leadership has too often been minimized in public recognition. Collective effort and struggle are what delivered progress, not the efforts of a single individual.

Among the leaders who embodied this collective spirit is Dolores Huerta, whose lifelong work reflects an unwavering commitment to justice, equity, and community power. As a co-founder of the United Farm Workers, she played a central role in organizing workers, coordinating large scale campaigns and leading complex negotiations. As a result, she helped secure contracts that improved wages, benefits, and working conditions for thousands of farmworkers. She was a principal architect of the national grape boycott, helping to mobilize millions of consumers and build alliances with labor unions, students, faith leaders, and civil rights organizations across the country. Her strategic leadership demonstrated a deep understanding of both grassroots organizing and national advocacy, bridging local struggles with broader movements for change.

Her contributions also extended well beyond labor organizing. She was a leading voice in advancing gender equity within the movement at a time when women's voices were often minimized or resisted. She consistently pushed for women to be recognized not only as participants

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but as decision makers and leaders. In addition, her advocacy expanded into voter registration, civic engagement, and public policy, helping to increase political participation among historically marginalized communities. Her work contributed to legislative and institutional changes that strengthened protections for workers and expanded access to opportunity. Her life's work embodies the inclusive, selfless, and forward looking values that public institutions should elevate and honor.

Recent allegations regarding César Chávez demand a direct and principled response. Silence or avoidance is not acceptable in a moment when communities across the nation are confronting the realities of sexual violence and abuse of power. Public honors reflect our collective values and when credible concerns related to harm arise, it is necessary to reevaluate which individuals we elevate and why. Truthful representation of history requires that recognition align with our commitment to justice and the dignity of those impacted by harm.

The work of building a more just society is ongoing, and it requires centering the leadership, dignity, and safety of women. This is especially true for women of color who continue to face systemic inequities and disproportionate harm. Advancing justice involves making deliberate choices about who we honor and uplift. Representation in public commemorations shapes cultural values and signals whose contributions are worthy of recognition.

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LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

Today's proposed action supports the County of San Diego's 2026–2031 Strategic Plan initiative of Community (Engagement) by elevating the contributions of historically marginalized groups and promoting accurate and inclusive public representation.

Respectfully submitted,



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Supervisor, First District

ATTACHMENT(S)

Attachment A: A RESOLUTION CALLING ON THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA AND THE UNITED STATES FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO RENAME CÉSAR CHÁVEZ DAY AS FARMWORKERS DAY.