

Mr. Chairman, committee members. Thank you for inviting us to testify on behalf H.R. 4882, *The Cesar E. Chavez and Farmworker Movement National Historic Park Act* by Representatives Ruiz and Grijalva, and Senator Padilla.

I'm Andres Chavez, executive director of the National Chavez Center, the arm of the Cesar Chavez Foundation dedicated to promoting and preserving my grandfather's legacy across the country. We also own and manage two of the three historic sites cited in this bill—the 40 Acres outside of Delano, California and the National Chavez Center in Keene, California.

The Forty Acres is in Delano where the movement was born. It served as headquarters for the United Farm Workers in the 1960s and provided an array of services such as a co-op gas station and a health clinic. The 40 Acres is also home to the Agbayani Village, a retirement home we built in 1974 for elderly and displaced Filipino farm workers.

The Forty Acres was where my grandfather conducted his first lengthy public fast in 1968, for nonviolence, and his last and longest fast in 1988 over the perils that pesticides pose to farm workers and consumers.

The National Chavez Center at Keene—where I grew up and where Cesar Chavez lived and labored his last quarter century—was headquarters for the movement starting in the early '70s when it expanded across the state and nation.

Keene was also where generations of farm worker leaders learned to run their own union and where thousands more passed through over the decades, acquiring invaluable skills and experience.

The 187-acre site in Keene, California is also home to the Cesar E. Chavez National Monument, the 398th unit of the National Parks Services.

The Chavez national monument, on a small part of the Keene grounds, has been run since 2012 through a partnership between the National Chavez Center and the National Park Service. That partnership has introduced this important piece of American history to new audiences that would not otherwise learn about the farm worker movement.

So many fresh faces from all walks of life—and from around the nation and the world—now visit this national monument and find great meaning and purpose there.

The Chavez national monument is the first park service unit to ever honor a contemporary Latino figure. So much of the relevance of the national monument we have witnessed hails from how it helps elevate the consciousness and pride felt by all Americans, especially young people like myself and the dramatically growing population of Latinos – both urban and rural—who see their contributions to America reflected there.

My grandfather put it best in his landmark address to the Commonwealth Club of California in 1984. The coming of our movement, he said...

...sent out a signal to all Hispanics that we were fighting for our dignity, that we were challenging and overcoming injustice, that we were empowering the least educated among us, the poorest among us. The message was clear. If it could happen in the fields, it could happen anywhere: in the cities, in the courts, in the city councils, in the state legislatures. I didn't really appreciate it at the time, but the coming of our union signaled the start of great changes among Hispanics that are only now beginning to be seen.

So, we at the National Chavez Center and Cesar Chavez Foundation strongly encourage you to act on H.R. 4882.

Thank you again for hearing from us.

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