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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2012

H O U S E R E S O L U T I O N

HONORING CÉSAR ESTRADA CHÁVEZ (1927-1993)

Introduced By: Representatives Diaz, Slater, Silva, Valencia, and Cimini

Date Introduced: February 16, 2012

Referred To: House Municipal Government

1 WHEREAS, César Chávez, born in Yuma, Arizona, on March 31, 1927, grew up in a
2 series of migrant labor camps in Arizona and California. After serving in the Navy from 1944 to
3 1945, he returned to migrant farm work; and

4 WHEREAS, While working with the Community Service Organization (CSO) in San
5 Jose, California, César Chávez led voter registration drives, helped Chicanos with immigration
6 problems, and organized CSO chapters in other cities. In 1962, when the CSO refused to create a
7 farm workers' union, he resigned; and

8 WHEREAS, During that same year, Chávez began to organize the National Farm
9 Workers' Association and, by 1965, 1,700 families enrolled. Always practicing non-violent
10 tactics borrowed from Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, Chávez invited arrest or fasted to call
11 attention to his struggle with the growers; and

12 WHEREAS, In September 1965 Chávez' union joined migrant Filipino grape pickers on
13 a strike against the growers that lasted into the 1970s. Under his leadership, the union organized
14 boycotts of non-union farm products; and

15 WHEREAS, In 1966, the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial
16 Organizations (AFL-CIO) chartered the United Farm Workers' Organizing Committee with
17 Chávez as president; and

18 WHEREAS, Chávez became a contemporary American hero and is an inspiration to all
19 who value the basic American ideals of justice, equality, and freedom; and

20 WHEREAS, Chávez advocated for non-violent social reform in protecting the

1 environment and the rights of the consumers. Ultimately, he forged an extraordinary and diverse
2 national coalition of students, middle-class consumers, trade unionists, religious groups, women,
3 and minorities, including Latinos, Filipinos, Jews, Native Americans, African Americans, and
4 gays and lesbians; now, therefore be it

5 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island and
6 Providence Plantations hereby honors the legacy of this extraordinary and courageous American
7 labor leader who forever changed the lives of farm workers in America; and be it further

8 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives proclaims that March 31st will be
9 celebrated as "César Chávez Day" in the State of Rhode Island; and be it further

10 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and he hereby is authorized and directed to
11 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the Center for Hispanic Policy and Advocacy
12 and Progreso Latino.

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