

DAYS OF COMMEMORATION

Senate Bill 352 (Substitute H-3) First Analysis (10-20-03)

Sponsor: Sen. Buzz Thomas
House Committee: Government
Operations
Senate Committee: Local, Urban and
State Affairs

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

Legislation has been proposed to commemorate the contributions of three notable 20th Century Americans. The text of the bill contains the reasoning behind designating special days of remembrance for Cesar E. Chavez, Gerald R. Ford, and Henry Ford. (See below)

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

The bill would create a new act to declare March 31 as Cesar E. Chavez Day; July 14 as President Gerald R. Ford Day; and July 30 as Henry Ford Day, in the State of Michigan. For each individual being honored, the bill contains a statement justifying the designation of an annual day of commemoration. (See Arguments)

HOUSE COMMITTEE ACTION:

As passed by the Senate, the bill applied only to Cesar E. Chavez. The substitute reported by the House Government Operations Committee added the tributes to President Ford and Henry Ford.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

House Bill 4319 of this legislative session, which passed the House on October 9, also would designate March 31 as Cesar E. Chavez Day. See the analysis by the House Legislative Analysis Section dated 10-7-03. A number of other commemorative days are already in statute, including days designated for Rosa L. Parks (February 4); John Fitzgerald Kennedy (May 29); and Casimir Pulaski (October 11).

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

The bill would have no fiscal implications, based on an analysis of an earlier version of the bill by the House Fiscal Agency dated 9-22-03.

ARGUMENTS:

For:

The bill contains the following statement in support of designating March 31 of each year as Cesar E. Chavez Day in Michigan:

The Legislature recognizes the fundamental contribution that Cesar E. Chavez made to this nation by organizing farm workers to campaign for safe and fair working conditions, reasonable wages, decent housing, and the outlawing of child labor. Cesar E. Chavez began working in the fields of Arizona and California at the age of 10. Profoundly influenced by these humble beginnings, Chavez embraced the nonviolent principles of Mohandas Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to crusade against racial and economic distribution, coordinate voter registration drives, and found the United Farm Workers of America. In 1994, Chavez was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest honor given to civilians by the United States government." The bill also says, "The Legislature encourages individuals, governmental and educational institutions, and community organizations to pause on Cesar E. Chavez Day and reflect upon the courage and sacrifice of a man to whom Robert Kennedy once referred as "one of the heroic figures of our time."

For:

The bill contains the following statement in support of designating July 14 of each year as President Gerald R. Ford Day in Michigan:

The Legislature recognizes the exceptional contributions to American life, history, and leadership made by Gerald R. Ford, the 38th President of the United States, who for decades has served the United States and the State of Michigan. For much of his life, President Ford resided in Grand Rapids. He attended South High School in Grand Rapids and the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. He served

with distinction as a member of the United States House of Representatives, vice president [and then] president of the United States. Among numerous other awards, President Ford has received the Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian award in the nation, and the Congressional Gold Medal for his “dedicated public service and outstanding humanitarian contributions.” The bill goes on to say, “The Legislature encourages individuals, educational institutions, and social, community, religious, labor, and business organizations to pause on President Gerald R. Ford Day and reflect upon the significance of President Ford’s leadership and important contributions to the history of the State of Michigan and to the history of this great nation.”

For:

The bill contains the following statement in support of designating July 30 of each year as Henry Ford Day in Michigan:

“The Legislature recognizes the outstanding contributions to American life, history, and culture made by Henry Ford, found of Ford Motor Company and a man a great vision. During most of his life, Henry Ford resided in Dearborn. He pioneered industrial mass production methods and made an automobile that was affordable for his workers. The Ford Motor Company debuted the Model T in 1908; by 1918, fully half of all cars sold in America were Model Ts. In 1910, Ford opened a large automobile factory in Highland Park; later, he introduced the moving assembly line. This innovation reduced costs, increased production, and revolutionized industrial manufacturing in the United States and abroad.” The bill goes on to say, “The Legislature encourages individuals, educational institutions, and social, community, religious, labor, and business organizations to pause on Henry Ford’s contributions to the history of the State of Michigan and to the history of this great nation.”

POSITIONS:

There are no positions at present.

Analyst: C. Couch

■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.