

RELEASE IN FULL

August 31, 2010.

President Barack Obama
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to respectfully ask for your consideration in awarding the *Presidential Medal of Freedom* to Dolores Huerta, a living icon of America's civil rights movement. Dolores Huerta and Cesar Chavez, who was awarded the *Medal of Freedom* posthumously by President Clinton, co-founded the Farm Workers Association, which eventually became the United Farm Workers, the nation's first successful and largest farm workers union.

You have eloquently noted that previous *Medal of Freedom* award recipients share "...an overarching trait: Each has been an agent of change. Each saw an imperfect world and set about improving it, often overcoming great obstacles along the way. Their relentless devotion to breaking down barriers and lifting up their fellow citizens sets a standard to which we all should strive." These words represent the essence and the life of Dolores Huerta.

Ms. Huerta is a civil rights pioneer, a champion of Latino workers unremitting struggle to ensure social and economic equity. Her legendary organizing skills were essential in the table grape boycott, helping to win recognition for the farm workers union. In her quest for labor rights, she has consistently advocated the path of nonviolence, citing the examples of Gandhi, Martin Luther King, and her ally and life-long friend, Cesar Chavez. She joined the extraordinary campaign of the late Robert F. Kennedy for President in 1968 and was a witness to one of our darkest days as she accompanied him to the Ambassador Hotel to deliver his victory speech after winning the California primary.

At age 80, Ms. Huerta continues to devote her passion and energy to helping the noble causes, which she has so ably advanced for more than half a century.

In terms of the civil and labor rights movements for Hispanics in America, Dolores Huerta is the Founding Mother. There is perhaps no individual living today who has done more to help improve the lives of disadvantaged Latino workers, their families and the community. It is, therefore, especially fitting that the woman who carries those ideals forward today be awarded the *Presidential Medal of Freedom*.

Respectfully,