

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 15, 2013

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama:

I write to urge you to posthumously award the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Mr. Fred Ross, Sr., a pioneering community organizer.

The Presidential Medal of Freedom may be awarded to any person who has made an especially meritorious contribution to the national interests or culture of the United States and Mr. Ross, a tireless advocate for marginalized communities throughout his life, is an especially worthy recipient of such an honor. Whether he was working to organize Dust Bowl refugees, desegregate California schools or advocate for the rights of Mexican-Americans in the face of police abuse, Mr. Ross was an unshakable voice for social justice.

The legacies of Mr. Ross contribution to American life are still apparent today, more than 20 years after his death. Mr. Ross' work in Orange County, CA led to the first successful federal court challenge of segregated education in 1947 and set a precedent for the landmark Supreme Court decision mandating the desegregation. Mr. Ross' leadership, organizing skills and dedication to equality and fairness for all helped empower countless minority communities to make their voices heard and enabled them to participate in the democratic processes that are the foundation of America's success.

While Mr. Ross did not work in New Hampshire, his ideas about the basic human and civil rights of people of all races, ethnicities and backgrounds remain an inspiration and example for all those who seek justice today. Fred Ross has made an indelible mark on American history and I urge you to recognize his contributions by awarding him the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Sincerely,



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senate