

DOLORES HUERTA FOUNDATION

March 1, 2013

Re: Nomination of Fred Ross, Sr. for Presidential Medal of Freedom

To Whom It May Concern:

Fred Ross, Sr. was a humble leader. As one of the world's greatest organizers he was the initiator of the "house meeting" model for community organizing. He created this model while working for the Council for Civic Action in Orange County where he organized the farm workers in the Latino Community to end the segregation of the schools. His organizing methods are used by labor and community organizations all over the world.

He had so much faith in the power of ordinary people and his method of organizing made it easy for everyone to participate. The involvement at the grass roots level provided the organizing experiences to develop leadership development. Countless leaders throughout the United States learned their organizing skills from Fred Ross, Sr. and lead many organizations throughout the United States in labor, environment, government agencies, etc. Some of these are national figures, like Cesar E. Chavez, Eduardo Roybal, the 1st Latino Congressman from California and Eliseo Medina, the Int. Secretary Treasurer of SEIU.

I consider Fred Ross, Sr. my spiritual father. He had such a high ethic and integrity. He devoted his whole life to help build organization at the grass roots level. His organizing lessons included civic participation and the requirement to register voters and participate in civic action to make changes, always reminding us, "You pay taxes, politicians and agencies work for the citizen."

Fred was always careful to include and standup for women to take their positions as leaders. His tutoring was no frills. If you were fortunate enough to be instructed by Fred, the lessons he taught were not only about organizing but also about leading a moral life of serving others to make a better world. Our country has benefited from the work that Fred Ross, Sr. and the leadership he inspired and taught.

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I still remember the day I met Fred Ross, Sr. in that “house meeting” in Stockton, California in 1955. It changed my life and inspired me to become an organizer, which I still practice to this day. Cesar Chavez also commented many times on how Fred changed his life. We all know the results of those meetings; The United Farm Workers, and my current organization, The Dolores Huerta Foundation for community organizing, as well as many other organizations. We are all Fred Ross's alumni.

Fred was such a humble person and such a great organizer that people do not even know him. They do know the leaders that he inspired. He would also be a candidate for Sainthood even though he was not a Catholic.

The Presidential Medal of Freedom for Fred Ross, Sr. is long overdue.

!Sí Se Puede!

Sincerely,

Dolores Huerta