

From: **John Heffernan** <heffernan@rfkcenter.org>
Date: Wed, Feb 13, 2013 at 3:21 PM
Subject: Fred Ross Sr. Presidential Medal of Freedom
To: sarah.curtis@mail.house.gov

Dear Sarah,

I called a bit ago and spoke to your colleague Caroline. I am writing to convey my support for the nomination of Fred Ross Sr. for the Presidential Medal of Freedom, posthumously. Fred, a legendary organizer, who trained both Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta in organizing, did more in his over fifty years of working with the marginalized and disenfranchised to create change than almost anyone I know. Here at the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights, RFK's message of one person can make a difference looms large. All that we do here is about carrying on that legacy. As Rep. Kennedy knows, I direct a project that is called Speak Truth To Power --- which is a human rights curriculum reaching students from Cambodia to Columbus and is based on the stories of what Kerry Kennedy describes as being the most courageous people on earth. People who have taken considerable risk to create change. Fred is one of those people Thirty years ago he trained me to be an organizer and to this day I take his teachings with me in almost every aspect of my life.

Recently, Kerry and I were at the Robert F. Kennedy Community Schools in Los Angeles for the launch of Speak Truth To Power. We were joined by about 500 teachers from the LA area. As we gathered in the library for a reception, which had been the ballroom of the Ambassador Hotel where Senator Kennedy gave his last speech, the night of the California primary, one could not help notice the enormous mural of Senator Kennedy shaking hands with Cesar Chavez above the entrance. As I glanced up at the mural, I couldn't help but think of Fred Ross and his work with farm workers and all the lives that he touched.

I urge Joe to sign the Dear Colleague letter nominating Fred Ross, Sr. for the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

All the best,

John

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