

Dear President Obama,

I, Jesús David Orozco, am writing to ask you to award posthumously the Presidential Medal of Freedom to the legendary organizer, Fred Ross, Sr.

In early October 2012 I came across the sleepy town of Douglas, Arizona on the border with Mexico to register voters. On my first stop at the First Baptist Church I saw an older woman running back and forth, organizing lettuce, oranges, other vegetables and fruits into boxes. Her name was *doña* Alejandra Muñoz and she was about to turn 93. We talked and she confessed to me that she had never registered to vote because she was embarrassed at her age. I told her my about my grandparents and how they began voting at the ripe young age of 83 as soon as they became citizens. It didn't take long to convince her to register, but she went a step further. She took it upon herself to register 20 other members of her community for the 2012 presidential election. She felt empowered that she could provide a voice to many that do not have the capacity to vote.

It was the legacy of Fred Ross, Sr. that provided me with the tools to find leaders that will create positive change in my community. I had the privilege of being trained by Fred Ross Jr. and one thing that stuck with me was that a community organizer is a leader who does not lead, but gets behind the people and pushes. *Doña* Alejandra is one of many leaders that I have encountered in Arizona and Fred Ross Sr.'s Legacy continues to live through me and through them. We were able to create the most energetic and motivated group of voters across the country and we came within 3 points to elect the first Latino senator to represent Arizona. Our actions and organizing has shifted the negative politics in Arizona and change is now on its way.

In organizing, the little things matter and it is this attention to detail that Fred Ross Senior has instilled in us to help create a vast volunteer army for social justice. I implore you to please consider him for the Presidential Medal of Freedom. This honor would help inspire future generations of community organizers to provide hope and create positive change.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Orozco', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jesús David Orozco