

Assembly California Legislature

February 19, 2013

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

ATTN: Ms. Julie C. Rodriguez, Associate Director, Latino Affairs

Dear Mr. President:

We, the undersigned Members of the California State Assembly, are writing to respectfully request you to posthumously award the Presidential Medal of Freedom to the legendary organizer, Fred Ross, Sr.

Last year, when Dolores Huerta received the Presidential Medal of Freedom she recognized Fred Ross Sr. as the organizer who mentored both her and Cesar Chavez. For nearly half a century, Fred educated, agitated and inspired people of all races and backgrounds to overcome fear, despair and cynicism. He was a pioneer who fought for racial and economic justice. The seeds he planted paved the way for:

- Desegregation in Orange County (Mendez et al vs. Westminster School District, et al. 1947, the legal precedent for Brown vs. the Board of Education, 1954).
- Civic engagement, voter registration and leadership development of Hispanics in California and beyond (electing the first Latino in history – Ed Roybal -- to the Los Angeles City Council in 1949).
- Cesar Chavez and the development of the United Farm Workers.
- Training thousands of organizers and leaders, including Justice Cruz Reynoso, Jessica Govea, the late Miguel Contreras and countless others who are now in leadership positions at the local, state and federal level of the labor movement and in politics.

Fred Ross Sr.'s enduring legacy as an organizer who built collective action, citizenship engagement and leadership development has never been more relevant or important to our democracy.

In recognition of this unsung hero we urge you to confer the Presidential Medal of Freedom posthumously upon Fred Ross, Sr. This recognition would be a beacon of hope for living and future organizers committed to social justice.

Sincerely,

Roger Hernandez

Cheryl Brown

ADL

Susan A. Bonille

Rob Bonta

Susan

Ruth

Dan Commiano

Phillips

Paul Bonenegra

JJ

Man June

Archie Gamador

Nancy Skinner

Flora

Mike Datto

Bonnie Towndel

Kevin Mulli

Jennifer

Reginald Byron Jones-Laufer, S.

Ed. Blum

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