

February 26, 2013

President Barack Obama
THE WHITE HOUSE
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

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

Dear President Obama:

I am writing to urge you to award the Presidential Medal of Freedom to a remarkable man who brilliantly dedicated his entire life to the fight for social justice: community and labor organizer Fred Ross, Sr. You've made it clear that your years as a community organizer in Chicago shaped your view of this country and taught you the importance of equal access to justice and social services. And it was grassroots organizing which put you into the White House in 2008 and returned you to office in 2012. Those of us who supported you from the very beginning worked to tell our own stories as we organized others to the cause of your candidacy. It worked, and it worked because of some of the organizing tools which were developed and used by Fred Ross, Sr.

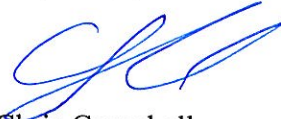
I know that this isn't the only letter you've received on this topic, and I know that there are members of Congress actively working for this honor for Fred Ross, Sr., but I wanted to add my voice to the chorus. I knew Fred Ross at the end of his life, when he was working with his son Fred Ross, Jr., through Neighbor to Neighbor, an organization which worked to stop aid to the Nicaraguan *contras* and to the barbaric military regime in El Salvador. Even though he was struggling with health issues, his enthusiasm for training young organizers was undimmed, and he was effective and deeply inspiring. It was really extraordinary to see, after his fifty years of organizing, that he could approach this new fight with such fresh vigor and excitement.

You will hear from others about his work with Dust Bowl migrants, Japanese-Americans imprisoned in camps during World War II, and the Community Service Organization. Certainly, his work with Cesar Chavez in building the United Farm Workers union and serving as its statewide director of organizing had a profound effect on one of the most important labor struggles of the twentieth century.

When you spoke in your inaugural address about the importance of the battle for freedom, equality, and dignity, you were describing the fight that Fred Ross, Sr., waged his entire life. When he died in 1992, he left a powerful legacy in the form of the men and women he trained and inspired, who went on to train and inspire others. It is not an exaggeration to say that Fred Ross, Sr., shaped the course of the struggle for social justice in our time. He was a modest man who would never have sought this honor for himself, but by posthumously awarding him the Presidential Medal of Freedom, you will be celebrating a man who stood for the highest principles of this nation. He was brilliant, he was courageous, he fought for liberty and justice for all in the best possible way: by working to educate and inspire people to take responsibility for fighting for the things in which they believe.

This is an honor which Fred Ross, Sr., undeniably deserves, and to award the Medal to him would be a way to underscore the statement you made in your inaugural address: "For history tells us that while these truths may be self-evident, they have never been self-executing; that while freedom is a gift from God, it must be secured by His people here on earth." More than anyone else in the last century, Fred Ross, Sr., dedicated his life to helping people secure freedom here on earth. He did so selflessly and tirelessly, and the work he did training organizers continues to shape the most important struggles we face as a nation. I urge you to award the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Fred Ross, Sr.

Very truly yours,



Chris Campbell
P.O. Box 1175
Carmel, CA 93921