FRED KOREMATSU DAY; CESAR E. CHAVEZ DAY; PRESIDENT GERALD R. FORD DAY; HENRY FORD DAY

Act 225 of 2003

AN ACT to designate January 30 of each year as Fred Korematsu Day, March 31 of each year as Cesar E. Chavez Day, July 14 of each year as President Gerald R. Ford Day, and July 30 of each year as Henry Ford Day.

History: 2003, Act 225, Imd. Eff. Dec. 3, 2003 ;-- Am. 2023, Act 32, Eff. Aug. 15, 2023

The People of the State of Michigan enact:

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435.301 "Cesar E. Chavez Day."

Sec. 1.

(1) The legislature recognizes the fundamental contribution that Cesar E. Chavez made to this nation by organizing farm workers to campaign for safe and fair working conditions, reasonable wages, decent housing, and the outlawing of child labor. Cesar E. Chavez began working in the fields of Arizona and California at the age of 10. Profoundly influenced by these humble beginnings, Chavez embraced the nonviolent principles of Mohandas Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to crusade against racial and economic discrimination, coordinate voter registration drives, and found the united farm workers of America. In 1994, Chavez was posthumously awarded the presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest honor given to civilians by the United States government. In memory of this great American, the legislature declares that March 31 of each year shall be known as "Cesar E. Chavez Day".

(2) The legislature encourages each individual in the great state of Michigan to pause on Cesar E. Chavez day and reflect upon the courage and sacrifice of a man Robert Kennedy once referred to as "one of the heroic figures of our time".

History: 2003, Act 225, Imd. Eff. Dec. 3, 2003

435.302 "President Gerald R. Ford Day."

Sec. 2.

(1) The legislature recognizes the exceptional contributions to American life, history, and leadership made by Gerald R. Ford, the thirty-eighth president of the United States and the only United States president from Michigan, who for decades has served the United States and the state of Michigan. For much of his life, President Ford resided in Grand Rapids. He attended South high school in Grand Rapids and the university of Michigan in Ann Arbor. He served with distinction as a member of the United States house of representatives, vice president of the United States, and president of the United States. Among numerous other awards and honors, President Ford has received the Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian award in the nation, and the Congressional Gold Medal for his "dedicated public service and outstanding humanitarian contributions". In commemoration of the significant role Gerald R. Ford has played in the history of the state of Michigan and our nation, the legislature declares that July 14 of each year shall be known as "President Gerald R. Ford Day".

(2) The legislature encourages each individual in the great state of Michigan to pause on President Gerald R. Ford day and reflect upon the significance of President Ford's leadership and important contributions to the history of the state of Michigan and to the history of this great nation.

History: 2003, Act 225, Imd. Eff. Dec. 3, 2003

435.303 “Henry Ford Day.”

Sec. 3.

(1) The legislature recognizes the outstanding contributions to American life, history, and culture made by Henry Ford, founder of Ford motor company and a man of great vision. During most of his life, Henry Ford resided in Dearborn. He pioneered industrial mass production methods and made an automobile that was affordable for his workers. The Ford motor company debuted the Model T in 1908; by 1918, fully half of all cars sold in America were Model Ts. In 1910, Ford opened a large automobile factory in Highland Park; later, he introduced the moving assembly line. This innovation reduced costs, increased production, and revolutionized industrial manufacturing in the United States and abroad. In honor of the significant role Henry Ford has played in the history of the state of Michigan and the United States, the legislature declares that July 30 of each year shall be known as "Henry Ford Day".

(2) The legislature encourages each individual in the great state of Michigan to pause on Henry Ford day and reflect upon the significance of Henry Ford's contributions to the history of the state of Michigan and to the history of this great nation.

History: 2003, Act 225, Imd. Eff. Dec. 3, 2003

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435.304 "Fred Korematsu Day."

Sec. 4.

(1) The legislature recognizes the contributions to civil liberties made by Fred Korematsu. Fred Korematsu was born to Japanese immigrant parents in Oakland, California, on January 30, 1919, the third of 4 sons. Fred Korematsu was 1 of the many American citizens of Japanese ancestry living on the West Coast during World War II. Following the attack on Pearl Harbor by the Imperial Japanese Navy on December 7, 1941, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt issued Executive Order No. 9066 on February 19, 1942. The order authorized the Secretary of War and his military commanders to require all Americans of Japanese ancestry to be placed in incarceration camps. Fred Korematsu is famously known for his arrest, at the age of 23, on May 30, 1942, and conviction on September 8, 1942 for defying the government's order to report to an assembly center to be moved to an incarceration camp. He appealed his case all the way to the United States Supreme Court. In the December 1944 landmark decision of Korematsu v United States, the high court ruled against him with a 6-to-3 decision that declared that the incarceration was justified by the Army's claims that Americans of Japanese ancestry were radio-signaling enemy ships from shore and were prone to dishonesty. Fred Korematsu later moved to Detroit, Michigan, where his younger brother resided. There he met his wife Kathryn, and the 2 wed before moving to the state of California to raise their children, Karen and Ken. Fred Korematsu's conviction was formally vacated on November 10, 1983 by United States District Judge Marilyn Hall Patel of the United States District Court of Northern California in San Francisco. This action, considered to be a pivotal moment in civil rights history, cleared Fred Korematsu's name but did not overturn the 1944 Supreme Court decision.

Fred Korematsu remained an activist throughout his life. On February 9, 1989, Fred Korematsu spoke to 400 people at the University of Michigan Law School. He said, "America finally came through for me, but I don't want this to happen again". In 1998, he received the nation's highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, from President Clinton for his contributions. Fred Korematsu served on the Constitution Project's bipartisan Liberty and Security Committee from 2001 until his death on March 30, 2005. Fred Korematsu was recognized in 2010 when the state of California passed the Fred Korematsu day of civil liberties and the constitution bill, making January 30 of each year the first day in United States history designated to honor an Asian American. Fred Korematsu Day has also been recognized in the states of Hawaii, Utah, Georgia, and Virginia. Fred Korematsu is considered by many as a national civil rights hero whose growing legacy continues to inspire people of all backgrounds.

(2) In recognition of the contributions that Fred Korematsu has made, the legislature declares that January 30 of each year shall be known as "Fred Korematsu Day".

History: Add. 2023, Act 32, Eff. Aug. 15, 2023

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