

## **Que Viva Ted Kennedy!**

UNITED FARM WORKERS

18<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Convention

August 22-24, 2008

Fresno, California

**Whereas**, Senator Edward M. Kennedy has championed the cause of Cesar Chavez and the Farm Worker Movement after picking up the mantle from Senator Robert F. Kennedy following his assassination in 1968, and since then no national political leader has more effectively and selflessly supported the farm workers' cause; and

**Whereas**, from helping convince Congress to end the infamous Bracero Program in 1964 to becoming the driving force behind the United Farm Workers' historic AgJobs immigration reform bill in the U.S. Senate today, Senator Ted Kennedy has never failed to respond to the farm workers' call for help; and

**Whereas**, in 1967 Senator Ted Kennedy oversaw the first official hearing of a committee of the United States Senate to ever take place in Starr County, Texas during a UFW-led strike in Rio Grande City, Texas; and

**Whereas**, Senator Ted Kennedy has embraced farm worker boycotts, beginning his address before the 1972 National Democratic Convention by exclaiming, "Greetings fellow lettuce boycotters"; and

**Whereas**, year after year and time after time, Senator Ted Kennedy has spent much of his public career standing shoulder to shoulder with the farm workers during marches and rallies, political campaigns and legislative battles from the halls of the United States Senate to the dusty fields of California; and

**Whereas**, Senator Ted Kennedy has always joined the farm workers in speaking out for justice as well as against violence, causing Cesar Chavez to once describe him as "always available" and as "the favorite among Latinos all over the country"; and

**Whereas**, as UFW co-founder Dolores Huerta once said, Robert and Ted Kennedy "didn't come to us and tell us what was good for us. All they said was, 'What do you want? And how can I help?' That's why we love them"; and

**Whereas**, in 1973 Senator Ted Kennedy traveled to Fresno, California to address the delegates to the United Farm Workers' First Constitutional Convention at the height of a bitter statewide grape strike; and

**Whereas**, Senator Ted Kennedy has helped lead the fights for all workers, including passage of the most recent federal increase in the minimum wage in 2007, as well as efforts to increase student financial aid, improve educational standards for working people and lead the fight to make it easier for workers to organize, and

**Whereas**, during Senator Ted Kennedy's 1980 presidential campaign the UFW proudly endorsed his candidacy and dispatched top organizers, including Cesar Chavez and Arturo Rodriguez, to work on his behalf; and

**Whereas**, in 1985 and 1986 Senator Ted Kennedy worked with Dolores Huerta when she was leading UFW efforts to help pass an historic immigration reform law that allowed more than a million farm workers to win legal status, including many attending this UFW convention; and

**Whereas**, most recently, Senator Kennedy has been a leading author of the landmark AgJobs bill, negotiated by the UFW and the nation's agricultural industry to allow undocumented farm workers in this country to earn the permanent legal right to stay by continuing to work in agriculture; now therefore

**Be It Resolved** that the United Farm Workers of America, sitting in convention in Fresno, California, expresses genuine thanks and gratitude to Senator Ted Kennedy for all he has done for farm workers and other people in our country who still suffer; and

**Be It Further Resolved** that the farm workers pray for Senator Ted Kennedy and ask God to permit his voice to continue to be heard on behalf of America's poor and dispossessed.