

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4315

March 31, 2026

The Honorable Greg Abbott
Governor of Texas
Office of The Texas Governor
1100 San Jacinto, Boulevard
Austin, TX 78701

Dear Governor Abbott-

On March 18, 2026, the New York Times published an investigation with strong allegations of abuse perpetrated by Cesar Chavez, the former leader of United Farm Workers of America in response to these allegations, many public entities are considering or have removed Cesar Chavez's name from streets, buildings and schools¹. As you consider renaming some of these establishments, I ask that you rename them in honor of a great South Texas hero, Dr. Hector P. Garcia. Dr. Garcia was a civil rights leader with an impeccable record of hard work and strong moral leadership.

Dr. Garcia flourished as an exemplary student within our public school system. He later attended Edinburg Junior College before transferring to the University of Texas at Austin, where he earned both a Bachelor of Arts in Zoology and became a Doctor of Medicine. He finished his residency at St. Joseph's Hospital at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska.

Dr. Hector P. Garcia was a member of Americas greatest generation, a World War II veteran who helped save American lives during the war. He rose to the rank of Major and earned a Bronze Star Medal among other accolades.

After his military service, Dr. Garcia returned to South Texas and dedicated his life to the advancement of Hispanic Americans across the United States. He helped Mexican American veterans access their benefits through the Veterans' Administration (VA). He became a leader within the local chapter of the League of United Latin America Citizens (LULAC).

Dr. Garcia founded the American GI Forum in Corpus Christi, Texas, which is the oldest organization for the advancement of Mexican American veterans in the country.

¹ Hurtes, Sarah, Fernandez, Manny. "Cesar Chavez, a Civil Rights Icon, is Accused of Abusing Girls for Years" 18 March 2026 <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/03/18/us/cesar-chavez-sexual-abuse-allegations-ufw.html>

Furthermore, Dr. Garcia worked to end segregation in South Texas public schools by advocating in support of civil cases such as *Hernandez v. Texas*, which ruled that the protections afforded under the 14th Amendment also extend to Mexican Americans, and in *Cisneros v. Corpus Christi Independent School District (CCISD)*, which reinforced the desegregation of CCISD². In 1968, President Lyndon B. Johnson appointed him to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, where he participated in federal reviews of voting rights, education, and employment discrimination. He was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1984. Finally, during the 111th Congress, the U.S. House and the U.S. Senate unanimously agreed to pass H.Con.Res. 222, a resolution recognizing Dr. Garcia's leadership and historical contributions to the Hispanic community as well as his remarkable efforts to combat racial and ethnic discrimination in the United States of America³.

For these reasons, I urge you to rename public property previously named in honor of Cesar Chavez to honor Dr. Hector P. Garcia instead. Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vicente Gonzalez', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress

² Shah MH, Turner MD. Transcending Borders and Bias: The Multifaceted Life and Legacy of Dr. Hector Pérez García. *Cureus*. 2023 Sep 14;15(9):e45232. doi: 10.7759/cureus.45232. PMID: 37720136; PMCID: PMC10504021.

³ Congress.gov. "H.Con.Res.222 – 111th Congress (2009-2011): "Recognizing the leadership and historical contributions of Dr. Hector Garcia to the Hispanic community and his remarkable efforts to combat racial and ethnic discrimination in the United States of America." November 15, 2009.

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/111th-congress/house-concurrent-resolution/222>