

FARM WORKERS

ENDORSE CARTER

Chavez's Union Supports Candidate After He Backs Controversial Proposal

By HENRY WEINSTEIN

Special to The New York Times

FRESNO, Calif., Sept. 5—Cesar Chavez, president of the United Farm Workers of America, today promised Jimmy Carter the "support" of the union in his bid for the Presidency after the Democratic candidate had told the union's first political endorsements convention by telephone that he "supports" a controversial union representation measure on the November ballot in California.

Mr. Carter's call from his home in Plains, Ga., was relayed over a public address system to the 3,000 farm workers at the convention and he was drowned out by applause as he said, "I support the objectives of Proposition 14 to establish for farm workers the permanent right and procedures of collective bargaining, free elections and the right to reach" workers that the unions are trying to organize in the fields. Then, in Spanish, Mr. Carter asked for the union's help in California.

Because it had been difficult to hear him on the phone and because his position on the proposition had been unclear in the past, Mr. Chavez got Mr. Carter to clarify his stand with the public address system turned off. Then Mr. Chavez announced that Mr. Carter had "said he definitely supports Proposition 14." Mr. Chavez told the Georgian, "rest assured you'll have our support." Mr. Carter's endorsement of Proposition 14 clearly had been a precondition for the union's support.

Later, the delegates to the convention, on the recommendation of the nominating committee, formally endorsed Mr. Carter's candidacy.

In a talk to the convention earlier, Mr. Chavez told the farm workers, "the history of our struggle has shown us that political power is an essential tool in winning our freedom."

Mr. Chavez, speaking first in Spanish, then in English, said today's convention was a "historic event in the farm workers century-long struggle for recognition of their unique contribution to American economic and political life."

The 49-year-old union leader stressed that political endorsements were "serious decisions" and they should be given only to candidates who "represent the aspirations of the mass of working people in his or her community" and who support Proposition 14.

The proposition would guarantee free elections in the field, ensure the operating continuity of the state's year-old agricultural labor relations board and provide that union organizers can have access to growers' land before and after work and during the lunch hour to talk to workers.

About 1,400 delegates from 154 ranches, selected by their coworkers, came here to endorse political candidates who ranged from local assembly candidates up to the President. In the past, the union's executive board had endorsed selected candidates who supported the union. But the convention was the first where a broad range of candidates were endorsed.

The tone of today's convention was markedly different than a typical meeting of the A.F.L.-C.I.O., of which the union is an affiliate. Delegates wore jeans, workshirts and straw hats, just as they do in the fields.

Brown Endorsed Proposition

The bare Fresno convention center was covered with bright red and black flags with the union's distinctive eagle. There was much singing and chanting, particularly about support of Proposition 14.

On Friday, Gov. Edmund G. Brown Jr., endorsed the proposition. State agricultural interests have already announced that they will spend at least \$2 million in an attempt to defeat it.

Today, some candidates won endorsements easily, others grudgingly. Among the latter was Senator John V. Tunney, who endorsed Proposition 14 on Friday, after hearing that Governor Brown had done so.

Senator Tunney's endorsement of Proposition 14 seemed to be recognition of the growing power of the farm workers' union.

Phillip Veracruz, the union's second vice president, brought enthused clapping from the crowd when he said, "We are the most oppressed, we are the most exploited, but now politicians can't get along without the farm workers of the United States."

In the past, Senator Tunney's support of the United Farm Workers' boycott of grapes and iceberg lettuce has been only lukewarm, and the Democratic Senator received campaign contributions from the Gallo wine concern, whose product the union has been boycotting since 1973.

Today, his colleague, Senator Alan Cranston, a Democrat looked upon more favorably by union, carried the ball for Senator Tunney. He stressed that Senator Tunney's Republican opponent, S.I. Hayakawa, opposed Proposition 14.

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