

Milwaukee Alderperson Zamarripa: Statement on reports of alleged sexual misconduct by the late Cesar Chavez

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The accounts shared today by Dolores Huerta, Ana Murguia, Debra Rojas, and other survivors are devastating. *The New York Times* investigation documents a pattern of sexual abuse and rape by Cesar Chavez, including the grooming and assault of girls as young as 12. These women carried enormous pain for decades because they feared that speaking the truth would cost the movement everything they had sacrificed to build. That is an impossible burden, and they should never have had to carry it.

I believe them.

Cesar Chavez's contributions to the farmworker movement and to Latino civil rights are a matter of historical record. So is this. Both things are true, and our community deserves leaders who will say so clearly rather than ask survivors to wait while we process our own grief.

The farmworker movement was never one man. It was built by thousands of workers, organizers, and families who gave their lives to the fight for dignity and justice. Dolores Huerta's courage and moral clarity built something that outlasts any individual. That legacy belongs to the people.

I will be joining the broader community conversation about what it means to have Cesar Chavez Drive bear his name, and I am committed to being part of that discussion in the coming weeks.

The City of Milwaukee's celebration of Cesar Chavez Day, scheduled for later this month, will not be taking place.

To any survivor who is carrying something heavy today: You are believed, and you are not alone.