

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HILDA L. SOLIS

SEPTEMBER 1, 2026

56 Years of Resistance: Honoring the Chicano Moratorium and the Fight for Justice

On Aug. 29, 1970, more than 20,000 people gathered in unincorporated East Los Angeles for the National Chicano Moratorium Against the Vietnam War, one of the largest Latino-led demonstrations in U.S. history. Led by Chicanos and Chicanas protesting the disproportionate drafting of young Mexican American men into the Vietnam War, the march became a defining moment in the Chicano movement and Latino political organizing in Los Angeles County.

The demonstration reflected broader demands for racial and economic justice, equal educational and employment opportunities, greater investment in Mexican American neighborhoods and an end to discriminatory government policies. It was a powerful assertion that Mexican American communities would organize and demand to be heard when government decisions placed their families and futures at risk.

That assertion was met with force. What began as a peaceful demonstration ended in tragedy when law enforcement declared the gathering an “illegal assembly” and deployed tear gas. Hundreds of people were arrested or injured, businesses were damaged, and three people lost their lives, including Rubén Salazar, an award-winning

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journalist, KMEX-TV news director and Los Angeles Times columnist. Salazar had used his reporting to bring attention to issues affecting Mexican American communities whose voices were routinely overlooked. His death remains one of the most painful chapters in Los Angeles County history and a lasting reminder of the importance of a free press in holding government accountable.

Fifty-six years later, that history carries new urgency. Latino and immigrant communities are confronting an unprecedented and inhumane federal immigration crackdown under the Trump administration. The expansion of arrests, detention and deportation has separated families, disrupted livelihoods and brought federal enforcement into workplaces and neighborhoods across Los Angeles County. In East Los Angeles, where the Chicano Moratorium became a historic act of resistance, these policies strike at a community with deep roots in Mexican American and immigrant life.

The toll is measured not only in families separated, but in lives lost. People have died in ICE custody as detention has expanded, raising grave concerns about medical care, conditions and accountability inside federal facilities. For families living with the possibility of arrest and separation, the federal crackdown has created a climate of fear that extends far beyond those directly targeted.

The economic damage is also being felt across neighborhoods. Immigration raids have disrupted small businesses and workplaces, reduced economic activity and caused significant losses for Latino-owned businesses and workers. In communities

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already shaped by decades of economic inequality and disinvestment, the federal crackdown threatens not only individual livelihoods but the economic stability of entire neighborhoods.

Yet the legacy of the Chicano Moratorium is not one of silence in the face of injustice. It is a legacy of organizing, resistance and demanding accountability. Today, immigrant rights advocates, community organizations, local leaders and journalists continue that work by documenting enforcement actions, defending civil rights and ensuring residents know their rights and have access to critical resources.

Honoring the 56th Anniversary of the Chicano Moratorium is more than remembering a historic demonstration. It means recognizing a legacy that remains alive in East Los Angeles and throughout Los Angeles County, reflected in the determination to confront injustice, defend the dignity of our communities and demand accountability from those in power. As federal policies once again place Latino and immigrant families in harm's way, the lessons of the Moratorium remain as urgent as ever.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Proclaim August 29, 2026, as the 56th Anniversary of the National Chicano Moratorium Against the Vietnam War and honor the life and legacy of Rubén Salazar.
2. Recognize the lasting contributions of the Chicano movement and the generations of residents, organizers, journalists and advocates who have

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Justice

advanced civil rights, economic justice and immigrant rights in East Los Angeles
and throughout Los Angeles County.

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