

# Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors Proclamation

HONORING CRUZ GOMEZ  
FOR HER CONTRIBUTIONS TO VOTING RIGHTS & COMMUNITY ACTIVISM

WHEREAS, Cruz Gomez, through her unwavering dedication to justice and equity, played a pivotal role in transforming Watsonville's political landscape and expanding voting rights; and

WHEREAS, in 1983, Cruz Gomez courageously ran for Watsonville City Council bringing attention to the systemic barriers preventing Latinos from achieving political representation despite comprising much of the population; and

WHEREAS, following her loss, Cruz Gomez and fellow advocates pursued legal action to challenge Watsonville's at-large electoral system, which systematically disenfranchised Latino voters, ultimately leading to a landmark court ruling that mandated district-based elections; and

WHEREAS, this historic decision in *Gomez v. City of Watsonville*, upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court, paved the way for fair representation and led to a significant increase in Latino political participation and leadership within Watsonville, resulting in the election of the city's first Latino mayor in 1988; and

WHEREAS, Cruz Gomez's dedication extended beyond electoral reform, as she worked tirelessly to empower her community by teaching English to farmworkers, assisting undocumented individuals in obtaining legal status, and supporting workers during labor strikes; and

WHEREAS, in 1985, Cruz Gomez stood in solidarity with the Watsonville Cannery workers—primarily Latina women—who engaged in an 18-month-long strike to protect their wages and benefits, an event that galvanized political awareness and activism within the Latino community; and

WHEREAS, the courage and resilience of Cruz Gomez, alongside other community leaders, ensured that future generations would have the opportunity to actively participate in the democratic process, fostering a more inclusive and representative government.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Felipe Hernandez, Santa Cruz County Fourth District Supervisor, hereby honor Cruz Gomez for her instrumental role in advancing voting rights, advocating for workers' rights, and strengthening civic engagement within the Latino community, ensuring a lasting impact on the city and county's history and the democratic process.



  
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Member, Board of Supervisors

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March 15, 2025  
Date