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THE SALINAS *Californian*

FRIDAY, MARCH 20, 2026 | THECALIFORNIAN.COM

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK



A New York Times investigation published March 18 includes allegations that César Chávez sexually abused two girls. THE REPUBLIC FILE

Labor leader Chavez accused of abuse

Civil rights activist says she didn't report Chavez to protect movement

Paris Barraza
USA TODAY

Renowned civil rights activist Dolores Huerta claims that Cesar Chavez, a labor leader, sexually assaulted her — an allegation she made public due to a New York Times investigation that reported Chavez sexually abused two girls.

The New York Times investigation, published March 18, includes allegations that Chavez sexually abused two girls while they were under the age of 18. The Times also reported that Chavez raped Huerta in 1966 in Delano, California.

Huerta said “she chose not to report the assault to the police because of their hostility toward the movement, and she feared that no one within the union would believe her,” according to the New York Times.

USA TODAY generally does not name victims of sexual assault. But Huerta spoke out publicly to tell her story, in an interview with the New York Times and in a statement posted online.

In the statement, Huerta said she could “no longer stay silent” and had to

share her own experiences following the New York Times’ investigation.

“As a young mother in the 1960s, I experienced two separate sexual encounters with Cesar,” Huerta said. “The first time I was manipulated and pressured into having sex with him, and I didn’t feel I could say no because he was someone that I admired, my boss and the leader of the movement I had already devoted years of my life to. The second time I was forced, against my will, and in an environment where I felt trapped.”

Huerta, 95, said those encounters led to pregnancies that she kept secret, and that she had arranged for those children to be raised by other families.

She said that despite developing a “deep relationship with these children,” “no one knew the full truth about how they were conceived until just a few weeks ago.”

Huerta’s statement and the New York Times investigation come a day after the United Farm Workers and the Cesar Chavez Foundation came out with statements that acknowledged they had learned of allegations made against Chavez, though the statements did not provide details. UFW also said it would not be taking part in any Cesar Chavez Day activities.

Huerta, alongside Chavez, was involved in the founding of the National Farm Workers Association, which later

became the UFW.

“I carried this secret for as long as I did because building the movement and securing farmworker rights was my life’s work,” Huerta said. “The formation of a union was the only vehicle to accomplish and secure those rights and I wasn’t going to let Cesar or anyone else get in the way. I channeled everything I had into advocating on behalf of millions of farmworkers and others who were suffering and deserved equal rights.”

Huerta said her “heart aches for everyone who suffered alone and in silence for years.”

Huerta reaffirmed her commitment to workers and women’s rights in her statement.

“The farmworker movement has always been bigger and far more important than any one individual,” Huerta said. “Cesar’s actions do not diminish the permanent improvements achieved for farmworkers with the help of thousands of people. We must continue to engage and support our community, which needs advocacy and activism now more than ever.”

The New York Times reported that “nothing has emerged publicly to back up the claims” made by Huerta, and her description of assault couldn’t be independently verified because she said she told no one until a few weeks ago.

REPORT

Racial gaps persist in police stops

Daniella Segura
Palm Springs Desert Sun
USA TODAY NETWORK

More than a decade ago, California passed a law aimed at curbing racial and identity-based profiling by police.

The Racial and Identity Profiling Act, or RIPA, requires law enforcement agencies to track and report data on traffic and pedestrian stops.

An analysis of RIPA data from 2019 to 2023 by the Public Policy Institute of California found that the overall number of stops has declined — suggesting officers may be making stops more selectively, with some reduction in who gets stopped.

But the analysis also found little evidence that disparities during those stops — particularly for Black and Latino Californians compared with white Californians — have significantly narrowed.

California’s Racial and Identity Profiling Act, explained

In 2015, California passed the Racial and Identity Profiling Act (RIPA), which aims to eliminate racial profiling by law enforcement.

The law mandates that state and local police collect data on all stops, including race, gender, and reason, and report it to the Department of Justice.

Starting in 2018, the law was implemented in waves. Per the law, all law enforcement agencies were required to begin collecting data by 2023.

How the Public Policy Institute of California studied police stops

California Public Policy Institute’s analysis focused data from 15 of the state’s largest law enforcement agencies: the California Highway Patrol, eight police departments (Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco, Sacramento, Fresno, San Jose, Long Beach, and Oakland) and six county sheriff’s departments (Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Sacramento, San Diego, Riverside, and Orange).

“Our aim is not to evaluate RIPA but to monitor changes in racial disparities in law enforcement stops,” the nonprofit said.

The report examines “racial disparities in the likelihood of being stopped

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Volume 165 | No. 35
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