



March 26, 2026

STATEMENT FROM HELEN IRIS TORRES, CEO OF HOPE

Many in our community are still processing what they have read, heard, and felt in recent days following allegations of sexual violence committed by Cesar Chavez. We want to be clear about where we stand. We honor the courage of the women who have come forward as survivors, and all survivors who carry these experiences. Their voices deserve care, respect, and accountability. For those who need support, we encourage you to reach out to [trusted resources](#).

Movements are not built by one person—they are built collectively, by many leaders, especially women, whose contributions have too often gone unrecognized. We will not allow this moment to erase the work of the farmworker movement or diminish our collective fight for justice. At the same time, no individual should be placed beyond accountability, and no movement should depend on a single voice.

We can hold both truths: standing with survivors while honoring the legacy of a community's leadership. We must also be honest about what has been asked of women for far too long. Too often, women are expected to give endlessly and lead at the expense of their well-being. That is not sustainable, and it is not just.

At HOPE, our work centers on strengthening leadership and expanding who is seen, heard, and supported. This moment calls on all of us to reflect not only on who leads, but on how we lead. We must build cultures where leadership is shared, where power does not rest with one individual, and where communities are strong enough to endure beyond any one person.

This means creating spaces where women and girls feel safe, respected, and supported—and where harm is neither ignored nor excused. It means ensuring leadership is sustainable, care is collective, and no one carries this work alone. This is how movements endure.

We are deeply grateful to the many leaders in our community whose courage, integrity, and commitment continue to move us forward. Your leadership is the foundation on which lasting change is built.

We stand with survivors—today and always—and remain committed to building a future rooted in safety, dignity, and accountability.

With hope toward the future,

Helen Iris Torres
CEO, HOPE
On behalf of the HOPE Board of Directors