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California Italian-American Task Force

THE 2025 COLUMBUS REPORT

A special report from the California Italian American Task Force.

CHAIR, WILLIAM CERRUTI

**Our Italian American cultural heritage unites us.
And Columbus Day is a symbol of that heritage.**



The California Italian American Task Force is a state organization

formed to address the concerns of the Italian American population.

This special report addresses Columbus Day issues facing Italian Americans and what is at stake for our heritage and culture.

California Italian-American
Task Force



ITALIAN AMERICANS CELEBRATE COLUMBUS DAY NATIONWIDE

Our shared cultural heritage serves as common ground in today's divided political landscape. A shared cultural heritage that continues to inspire unity across partisan lines and uplifts us all.

We can all trace our roots back to our Italian American ancestors and the Italian American families that shaped us. Rooted in traditions forged over generations of experience and a sense of obligation to future generations.

Columbus Day is a time to honor the journey of our ancestors, celebrate the richness of our culture and take pride in the traditions that continue to inspire future generations.

In the struggle to save our heritage which is being marginalized and pushed to the periphery of our nation's history, it's past time for us to voice our support for our Italian American leaders and organizations who are leading the charge to save Columbus Day and all that goes with it.

Italian Americans across the nation have a renewed sense of what's at stake for the future of Italian America as evidenced by the increasing participation of Italian Americans in Columbus Day Parades, in Flag raisings, in Columbus Day festivals and in advocacy for Columbus Day holidays and statues across the nation.

CLICK TO READ WHY COLUMBUS DAY MATTERS

America: A nice Italian name

In this report from the California Italian American Task Force, we look at where Columbus Day is still under attack and where it is being restored.

Since the hysteria and mob rule of 2020, the attacks by the anti-Columbus movement have accelerated. It has been a long 5 year conflict to combat the anti-Columbus forces at work in our society.

Columbus Day was cancelled and replaced wherever politicians were aligned with or cowed by the rioters. Many Columbus statues were torn down or damaged by protestors. More were removed from the public square by hostile public officials where they had proudly stood for generations.

From San Francisco to New York, from Chicago to Boston, Columbus statues and holidays were banned and replaced. As they have been in Sacramento.

Politicians at all levels of the government, federal, State and local, adopted new racial holidays in response to the mob.

That is, until The Italian American community rose up to defend their Columbus holiday and their heritage. A new sense of unity has emerged to protect Columbus Day and led to a national movement among Italian Americans to save Columbus Day and the sacred statues of him erected by Italian immigrants and earlier Italian American communities with their own hard-earned money.

**COLUMBUS DAY WAS ACCEPTED AS A
NATIONAL DAY OF THE CREATION OF AMERICA**



Columbus Day is a symbol of Italian American pride and identity. A symbol of Italian America itself. From the beginning, Columbus Day represented the unity of Italian Americans during the decades of non-acceptance. A symbol that they too belonged here, that they too were American.

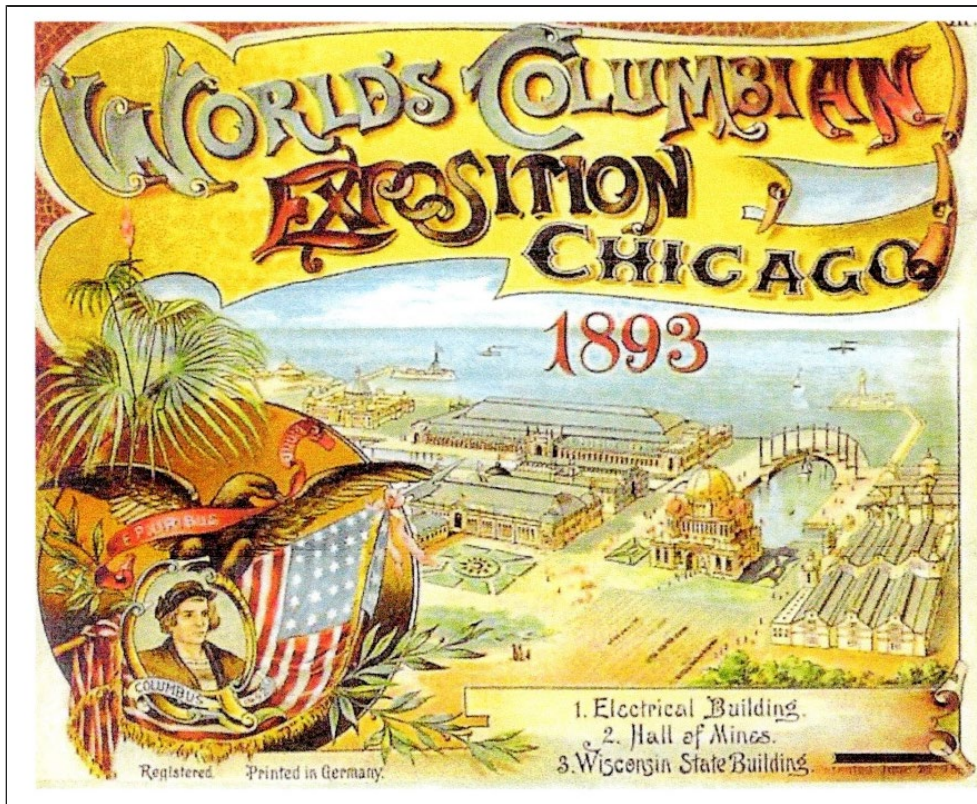
In fact, the origin of Columbus Day as a national holiday was to unify the nation after the civil war between earlier immigrant groups from Protestant northern Europe and the new Catholic and Jewish immigrant groups from southern and eastern Europe. And it worked.

Despite the opposition of the powerful Ku Klux Klan which opposed Catholicism and the new wave of immigration. It lobbied against Columbus Day.

Columbus Day was accepted by the nation as a national symbol of the "Creation of America."

Both a patriotic holiday and a holiday to celebrate America as a nation of immigrants.

The Pledge of Allegiance was written to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the Admiral of the Sea who had sailed into the unknown across uncharted waters to discover a new land, a new continent, unknown to the rest of the world. His great accomplishment, for which he should be remembered and celebrated, is that he came back from his perilous voyage to tell the world of his discovery.



The world's Columbian Exposition of 1892 and Columbus were celebrated in Chicago on that 400th anniversary in 1893. It's estimated that 27 million people attended the Exposition out of a population of about 60 million - about half the nation.

In 1892, the President of the United States recognized the first national Columbus Day Holiday in response to the mass Lynching of Italian Americans in New Orleans and restore diplomatic relations with Italy over the massacre.

That same year one million people watched the Columbus Day parade in New York City as some 40,000 people marched in the parade. Even 1,000 native Americans marched with them.

The rest is history. Or it was history. Until the 500th Anniversary of Columbus' arrival was celebrated in 1992 in The United States.

That year the Berkeley City Council replaced Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples Day, and leaders of the American Indian Movement declared war on European immigrants and their descendants. Indigenous Peoples Day is a counter celebration to Columbus Day and native American activists have made it a movement nationwide on a daily basis to erase and replace Columbus Day.

Since that fateful time, Italian Americans have been on a collision course with

some elements of the American Indian community and their sympathizers. Primarily the anti-American native activists, the casino tribes with their great wealth and political power and those who define their allegiance to the cause of historical grievance by knocking Columbus Day.

In the age of political correctness, the assault on the reputation of Columbus has been another painful episode in the Italian American experience. ***The loss of the Columbus holiday and monuments represents the loss of the gains of past generations of Italian Americans.***

FORTUNATELY, IN THE FIGHT TO SAVE COLUMBUS DAY ITALIAN AMERICANS HAVE FOUND NEW ALLIES

The Native American Guardians Association



The Native American Guardians Association, which claims to represent the views of 80% of the American Indian population, has joined with the Italian Americans in defending and supporting Columbus Day. The Guardians association polls indicate that native Americans do not oppose Columbus Day and that only about 10% are among the minority of activists that do.

"We affirm that Christopher Columbus is not only a historic Italian figure but a key figure In American and World history during the age of discovery"

The Guardians Association recognizes the importance of Columbus as a historical figure and Columbus Day to Italian Americans. They recognize the harm of cancel culture on both Italian Americans and native Americans and are in a fight against native American activists to save their own cultural heritage and preserve the use of American Indian names on sports teams, which most native Americans do not consider offensive.

*"There is no good reason to replace
one holiday with another."*

LEGAL CHALLENGES TO RESTORE COLUMBUS DAY ARE CLAIMING VICTORIES



COLUMBUS DAY RESTORED IN PHILADELPHIA

In a recent win over the mayor of Philadelphia, Jim Kenny, Columbus Day has been restored in Philadelphia.

The emergence of a national organization of Italian American associations across the country to defend the Columbus heritage is bringing the fight to the courts. The Philadelphia lawsuit was spearheaded by COPOMAIO, the Conference of Presidents of major Italian American Organizations.

In another case, the Philadelphia Mayor Kenny was blocked from uprooting the 149-year-old Columbus statue from Marconi Plaza.

In Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, The Mayor and City Arts Commission were blocked from removing the city's 30-foot Columbus Statue. Another case in which COPOMAIO attorney George Bochetto was instrumental in the decision of the court. The Judge threw the book at the city.

According to Bochetto 'These unanimous decisions affirm both the rule of law and the value of our Italian American heritage.'



POLITICAL ADVOCACY IN CONGRESS AND PRESIDENCY IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The newly elected President of the United States has affirmed Columbus Day as a national holiday.

In an announcement he made recently he stated "I'm bringing Columbus Day back from the ashes. His detractors did everything possible to destroy Christopher Columbus, his reputation, and all the Italians who love him so much. They tore down his statues, and put up nothing but "Woke," in his place..... Well, you'll be happy to know, Columbus is going to make a comeback. I am hereby reinstating Columbus Day under the same rules, dates and locations, as it has had for all of the many decades before.

Italian American leaders have applauded the President's actions. Italian American legislators from both sides of the aisle are moving in the same direction as the President.

The previous President sought to downgrade Columbus Day and recognize Indigenous Peoples Day on Columbus Day. He issued Proclamations to that effect. That got him into hot water with Italian Americans.

[CLICK TO VIEW THE FEDERAL COLUMBUS DAY PROCLAMATION](#)

★ ★ ★ COLUMBUS DAY

— UNITED STATES OF AMERICA —



CONFUSION ABOUT COLUMBUS DAY AS A FEDERAL HOLIDAY

There is a lot of confusion in America about whether Columbus Day is a national holiday. Some believe it has been replaced by Indigenous People's Day. Even Italian Americans are confused about it.

Truth be told, by law, Columbus Day is the only national federal holiday recognized in October each year.

Indigenous People's Day is not a national holiday and never has been. Until Congress makes it one.

But the confusion has caused its share of damage.

★ **SAVE COLUMBUS DAY** ★
— PROTECT & PRESERVE OUR PAST —

SACRAMENTO COUNTY ELIMINATES COLUMBUS DAY UNDER FALSE PRETENSES

Even the DEI (Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion) staff in Sacramento County used the confusion and willful misrepresentations to erase Columbus Day from the County holiday calendar and replace it with Indigenous Peoples Day in April 2023 at the height of the Reparations movement for people of color.

DEI staff even went so far as to issue an official County Press Release to the Media, and the public implying Columbus Day is Not a national Holiday

"Columbus Day is not a national Holiday."

SacCounty to Recognize Indigenous Peoples' Day

Article Date: Tuesday, April 18, 2023

The Board of Supervisors, at its April 18 meeting, voted unanimously to approve the second Monday in October to be recognized as Indigenous Peoples' Day.

With this approval, the Board is recognizing and honoring the resiliency and substantial contributions of Native Americans.

The County follows the State of California and the Federal government, who proclaimed Indigenous Peoples' Day on the second Monday of October in 2019 and in 2021, respectively. The national holiday was formerly known as Columbus Day.

The approval has no fiscal impact to the County's budget.

ABOVE: Sacramento County Media Release claims Columbus Day is not a National Holiday.

This official action by our county government was engineered by DEI Staff and sowed even more confusion in the media and in the public mind about Columbus Day with their false and misleading public announcement which was carried by the media far and wide. **The damage has been done.**

The actions by the County, seemingly racially motivated, may have violated the law, but efforts so far with county officials to redress this injustice have been met with resistance. Continuing efforts by the Italian community to restore Columbus Day as a county holiday and remove the prejudicial Media Release from the County website are ongoing.

The County erasure of the Columbus Day holiday was done without notice or warning to the public or Italian community **and done behind closed doors**. Replacing Columbus Day was never mentioned on the County Agenda. Nor was there ever a

vote to remove Columbus Day as a County holiday. DEI staff engineered an administrative interpretation in house that in passing a Resolution to recognize Indigenous peoples Day it replaced Columbus Day.

Some supervisors were unaware the Resolution would affect Columbus Day when they voted to approve it. They were under the impression that it was just a ceremonial resolution, not one to replace Columbus Day as a county holiday. But DEI staff engineered an administrative interpretation in house that in passing the Resolution to recognize Indigenous Peoples Day on the same day as Columbus day it replaced Columbus Day.

The Italian Cultural Society does not agree with that interpretation and considers Columbus Day to still be a county holiday.

In response, leaders from the Italian Cultural Society of Sacramento sought to overturn the result and restore Columbus Day and entered negotiations with the County Supervisors. And that is where things still stand. Also in response, Italian Cultural Society leaders appeared before the County Civil Service Commission shortly after when the county sought to create a new Director of DEI position, and defeated it. The Society has asked that the DEI unit in the county be disbanded due to its discrimination against Italian Americans.

Columbus Day is the only national holiday not recognized by the County, however they have added Indigenous people's day (not a national holiday), also known as the day of Indigenous resistance, and Juneteenth to the County Holiday calendar.

There are only 12 recognized federal holidays. The county could have chosen any one of 353 possible days to recognize Indigenous Peoples Day instead of Columbus Day.

The action by the county cancelling Columbus day was divisive and has divided the Sacramento community. The Italian community believes there is room in Sacramento County for both Columbus day and indigenous peoples day to be recognized.

Only two months after Sacramento County committed race-based discrimination in April 2023 by removing Columbus Day as a holiday, the Supreme Court of the United States finally ruled in June 2023 that discrimination based on racial diversity (DEI) is a violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment to the Constitution. Despite that ruling, the DEI movement is in full resistance to it and alive and well in Sacramento.

Under the tenets of DEI, discrimination is justified by historical grievance. Under the banner of Equity, there is no limit on the scope of discrimination

THE CALIFORNIA STORY



PHOTO ABOVE: Columbus Statue at Coit Tower in San Francisco was removed in 2020 - only the base remains.

During this same period the Governor of California, Gavin Newsom, and State Legislative leaders, eliminated Columbus Day as a State Holiday in 2021. And went even further by removing the California State Statue of Columbus and Queen Isabella from the State Capitol Rotunda. In the wee hours of the morning. These actions fueled anti-Columbus sentiment in California.

Politically correct Legislative Leaders, Senate President pro Tempore Toni Atkins, D-San Diego, Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon, D-Lakewood, and Assembly Rules Committee Chair Ken Cooley, D-Rancho Cordova, issued a joint statement in 2020 trying to justify the removal to wit: ".... The continued presence of this statue in California's Capitol, where it has been since 1883, is completely out of place today. It will be removed."

Another example of ignoring and taking sides against the aspirations of the Italian American population of the State.

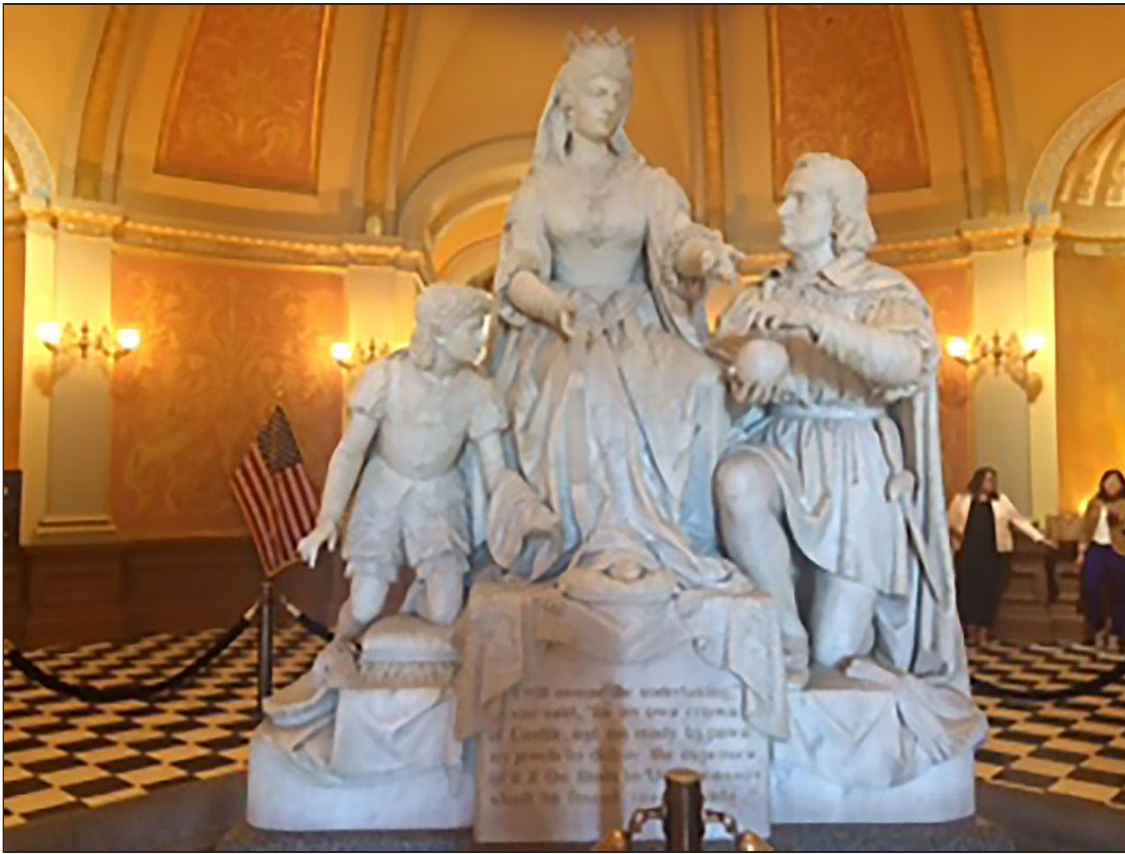


PHOTO ABOVE: The Statue of Columbus with Queen Isabella was in the Rotunda of the California State Capitol Building in Sacramento and PHOTO BELOW: The removal of the statue

PHOTO BELOW: The Columbus Transcontinental Highway marker. Los Angeles banned the sign which was established by an earlier generation of Italian American legislators, to be replaced by a tribal sign.



California Recognizes Italian-American Heritage Month





PHOTO ABOVE: 2025 California Italian American Heritage Month Resolution

CLICK ON THE RESOLUTION ABOVE TO READ TEXT

CLICK TO READ THE 2024 COLUMBUS DAY TASK FORCE REPORT

ITALIAN CAUCUS OF CALIFORNIA
CREATED IN STATE LEGISLATURE



State Assemblywoman Catherine Stefani (D-San Francisco),

In response to the increasing awareness and need to fight for our Italian American heritage, Italian American legislators in the California State Legislature earlier this year formed an Italian Caucus to better represent the interests of the Italian population of the State.

California Italians have had difficulty having their aspirations voiced at the State level, especially in recent years. In a sea of loud and angry voices, the public policy concerns of Italian Americans are not heard.

The new Caucus has support from all the Italian American Legislators in both the State Senate and the state Assembly from both parties. A good start.

Under the leadership of State Assemblywoman Catherine Stefani (D-San Francisco), the Chair and chief organizer of the Caucus, the Caucus has been incorporated as a step on the journey to be recognized as an official Legislative Caucus among the many other Caucuses that exist for other cultural groups.

Under Stefani's guidance, organizing meetings have been held, a Caucus leadership committee appointed, and a successful initial fundraising event conducted. The Caucus is developing its public policy goals and strategy agenda for the future.

The new Italian Caucus is not the first time Italian American legislators have gathered to jointly spearhead our policy goals. Past legislative initiatives sponsored by the Italian community have been authored by Italian American legislators over the past few decades. Mostly with the goal of including the Italian American story in the history books, a hard nut to crack. Current California textbooks do not include mention of the Italian American experience, not even a footnote.

The emergence of a new political caucus on behalf of Italian Americans is welcome. The California Italian American Task Force has been a leading voice at the State level for Italian Americans with state legislators and is actively involved with the new caucus in pursuit of our statewide cultural agenda.

PHOTO BELOW: Assemblywoman Catherine Stefani with State Senator David Cortese at Italian Caucus fundraiser in April 2025



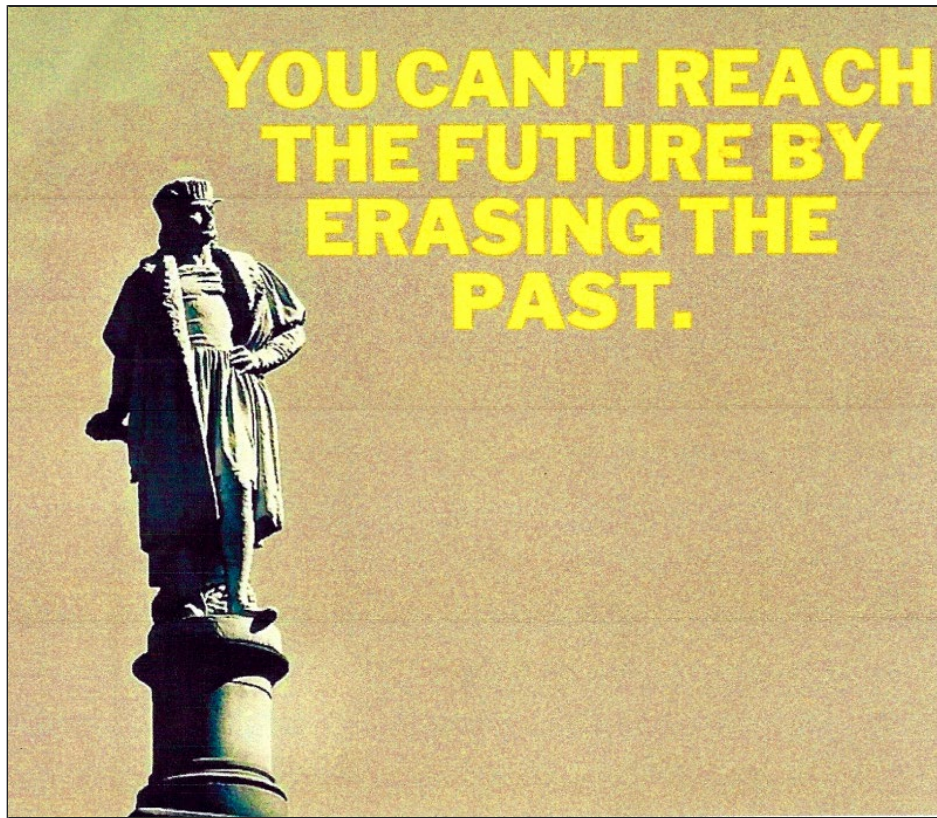
NEVADA GOVERNOR UPHOLDS COLUMBUS DAY



In June, Nevada Governor Joe Lombardo vetoed a bill that would have recognized Indigenous people's day on the second Monday of October ***the same date as Columbus Day.***

Nevada already observes Indigenous people's day on August 9, a date established by the United Nations in 1994 as an International Day of Protest against the European expansion of the past 500 years. And the United States already observes Native American Heritage Day on August 9.

In his veto message, Lombardo wrote: "...it is better for Indigenous people's day to fall on a day where there are no other holidays so it can receive Nevadans" undivided attention."



According to National Italian American leader Basil Russo, *"Pitting groups against each other, whether through dual recognition or by replacing Columbus Day altogether, was never a real solution, but rather a political measure to appease one group of constituents over another. We will continue our legal efforts to preserve Columbus Day."*

Russo is President of the national organization, COPOMAIO, which is actively defending Columbus statues and holidays in Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Washington D.C. and elsewhere.

For the vast majority of Italian Americans, Columbus Day remains a vital expression of heritage, identity, and history. Efforts to shift or replace the holiday are not seen as gestures of inclusion, but as erasures of ethnic pride.

**SYRACUSE, NY COLUMBUS STATUE ON
THE CHOPPING BLOCK**



In Syracuse New York, Italian Americans are facing a challenge from both the Mayor Ben Walsh and the Mellon Foundation, which seeks to rewrite history with its “Monuments Project” to reimagine monuments and history around the country.

In Syracuse, the Columbus monument, a historic and cultural landmark that has stood for generations in Syracuse, is threatened to be deconstructed by the city against the wishes of the Italian community, represented by the Columbus Citizens Foundation of New York.

The Mellon Foundation of New York, a powerful cultural institution based in New York, is throwing money around the country under its reimagination banner and has set its sights on Syracuse. An example of another biased cultural institution that Italian Americans must contend with. Many other major institutions like the Mellon Foundation oppose Columbus Day including the Ford Foundation, American Universities, the Democrat Party, Public Agencies, National Organization of Women, the National Education Association and left-leaning Unions, to name a few.

CONTINUING SAGA IN CHICAGO

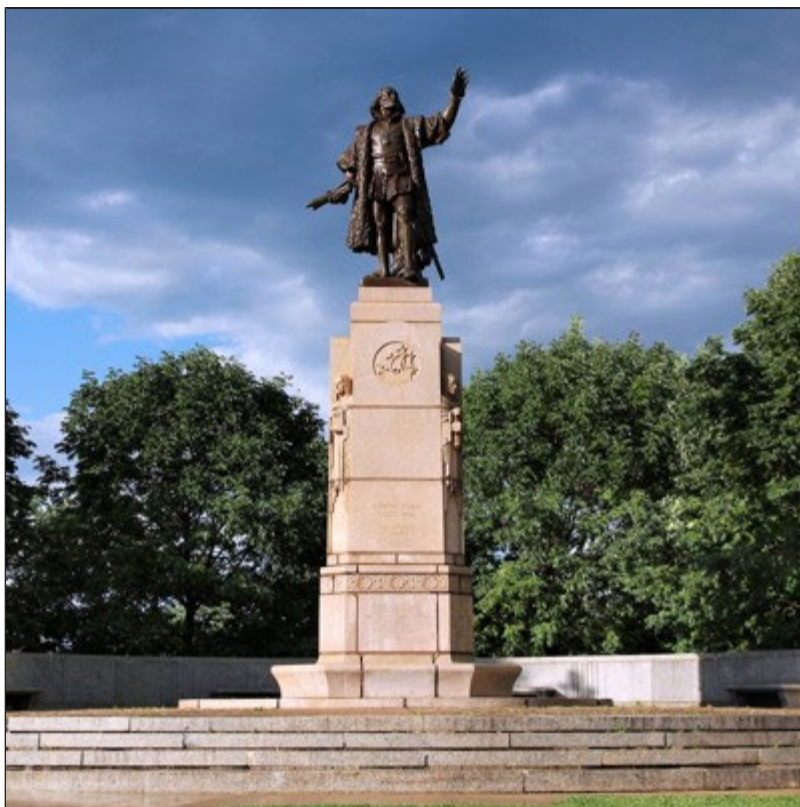


PHOTO ABOVE: Arrigo Park Columbus statue installed in Italian Immigrant Museum on historic Taylor Street after a protracted legal battle. It had been in storage since 2020

The Grant Park Statue - Practically five years to the day of the removal of the Grant Park Christopher Columbus statue, the Chicago Park District commemorated the anniversary by repeating history and unceremoniously removing the base of the statue. As was the statue itself, the base was one of the only remaining relics from the 1933 Century of Progress World's fair.

As the Grant Park, Arrigo Park and Drake Fountain Columbus statues were removed without warning or discussion in 2020, the base of the Grant Park statue was removed in a similar and disrespectful fashion after being chipped away with hammers and gone the next day.

The Grant Park statue was first unveiled on July 17, 1933, as part of the welcome festivals for the aviation hero Italo Balbo on Chicago's lakefront. It was revealed on August 3rd of that year to commemorate the "Italy Day" at the fair.

Balbo and his 24 twin engine seaplanes or "Flying Boats" helped celebrate the City of Chicago's 100th anniversary by his historic transatlantic flight from Rome. It was the first flying formation across the Atlantic. The squadron also brought with it a column from the ancient city of Ostia, dating back to 117 BC, presenting it to the city as a gift.

The Balbo Monument, although crippled and shrouded by a chain link fence still

stands where it did during the Fair of 1933.

The Arrigo Park Statue – It took four-and-a-half years to come to a settlement agreement with the Chicago Park District regarding the Arrigo Park Columbus statue. The Italian community will gain possession of the statue but since the city objects to its location it will be moved to a safe haven at the Chicago Museum of Italian Immigration located in the Taylor Street area where the Italian immigrant community settled from the 1800s through the 1950s.

PHOTO BELOW: The Balbo Monument.



PROTESTS CONTINUE IN PUEBLO



PHOTO ABOVE: Pueblo, Colorado Columbus Statue, the first Columbus statue west of the Mississippi (1905)

In 2020, as unrest erupted around the nation, tensions over the Columbus statue in Pueblo, Colorado escalated too.

The Columbus Monument was gifted to the city in 1905 by the Italian American community, after a national fundraising campaign to raise the funds. Other immigrant groups contributed to the cause. The celebration was not just Italian but a statewide expression of immigrant solidarity. More than 7,000 people gathered in Pueblo for the dedication ceremony.

Colorado was the first state in the nation to recognize Columbus Day as a State holiday in 1905. But due to opposition from the American Indian Movement to the holiday it is no longer recognized. In 2020, Columbus Day was replaced by Mother Cabrini Day in honor of the first Italian American Saint.

This did not happen overnight. For decades since 1992, native American activists had protested and interfered with the Annual Columbus Day Parades in Pueblo organized by the Italian community. Italian Americans in the parades were attacked physically time and again. Blood and objects were thrown on them. City officials did not protect the parade. State political officials were not supportive of the Italians.

Then came the beginning of the end, city officials refused to grant the Italian community a parade permit for the event. This went on for years as the Italians applied each year, but the city found ways to deny them. At one point the city was forced to go to a lottery system for the permits.

Eventually, the Italians were once again allowed to apply for permits for the parades, but the harassment continued.

Today, the Italians hold an annual ceremony on Columbus Day at the Columbus monument in Pueblo, Colorado's last remaining Columbus monument. But they still must endure large numbers of anti-Columbus protestors on a continuing basis there and at city hall. The elimination of Columbus Day as a State holiday in Colorado did not appease them to the chagrin of political leaders. As there is no appeasing their unappeasable ire. The protesters are a small group of people but vocal.

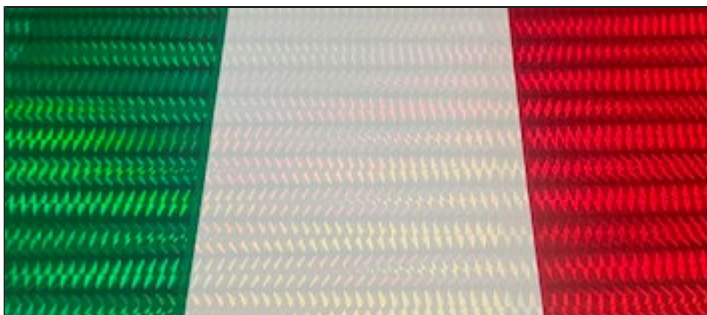
Efforts by city officials to mediate the protest surrounding the Columbus statue have failed. Protests were as loud as ever outside the 2024 Columbus Day Celebration with chants of "Take it Down." The cultural clash in Pueblo over the Columbus statue continues. This October will mark the 120th anniversary of its dedication.

Notably, it holds the distinction of being the first Columbus monument West of the Mississippi and is registered on the National Register of Historic Places, underscoring Pueblo's important place in Italian American history.

Even though other cities in Colorado like Denver and Houston have canceled Columbus Day, this year the Italian community will have a Flag raising ceremony in Denver in recognition of Columbus Day. And City Hall will be lit up in the Italian colors. It is the second year that the Italians have done the Flag raising ceremony. A tribute to their new unity and determination to preserve their Columbus heritage.

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT PUEBLO, COLORADO](#)

BOSTON AREA MAYOR UNDER FIRE FOR BLOCKING ITALIAN-AMERICAN TRADITION



In Newton, Massachusetts, Mayor Ruthanne Fuller has come under fire after halting a beloved Italian American tradition in the Nonantum neighborhood.

For decades, residents have painted red, white and green stripes on Adams Street each July to celebrate the annual St. Mary of Carmen Festival, a cultural cornerstone for the area's Italian American community.

This year, days before the festa, city crews laid down thick, rubberized double-yellow traffic lines, taking away red, white and green lines that had been on the road for nearly the past half century.

Mayor Fuller defended the move, citing “safety concerns,” including visibility and crash risks. But critics labeled the rationale as vague and insensitive. In a letter to the Boston Globe, former Massachusetts transportation commissioner Gina Fiandaca called the decision “tone deaf and dismissive,” especially given that no evidence was presented to support the safety claims.

Fiandaca and others noted that city officials failed to explore alternative options, such as decorative crosswalks, pole wraps, or seasonal banners that could preserve the festival's spirit while addressing safety standards.

The backlash was swift. Social media users accused the city of cultural erasure, pointing out that the tricolor stripes were removed “in the middle of the night.” Many felt blindsided, especially as the decision came just days before the festival was set to begin.

Supporters of the tradition say the painted road is more than festive, it's a symbol of identity and continuity for a community that helped build Newton.

The controversy has reopened broader questions about who gets to define community traditions, and whether long-standing cultural expressions are being pushed aside in the name of policy.

To quell complaints, Fuller alerted residents that the city would allow red and green paint between the white lines in the crosswalks and that fire hydrants could be painted in the colors.

And there was a second “silver” lining: media outlets reported that the St. Mary Festa experienced a packed turnout, as people flocked to the event in support of the tradition and neighborhood.

MISS COLUMBUS DAY QUEEN PAGEANT & PARADE RETURN TO SPRINGFIELD, MA.



For the first time in 20 years The Miss Columbus Day Queen Pageant and Parade have returned to Springfield, Mass marking a revival of Italian cultural celebrations in Springfield. Queen Pageant winner, Stefania Liquori said "She is happy to be Italian American."

This years Italian Festival in Springfield had a turnout of 17,000 people bringing the Italian community together in a display of Italian Heritage and Pride.

NORTH END IN KANSAS CITY BECOMES COLUMBUS PARK



Kansas City has been celebrating Columbus Day since 1883.

The Kansas City Columbus monument stands at Holy Rosary Church in the tight knit Columbus Park neighborhood. In 1967, the North End neighborhood was renamed Columbus Park by a public vote.

The Parish was founded in 1891 when the neighborhood was solidly Italian. The Missionary goal of the Scalabrini Community originally was for the Italian migrants and their descendants. The mission was extended to include migrants of all nationalities. Holy Rosary Parish has been staffed by Scalabrinians since being founded in 1891. Blessed John Baptist Scalabrini came to visit Holy Rosary in 1903.

Today, the neighborhood is 80% Sicilian.

**ANTI-COLUMBUS POLITICIAN RUNS
FOR MAYOR OF NEW YORK**



While Columbus Day is celebrated in New York with the largest Columbus Day Parade in the nation each year, one of the candidates for mayor in November is not a friend of Columbus.

The avowed Socialist candidate, Zohran Mamdani, can be seen in a tweet from June 2020 giving the middle finger to the back of the towering statue of Columbus in Astoria, New York. Two years after he became a citizen.

“Take it Down” wrote Mamdani, who was running for state office at the time.

The tweet left a bad taste in the mouth of Italian American groups in the Big Apple. The President of the Columbus Heritage Coalition in New York, vowed not to support the lefty candidate come November. “I don’t think he will be the mayor for all the people of New York City.”

Mamdani’s critics argue his hostility toward Columbus monuments is not just a disagreement over history, but part of a broader political agenda that undermines traditional ethnic communities.

According to Italian American leader Joseph Scelsa, the founder and President of the Italian American Museum of New York,

“There is a substantial Italian American population in New York. To eliminate such a large population of people would be a travesty. It’s not exclusive. It’s exclusionary. Who’s to say who is a hero and who is not a hero? Columbus is our hero.”

The Italian American population across the five boroughs numbers a half a million.

The Columbus statues in New York City are symbols that hold deep meaning for many, especially within the Italian American community. Disrespecting Italian Americans by disrespecting their holiday and monuments is not the right side of history.

ITALIAN-AMERICAN REMEMBRANCE WEEK



PHOTO ABOVE: Italian Americans arrive at internment camp in Missoula, Montana for the duration of WW II.

Italian Americans were the first group to be interned before the Japanese Internment.

Although California no longer recognizes Columbus Day as a State holiday, since 1998 it does recognize the Second week of October every year as Italian American

Wartime Internment Remembrance Week.

The Resolution designating Remembrance Week narrates the story of how Italian American civil liberties were violated in California during the war. The resolution was issued in conjunction with the exhibit, "Una Storia Segreta -The Secret Story" on display in the State Capitol Rotunda

For a second time.

"During World War II, Italian Americans comprised the largest foreign-born group in California and the entire United States. And today are the fifth largest ancestry group in the United States.... During the war the freedom of more than 52,000 Italian born immigrants in California and more than 600,000 Italian born immigrants nationwide was restricted by government measures.... More than 10,000 were forced to leave their homes and prohibited from California's coastal zones."

"The impact of the wartime experience devastating to Italian American communities in California, the effects of which are still being felt. This story needs to be told to acknowledge that these events happened, to remember those whose lives were unjustly disrupted and whose freedoms were violated, to help repair the damage to California's Italian American communities.... "

It should be noted that it was on **Columbus Day in October 1942** when the president of the United States removed the restrictions on most of those who were subject to them.

These restrictions included mandatory identification booklets, travel restrictions no more than five miles from their house, 6 pm curfews or arrest for violators, seizure of personal property, boats and businesses, causing many to lose their homes, employment and businesses.

Worse still, they could not even attend family funerals, marriages, births or even visit family members in hospitals or their soldier sons on military bases.

Italian Americans constituted the largest ethnic group to serve in the American armed forces during the war estimated at a over one million men while family members on the Homefront were restricted. A testament to their patriotism and loyalty to the nation. And on opposite sides of the fighting from family members in Italy.

Another painful chapter in the Italian American experience.

The cultural war against Columbus taking place before our very eyes is another painful chapter but one we have a say in and a vote. The assault on Columbus puts our culture and identity at risk all the while reinforcing the culture and identity of other ethnic and racial groups.



[CLICK TO READ DAY OF REMEMBRANCE TEXT](#)

[CLICK TO READ "A KNOCK AT MIDNIGHT"](#)

[CLICK TO VIST THE 'WWII ITALIAN AMERICA' PAGE ON OUR SITE](#)

COLUMBUS MISINTERPRETED



Opponents of Columbus statues and holidays often misinterpret them as tributes to colonialism. In truth, Columbus became a symbol of hope and belonging for early Italian immigrants seeking acceptance in America.

In 1891, the largest lynch mob ever to assemble on U.S. soil murdered 11 innocent Italian immigrants in New Orleans – one of the darkest chapters in American history. To ease the resulting diplomatic crisis with Italy and promote national healing, U.S. President Benjamin Harrison declared the first Columbus Day celebration in 1892 - 400 years after Columbus's discovery of America.

The massive New York city parade of 1892 drew over a million people in a powerful display of unity and recognition. That event inspired generations of Italians to build Columbus statues and organize parades – not to glorify conquest, but to assert their place in American society and honor their heritage.

Italian Americans are proud of their heritage. Today, Columbus Day continues to stand as a symbol of Italian American pride.

In 2021 there were 149 Columbus statues and monuments in the country. The number of remaining Columbus statues still holds the number 3 position of historical figures who have had monuments erected in their honor. Abraham Lincoln has the most at 193, George Washington in second with 171. Both Washington and Lincoln have had their reputations tarnished by the color revolution.

There are 600 Columbus Statues worldwide, a number exceeded only by those of Jesus Christ.

Italian Americans were the second largest group of people lynched in the United States after black Americans with more than 50 documented lynchings from the late

1800s into 1920s. It was no wonder that celebrating Columbus Day was so important to their sense of dignity and self-worth considering the rampant anti-Italian sentiment of the time.

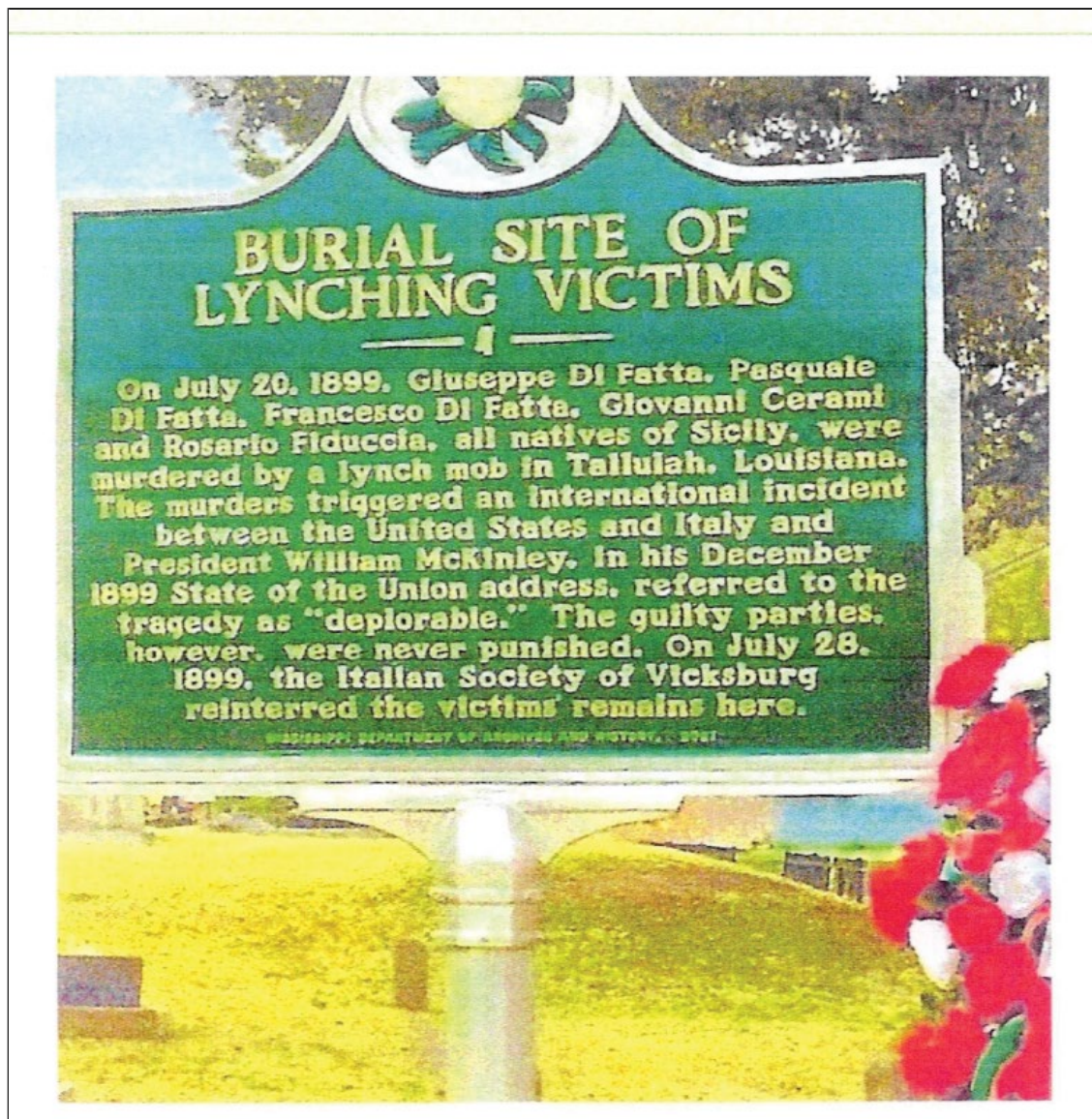


PHOTO ABOVE: Historical Marker for lynching of five Italians in 1899 in Tallulah, Louisiana

[CLICK TO VISIT THE 'SAVING COLUMBUS DAY' PAGE ON OUR SITE](#)

**ITALIAN AMERICANS HAVE LEFT THEIR
MARK ON AMERICA**



PHOTO ABOVE: Amedeo Pietro (A.P.) Giannini began branch banking in the United States by opening branches of his Bank of Italy in the Italian neighborhoods of California in the early 1900s. he opened more than 70 Bank of Italy branches in California before changing the name to Bank of America in 1929. He changed America

From the streets of New York to the farmlands of California, Italian Americans have left their mark on America.

They have left a historical legacy symbolized by Columbus Day. A symbol that unites us and whose monuments give power to our sense of peoplehood.

This month is Italian America Heritage Month, recognized far and wide every October. It is the month we honor those who brought their traditions, their passions, and their talent to a new land.

A time when we celebrate the food that brings us together, the music that moves us, the art that inspires us, and the strong sense of family, community, and history which unite us.

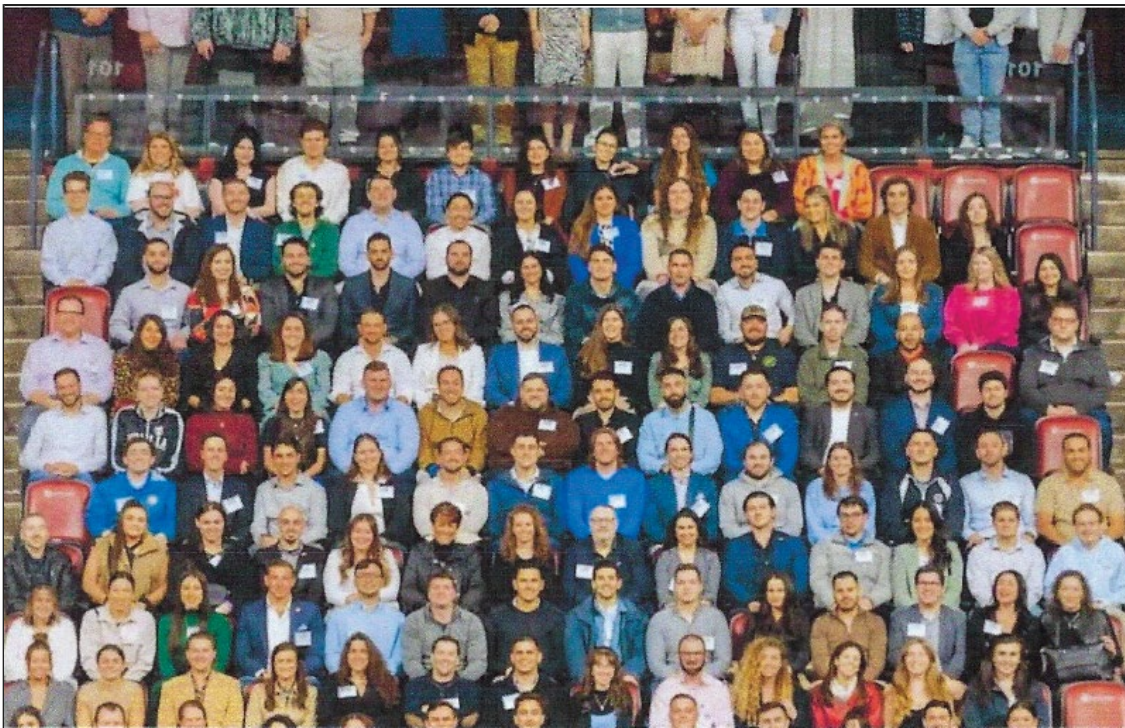
In recent years, the engagement of Italian Americans in leading our country, has marked an unprecedented era of Italian Americans representing the nation in vital constitutional roles. An Italian American, *Samuel Alito*, serves on the U.S. Supreme Court. Fellow Italian American Supreme Court Justice, *Antonin Scalia*, recently passed away.

The current Speaker of the House of Representatives is Mike Johnson (R - Louisiana), whose maternal grandfather was a Sicilian immigrant.

In that leadership role he follows his immediate predecessors, Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-California) whose maiden name was D'Alesandro, and Speaker Kevin McCarthy (R- California.), both of Italian descent. McCarthy's mothers name was Roberta Palladino.

The attorney general of the United States is Pam Bondi. Her grandparents, Calogero Bondi and Teresa Cagina were both immigrants from the Campagna region of Italy near Naples.

YOUNG ITALIAN-AMERICAN LEADERS ORGANIZE



The Annual Italian American Future Leaders Convention (IAFL) will be held in Sunrise Florida at the Amerant Bank Arena on the weekend of January 16-19. This is the fourth year that the convention has taken place where hundreds of young Italians Americans between the age of 21 – 35 gathers to network and learn about how they can contribute to the future of Italian America.

The Convention is sponsored by the Conference of Presidents of Major Italian

American Organizations (COPOMAIIO) – a national coalition of 75 cultural, educational, fraternal and anti-defamation groups.

According to the President of COPOMAIIO, Basil Russo,

“IALF is shifting the demographics of the Italian American community. The spotlight is now on the future as young people are empowered to elevate and unite our culture and heritage.”

The convention attendees are roughly half women and half men. First time attendees receive a free hotel stay for the 3-night cultural experience, and all meals, beverages and entertainment. Flights and ground transportation are not covered.

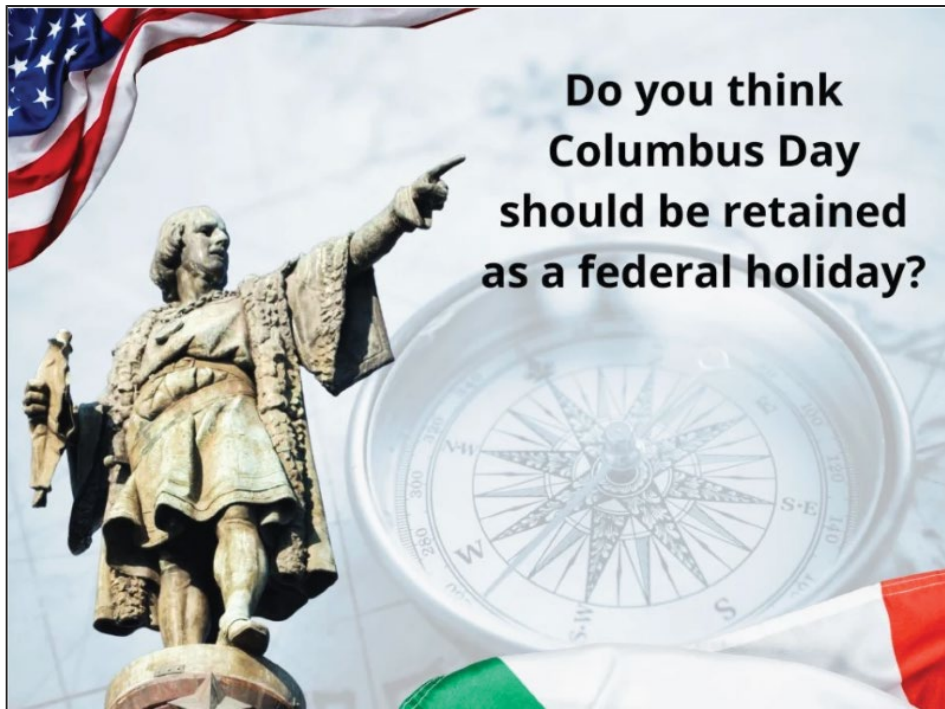
For more information visit the IALF website: iafuture.org

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS](#)



[CLICK TO READ WHAT COLUMBUS DAY MEANS TO ME - A LETTER](#)

COLUMBUS DAY - *WHAT DO ITALIAN AMERICANS THINK?*



In a recent poll of Italian Americans by “We The Italians” magazine, over 90% believed Columbus Day should remain a federal holiday. Less than 10% said no.

An unexpected result in the poll was that more Generation Z respondents born after 1997, nearly 95%, said yes, higher than any other age group. while only 5 % said no.

There is clearly hope for the future of Columbus Day in future generations of Italian America.

The West had the lowest support at 85%, while the Midwest had the highest at 95%.

In the United States, October is celebrated as Italian American Heritage Month. This is because on the Second Monday of October, the U.S. observes Columbus Day – a federal holiday, and therefore one of the highest- ranking national Celebrations.

For the vast majority of Italian Americans, Christopher Columbus has long been- and continues to be – a symbol of Italian American Pride. Naturally, not for all Italian

Americans. In recent years, Columbus has been questioned and attacked, and Italian Americans by and large believe these attacks extend to the very idea of Italian identity in the United States.

The “We the Italians Project” reaches 3 million Italian Americans.

ITALIAN PRIME MINISTER SUPPORTS COLUMBUS DAY



PHOTO BELOW: The Italian leader stood before the Statue of Columbus in New York's Columbus Circle in a moment of silence in 2024 to honor Columbus.

'They seek to cancel our culture. They are wrong,' the Italian Prime Minister said.

WASHINGTON—In a message to Italian Americans on Oct. 18, Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni defended Columbus Day, the U.S. federal holiday celebrated on the second Monday of October that has stirred controversy. She criticized what she called “woke culture,” saying that efforts to eliminate the holiday undermine the legacy of Italian Americans in the United States.

"I know that there are forces that seek to divide us, to redefine our history, and to tear down our shared traditions. They call it 'woke culture.' They seek to cancel our culture. They are wrong," Meloni said in a video message to this year's National Italian American Foundation gala dinner.

Echoing recent comments from U.S. President Donald Trump about Columbus Day, the Italian prime minister said, "To try to erase Columbus Day is not just an attack on a statue or a date on the calendar; it is an attempt to erase the foundational history of Italian Americans and to deny their hard-fought place in the tapestry of this nation."

On Oct. 9, President Trump signed a proclamation reinstating Columbus Day as a national holiday to honor the legacy of Italian explorer Christopher Columbus.





PHOTO ABOVE: The Columbus Monument in Genoa, Italy

