



Joint Civic Committee of Italian Americans

3800 Division Street, Stone Park, Illinois 60165 | P (708) 450-9050 | F 708) 450-9065 | www.jccia.com | jcc@jccia.com

March 11, 2020

The Honorable Kwame Raoul
Attorney General of the State of Illinois
500 South Second Street
Springfield, IL 62701

Dear Mr. Attorney General:

The Joint Civic Committee of Italian Americans (JCCIA), along with members of the Polish, Jewish, Hispanic, Filipino, African American, and other communities, vehemently opposes the Chicago Board of Education's (CBE) illegal usurping of Columbus Day, a nationally recognized federal holiday as well as one celebrated by the People of the State of Illinois under Public Act 100-0119. The CBE inappropriately substituted out Columbus Day with Indigenous People's day in the same manner as they would a teacher calling in sick for the day. It's vital to point out that our coalition stands firmly in support of Indigenous People's Day. Indeed, we celebrate Indigenous People's Day on the last Monday of September—the day that, in 2017, the State signed into law the celebration of this holiday.

The historical legacy of any individual should not give license to the wholesale removal of a symbol that was a beacon of hope for millions of maligned Italians who helped create the beauty of this country. Instead, that subject is better suited for history books and discussion amongst those who learn and teach.

We have demanded the CBE rescind its decision to remove Columbus Day from its calendar because the Board violated Illinois State Schools Code (105 ILCS 5/24-2), Sec. 24-2, Par. (a)(b)(1)(2). In its procedure to eliminate Columbus Day, the Board failed to "...first holds a public hearing about the proposal. The entity shall provide notice preceding the public hearing to both educators and parents." Citing the February 26, 2020, CBE Agenda, there is no notice of a Columbus Day rescission discussion. Accordingly, the CBE vote was both procedurally and legally wrong. The JCCIA, the community it represents and the communities of other ethnic groups who stand behind our demand, are requesting that the Attorney General of the State of Illinois defend the State against the illegal parliamentary procedures of the Board in eliminating a State of Illinois recognized holiday, namely, Columbus Day, celebrated traditionally on the second Monday in October.

We, along with Illinois State Representatives John D'Amico, Anthony DeLuca, Natalie Manley, Deanne Mazzochi, Martin Moylan, Bob Rita, Dan Ugaste, and Michael Zalewski, hope you will take swift action in correcting this wrong. It is our belief that no action will only embolden others to not follow the rules and avoid the transparency required of public hearings—especially when one considers that the Board exists at the whim of Illinois taxpayers and their dollars.



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Attorney General

We intend to be vocal about this issue while respecting our Indigenous community, and ensuring that we remain consistent with the First Amendment of our United States Constitution. We honor those who came before us and were so much a part of our rich heritage and contributions that made the Land of Lincoln and the United States of America great.

Sincerely,

Sergio Giangrande

President

Joint Civic Committee of Italian Americans

CC: ISBE, Chicago Board of Education, Deputy Governor Jesse Ruiz and Mayor Lori Lightfoot