



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 4, 2020

Chicago Board of Education
1 North Dearborn, Suite 950
Chicago, Illinois 60602

The Joint Civic Committee of Italian Americans, along with members of the Polish, Jewish, African American, and other communities, vehemently opposes the Chicago Board of Education usurping Columbus Day. It's important to point out that we stand together and annually 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 is and should be subject to debate. That debate 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.

We are demanding the Chicago Board of Education 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, Chicago Board of Education Agenda, there is no notice of a Columbus Day rescission discussion. Accordingly, the Chicago Board of Education vote was both procedurally and legally wrong.

In addition to sending this letter to the Illinois State Board of Education Chairman and Superintendent, we are also sending this correspondence to Mayor Lightfoot, Governor Pritzker, Deputy Governor Ruiz, Illinois House and Senate Leaders, Illinois legislators that sit on the House and Senate education committees, all Italian American elected officials in our state, the Illinois delegation to the U.S. Congress, U.S. Senator Durbin, U.S. Senator Duckworth, U.S. Education Secretary DeVos, and President Trump.

Sincerely,

Sergio Giangrande
President
Joint Civic Committee of Italian Americans

Along with the following:

Calabrese in America
Chicago Sister Cities International-Milan
Italian American Political Action Committee
Italian American Human Relations Foundation
Italian American War Veterans of the United States

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Chicago Board of Education

Justinian Society of Lawyers
National Italian American Foundation
Order of the Sons of Italy
UNICO
Alderman Walter Burnett
Alderman Brian Hopkins
Alderman Raymond Lopez
Alderman Anthony Napolitano
Alderman Nick Sposato
Alderman Chris Taliaferro
Cook County Commissioner Larry Suffredin
Cook County Commissioner Pete Silvestri
Elmwood Park Mayor Angelo "Skip" Saviano
Niles Mayor Andrew Przybylo
Representative Anthony DeLuca
Representative John D'Amico
Thornton Township Supervisor Frank M. Zuccarelli

cc: ISBE, Mayor Lightfoot, Governor Pritzker, Deputy Governor Ruiz, President Harmon, Leader Brady, Speaker Madigan, Leader Durkin, Members of the House and Senate Education Committees, Italian American Elected officials, Illinois U.S. Congressmen, U.S. Senator Durbin, U.S. Senator Duckworth, U.S. Education Secretary Betsy Devos, and President Trump.