



**Commission for
Social Justice**

ORDER
Sons and Daughters of Italy
IN AMERICA®

June 9th, 2025

Governor Joseph Lombardo
Nevada State Capitol Building
101 N. Carson St
Carson City, NV 89701

Dear Governor Lombardo,

On behalf of the Commission for Social Justice (CSJ), the anti-defamation arm of the Order Sons and Daughters of Italy in America (OSDIA)—the largest and oldest organization representing Italian American men and women—I would like to express our gratitude that you have decided to veto the provisions of BDR 19-7, relating to Indigenous Peoples Day in Nevada.

For centuries, Christopher Columbus has been the symbol through which we Italian Americans have celebrated our ethnicity. In fact, it is so symbolic that Columbus Day was first proclaimed a national celebration by President Benjamin Harrison in response to the 11 Italian immigrations lynched in New Orleans in 1891—the largest lynching in United States history. Half a century later, the United States government chose Columbus Day of 1942 as the day to formally remove the “enemy alien” designation that was applied to Italian immigrants during World War II. So, as you can see, Columbus Day stands for much more than the explorer himself; it stands for our Italian heritage.

We are in full support of recognizing Native Americans. But why must such recognition replace Columbus Day? With only 12 recognized federal holidays, that leaves 353 possible days to recognize the contributions of Native Americans. Though we are in full support of this, it is equally unjust to take away from Italian Americans a day that represents *their* roots, history, and contributions to this country.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. expressed these sentiments best when he stated: “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

We at the Order Sons and Daughters of Italy in America believe in diversity and tolerance by **addition**, *not* by **subtraction** or **substitution**.

We urge you to continue supporting Italian Americans and our heritage in this battle that has been unjustly thrust upon us, and we also urge and fully support you to recognize the

contributions Native Americans made to this great nation and your city on a day other than Columbus Day.

Sincerely,



Robert M. Ferrito
National CSJ President
Order Sons and Daughters of Italy in America

CC: *Michael G. Polo, National President, Order Sons and Daughters of Italy in America*
Shayla Kaestle, National Executive Director, Order Sons and Daughters of Italy in America
Order Sons and Daughters of Italy in America Supreme Council
Commission for Social Justice Board of Directors, Voting Members, and Resource Persons

