

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 183

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 175

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 183—Relative to
Italian-American Wartime Internment Remembrance Week.

[Filed with Secretary of State September 16, 1998.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 183, Torlakson. Italian-American Wartime Internment
Remembrance Week.

This measure would designate the second week of October of
every year as "Italian-American Wartime Internment
Remembrance Week."

WHEREAS, During World War II, Italian Americans comprised
the largest foreign-born group in California and the entire United
States; and

WHEREAS, Italian Americans today are the fifth-largest ancestry
group in the United States, numbering over 15 million, and more than
1.5 million Italian Americans live in California; and

WHEREAS, Hundreds of thousands of Italian Americans
performed exemplary service and thousands sacrificed their lives in
defense of the United States; and

WHEREAS, During World War II, thousands of Italian-American
citizens and residents of Italian origin were arrested, and 264 of them
were incarcerated for the duration of the war in internment camps
located in Fort Missoula, Montana; Fort Sam Houston, Texas; Camp
Forrest, Tennessee; and Fort MacAlester, Oklahoma; and

WHEREAS, During World War II, 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 that branded them "enemy aliens"; and

WHEREAS, These restrictions included mandatory identification
booklets, travel restrictions, curfews, and the seizure of personal
property, causing many to lose their employment; and

WHEREAS, During World War II, more than 10,000
Italian-American immigrants living in California, mostly elderly
women, were forced to leave their homes and were prohibited from
entering California's coastal zones; and

WHEREAS, During World War II, Italian-American fishermen
were prevented from entering fishing areas and many of these
fishermen had their boats confiscated by the United States Navy for
government use during the war; and

WHEREAS, During World War II, scores of naturalized citizens of Italian descent were investigated by the Assembly Fact-Finding Committee on Un-American Activities in California as suspected leaders of a fascist movement in California, and more than 20 were excluded from California for the duration of the war; and

WHEREAS, The impact of the wartime experience was devastating to Italian-American communities in California, the effects of which are still being felt; and

WHEREAS, Italian-American citizens and residents of Italian origin and their families seek the United States government's acknowledgment of this tragic and largely unknown experience; and

WHEREAS, This story needs to be told in order 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, and to discourage the occurrence of similar injustices and violations of civil liberties in the future; and

WHEREAS, The month of October in California is Italian-American History Month; and

WHEREAS, The exhibit "Una Storia Segreta—The Secret Story" will again be on display in the Capitol Rotunda from August 17 to September 4, 1998; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature welcomes the exhibit "Una Storia Segreta—The Secret Story" again to the Capitol Rotunda; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature encourages Californians to view the exhibit to promote greater awareness of this regrettable moment in history; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature recognizes the occurrence of these events and formally acknowledges that these events represented a fundamental injustice against Italian-American citizens and residents of Italian origin; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature hereby designates the second week of October of every year as "Italian-American Wartime Internment Remembrance Week"; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.