

ITALIAN AMERICAN LEGISLATOR PROJECT 2011: A LEGACY OF SERVICE TO THE CALIFORNIA STATE LEGISLATURE

WHEREAS, People of Italian descent have participated in American politics and government since the beginning of United States history, and have served as Members of the California State Legislature since its first session held on December 15, 1849; and

WHEREAS, "The Italian American Legislator Project of 2011: A Legacy of Service to the California Legislature" (the Legacy Project) was recently launched to identify and compile a list of persons of Italian American heritage who have served as Members of the houses of the California Legislature. This project was initiated by the office of Assembly Member Anthony Portantino and the California Italian American Task Force with assistance from the California Research Bureau, the Office of the Chief Clerk, the Italian American Museum of Los Angeles, Lawrence DiStasi, former-Senate President pro Tempore David Roberti, other previously-serving Italian American legislators, and the staff of various currently-serving Italian American legislators; and

WHEREAS, The Legacy Project survey has already identified 51 Italian Americans who are former or current members of the California Senate Assembly; this is the first time that a comprehensive list of Italian American legislators has been compiled; and

WHEREAS, Compiling the tentative Legacy Project list reveals a complex but highly successful journey of Italian Americans in the United States and California. A names-only search provided limited assistance for this project, making this project partly reliant on oral recollections, intergenerational confirmations, and documents not readily accessible to the public. Many names were altered deliberately or by error at Ellis Island or by government and school personnel. Some names were changed during times of open discrimination to gain employment, social acceptance, protect children, or avoid stereotyping, and other names were simply changed through marriage; and

WHEREAS, The following Italian American legislators have been identified by surveyors who believe that further searches are needed to find other persons not listed or that further confirmation is needed to positively affirm the heritage of those persons listed with an asterisk:

1. Tom Ammiano (Assembly, 2008–Present)
2. John Badaracco (Assembly, 1919, 1921, 1923)
3. Bill Bagley (Assembly, 1961–74)
4. Frank Belotti (Assembly, 1951–72)
5. Patty Berg (Mazzarelli) (Assembly, 2003–08)
6. Paula Boland (Assembly, 1990–96)
7. Frank G. Bonelli (Assembly, 1954–58)
8. William Bonelli (1930–32)
9. Tom Bordonaro (Assembly, 1994–98)
10. *Douglas Bosco (Assembly, 1978–80)
11. Marilyn Carolini Brewer (Assembly, 1994–2000)
12. Anthony Caminetti (Assembly, 1883, 1897, 1899; Senate, 1887, 1889, 1907–13)
13. Joseph Canciamilla (Assembly, 2000–06)
14. Victor Canepa (Assembly, 1913, 1915; Senate, 1917–21, 1927, 1929)
15. Anthony Cannella (Senate, 2010–Present)
16. Sal Cannella (Assembly, 1990–96)
17. August Cavagnaro (Assembly, 1901)
18. Eugene A. Chappie (Assembly, 1965–75)
19. Larry Chimbole (Assembly, 1976–78)
20. Dominic Cortese (Assembly, 1981–96)
21. Vic Fazio (Assembly, 1975–78)
22. Dr. William Filante (Assembly, 1979–92)
23. Cathleen Galgiani (Assembly, 2006–Present)
24. Mike Gatto (Assembly, 2010–Present)
25. Arlen Gregorio (Senate, 1970–78)
26. Jerry Hill (Assembly, 2008–Present)
27. Wally Knox (Assembly, 1994–2000)
28. Robert Lagomarsino (Senate, 1961–74)
29. Doug LaMalfa (Assembly, 2002–08; Senate, 2010–Present)
30. Paul J. Lunardi (Assembly, 1959–63; Senate, 1963–66)
31. Ennio Martinelli (Senate, 1909, 1911)
32. Bob Moretti (Assembly, 1965–74)
33. George Moscone (Senate, 1967–76)
34. Roger Niello (Assembly, 2004–10)
35. Egisto Palmieri (Senate, 1885)
36. Joseph Pedrotti (Assembly, 1921, 1923; Senate, 1925–29, 1931)
37. Don Perata (Assembly, 1996–98; Senate, 1998–2008)
38. Anthony Pescetti (Assembly, 1999–2002)
39. George Plescia (Assembly, 2002–08)
40. Anthony Portantino (Assembly, 2006–Present)
41. Paul Priolo (Assembly, 1967–80)
42. David Roberti (Assembly, 1967–71; Senate, 1971–94)
43. James Rogan (Assembly, 1994–96)
44. Don Sebastiani (Assembly, 1980–86)
45. Augustus D. Splivalo (Assembly, 1867)
46. Alfred Talliaferro (Assembly, 1852; Senate, 1857, 1858)
47. Mike Thompson (Senate, 1990–98)
48. Charles P. Vicini (Assembly, 1917–19)
49. Catherine Marinelli Wright (Assembly, 1980–92; Senate, 1993–2000)
50. Mark Wyland (Assembly, 2000–06; Senate, 2006–Present)
51. *Louis Zocchi (Assembly, 1895)

WHEREAS, Italian American legislators have left a legacy of political leadership and accomplishments. Two Italian American legislators, David Roberti (1980–94) and Don Perata (2004–08), have served as Presidents pro Tempore of the Senate, and one Italian American legislator, Bob Moretti (1971–74), has served as Speaker of the Assembly; and

WHEREAS, Eight Italian Americans currently serve in the California Legislature, three in the Senate and five in the Assembly; and

WHEREAS, California's Italian American legislators have worked together to represent the interests of the Italian American people of California, and have authored several pieces of legislation seeking to include in the K–12 curriculum the history, role, and contributions of Italian Americans, and resolutions designating October as Italian American Heritage Month, and have sponsored annual exhibits in the State Capitol capturing over 180 years of Italian American history in California; and

WHEREAS, Columbus Day, observed on October 12 of each year, is a holiday of special significance to Italian Americans in the United States and California, and the designation of October as Italian American Heritage Month is recognition of the significant impact Italian Americans have made to the rich cultural fabric of California and the lives of all its residents; and

WHEREAS, The 2000 Census counted 1,450,885 Italian Americans in California, constituting 4.3 percent of the state's population and the third largest Italian American population in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Italian Americans have made enormous contributions to the economic and cultural development and success of California, and Italian American legislators have made important contributions to the political life of California through their dedication to public service; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, that the month of October continue to be designated Italian American Heritage Month; that the Legislature maintain and continue to update the Legacy Project and continue annual observances of Italian American Heritage Month; that the Legislature welcomes the exhibit "The Italian American Legislator Project of 2011: A Legacy of Service to the California Legislature" to the State Capitol Building during the month of October; and that the Legislature encourages all Californians, through the K–12 curriculum and otherwise, to learn about the history, role, and contributions of Italian Americans to the State of California.