



Dear Friends,

As you may be aware, the State Legislature has decided to remove the statue of Columbus and Isabella from the State Capitol Rotunda. The Legislature's very divisive decision marginalizes the Italian American community. The reason given by the Legislature for removing this statue is that the statue represents a polarizing historical figure.

The statue of Christopher Columbus at Coit Tower overlooking San Francisco Bay was vandalized and removed this week.

The voices of the Italian-American community fell on deaf ears or were totally disregarded by the Legislature. But we should not be marginalized, our voice must be heard! As a first step, we must let the legislators who ordered the removal of the statue hear our collective disapproval of their callous disregard for the Italian American community. Below I have listed their names and addresses.

I have prepared the following letter as a guide to voice your displeasure with the action to remove Columbus from the State Capitol Rotunda where it has stood since 1883.

Dear (Legislator)

Regarding the removal of the statue of Columbus from the State Capitol Rotunda, I want you to know this is a day of mourning for all Italian-Americans who care about their history. For generations, Columbus and

Columbus day have been a symbol of Italian-American identity and unity. Each Columbus statue destroyed, decapitated, and removed strips away the recognition Italian-Americans fought so hard to earn. Shame on those who spit on our history, deny our contributions, and prefer to stereotype and discriminate. They do not know our Story.

Columbus Day was declared a national celebration in 1892 following the March, 1891 New Orleans lynching's where 11 Italian-Americans were murdered by a mob in one of the largest mass Lynching's in American history. Italian-Americans were the second largest group of Americans to be lynched in America.

Columbus Day exists in recognition of the lynching's, murders, discrimination and abuse Italian-Americans endured and to recognize the contributions they made to their new home: America.

Columbus day was declared a national holiday in 1934 by President Franklin Roosevelt in honor of Italian Americans.

While Columbus Day is a symbol of Italian-American pride and their contributions to America, he also represents the foundations of American history. The unfair attacks on Columbus which obscure the truth about the man, his voyage and his motives should not obscure the reason why Columbus Matters to Italian-Americans and many Americans. We should not accept the shame narrative of American history. A narrative which does not recognize the history and contributions of the millions of immigrants who helped build America. A false narrative which denies their truth and history.

The main opposition against Columbus Day and to Italian-Americans in the past was by the Ku Klux Klan. Now the struggles and successes of Italian-Americans are being opposed and erased from history by a new wave of bigotry and intolerance and a prejudiced rewriting of history.

To remove or destroy a statue that is so important to the Italian-American people is not OK. If some are offended by the Columbus statues that is no excuse for their destruction or removal. There would be no statues and no public art at all if we, as a nation, were to use the impossible yardstick that some may be offended. Where would it end?

I respectfully request that the statue of Columbus remain in the State Capitol Rotunda and that the State Legislature celebrate Columbus Day as a state holiday in tribute to the Italian-American population of California.

IN PROTEST

Here are the names of the California legislative leaders that decided to remove the Columbus Statue:

1. **Toni Atkins** - (San Diego) - President of the State Senate:
toni.atkins@Senate.ca.gov / phone (916) 651-4039 /
California State Capitol, Room 205 • PO BOX 942849, Sacramento, CA 95814
 2. **Anthony Rendon** (Lakewood) - Speaker of the Assembly:
<https://speaker.asmdc.org/contact-anthony> / phone (916) 319-2063
-

California State Capitol, Room 219 • PO BOX 942849, Sacramento, CA 94249

3. Ken Cooley - (Sacramento/ Elk Grove) – Assembly Rules Committee:
<https://lcmspubcontact.lc.ca.gov/PublicLCMS/ContactPopup.php?district=AD08&inframe=Y> /
phone (916) 319 2008
California State Capitol, Room 2013 • PO BOX 942849, Sacramento, CA 94249

Let your voice be heard!

Bill Cerruti

Chair, California Italian American Task Force

Email: italy1@surewest.net.

READ: WHY COLUMBUS DAY MATTERS!

