

PLEASE OPPOSE HB20-1031

CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW STATE HOLIDAY IN PLACE OF COLUMBUS DAY
Section (1) Legislative Declaration.

(1)(f) "Replacing Columbus Day as a state holiday does not take away from the recognition of the Italian American community and its contributions to the state."

This declaration by Representative Benvidez is knowingly and blatantly untrue. The truth is that taking away Columbus Day, completely and unequivocally, takes away all recognition of the Italian-American community in Colorado. The truth is that year after year, my fellow representatives from the Italian-American community and I, have gathered here at the Capital to passionately testify to the importance of Columbus Day, to our children, to our community, and to our heritage. The truth is that this is an ongoing, yearly assault on everything it means to be an Italian-American. The truth is that this is not just a State Holiday, but a National Holiday, honoring one of the most prominent figures, not only in American History, but world history as well. The truth is that the accomplishments of Columbus are recognized and celebrated around the world and his role in the very foundation of this country is undeniable. The truth is that this long standing tradition of celebrating Columbus Day across the nation honors generations of Italian American families and their considerable contributions to this country. The one day of the year when Italian American communities across this great Nation celebrate a National Holiday that celebrates Italians. A holiday tradition that is as American as baseball and apple pie, passed on to us with pride from our grandparents and great-grandparents. To the Italian American community, the significance of celebrating Columbus Day can be compared to that of Saint Patrick's Day to Irish Americans, Martin Luther King Day to African Americans, and Cinco de Mayo to the Latin American community. The truth is that this is not about creating a new holiday for the benefit of ALL Coloradans, but rather about taking away an existing piece of our history and our heritage, ultimately hurting all Coloradans.

Finally, there is the issue of creating a new holiday, solely for the people of Colorado. Does that mean that the schools, the postal service, along with Colorado and Local government agencies will shut down on this new holiday? Will these same services also shut down on Columbus Day, which will remain a National Holiday? Obviously, all Federal Government services will continue to Celebrate Columbus Day and will be closed. Nothing about this ridiculous bill, or any of its previous incarnations, is good for Colorado.

Please respect and honor the Italian American community in Colorado. Please protect our heritage and our history. Please protect Columbus Day!

Respectfully,

Richard SaBell, February 4, 2020