



## Joint Civic Committee of Italian Americans

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March 4, 2020

Mr. Darren Reisberg  
Chairman  
Illinois State Board of Education  
100 N. First Street  
Springfield, IL 62777

Dr. Carmen I. Ayala  
State Superintendent of Education  
Illinois State Board of Education  
100 N. First Street  
Springfield, IL 62777

Dear Mr. Reisberg and Dr. Ayala:

The Joint Civic Committee of Italian Americans, along with members of the Polish, Jewish, African American, and other communities, vehemently opposes the Chicago Board of Education usurping Columbus Day. It's important to point out that we stand together and annually celebrate Indigenous People's Day on the last Monday of September—the day that, in 2017, the state signed into law the celebration of this holiday.

The historical legacy of any individual is and should be subject to debate. That debate should not give license to the wholesale removal of a symbol that was a beacon of hope for millions of maligned Italians who helped create the beauty of this country.

We are demanding the Chicago Board of Education rescind its decision to remove Columbus Day from its calendar because the Board violated Illinois state schools code (105 ILCS 5/24-2), Sec. 24-2, Par. (a)(b)(1)(2). In its procedure to eliminate Columbus Day, the Board failed to "...first holds a public hearing about the proposal. The entity shall provide notice preceding the public hearing to both educators and parents." Citing the February 26, 2020, Chicago Board of Education Agenda, there is no notice of a Columbus Day rescission discussion. Accordingly, the Chicago Board of Education vote was both procedurally and legally wrong.

In addition to sending this letter to the members of the Board of Education, we are also sending this correspondence to Mayor Lightfoot, Governor Pritzker, Deputy Governor Ruiz, Illinois House and Senate Leaders, Illinois legislators that sit on the House and Senate education committees, all Italian American elected officials in our state, the Illinois delegation to the U.S. Congress, U.S. Senator Durbin, U.S. Senator Duckworth, U.S. Education Secretary DeVos, and President Trump.



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Mr. Reisberg and Dr. Ayala

We respectfully request the Illinois Board of Education (ISBE) to investigate this violation and that we meet with you or representatives of ISBE.

Sincerely,

Sergio Giangrande  
President  
Joint Civic Committee of Italian Americans

Along with the following:

Calabrese in America  
Chicago Sister Cities International-Milan  
Italian American Political Action Committee  
Italian American Human Relations Foundation  
Italian American War Veterans of the United States  
Justinian Society of Lawyers  
National Italian American Foundation  
Order of the Sons of Italy  
UNICO  
Alderman Walter Burnett  
Alderman Brian Hopkins  
Alderman Raymond Lopez  
Alderman Anthony Napolitano  
Alderman Nick Sposato  
Alderman Chris Taliaferro  
Cook County Commissioner Larry Suffredin  
Cook County Commissioner Pete Silvestri  
Elmwood Park Mayor Angelo "Skip" Saviano  
Niles Mayor Andrew Przybylo  
Representative Anthony DeLuca  
Representative John D'Amico  
Thornton Township Supervisor Frank M. Zuccarelli

cc: Chicago Board of Education, Mayor Lightfoot, Governor Pritzker, Deputy Governor Ruiz, President Harmon, Leader Brady, Speaker Madigan, Leader Durkin, Members of the House and Senate Education Committees, Italian American Elected officials, Illinois U.S. Congressmen, U.S. Senator Durbin, U.S. Senator Duckworth, U.S. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, and President Trump.