

## OPPOSE HB1135

**We abhor all the atrocities that have been perpetrated against citizens of our country. Those terrible events include the abuse and mistreatment of Native Americans, the enslavement of Africans who were brought to our country against their will, the internment and seizure of property owned by Japanese Americans during World War II, and the discrimination against and persecution of ethnic groups like the Irish, the Poles and the Italians who immigrated to this country.**

**We ask that you support us in voting against HB1135 for the following reasons:**

- **Columbus Day is a national holiday.** President Obama and the Presidents who proceeded him—both Republican and Democrat—have proclaimed every October that Columbus’s legacy is embodied in the spirit of our Nation and that the people of the United States should observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.
- **Columbus Day not only honors an explorer and the need for discovery -- a mission we're still on as a nation -- but it honors our heritage** and for many of us, it honors the moment when our government acknowledged our families and our nationality and our place in America. We're proud of Columbus Day, and we're proud of all of the accomplishments Italian Americans have had in this country.
- **November is recognized nationally as Indigenous Peoples month.** Considering this, Colorado should proclaim a day in honor of indigenous People in November. We would support that.
- **The bill uses questionable writings by Bartoleme de las Casas’ as factual information supporting the discrediting of Columbus.** In fact, de las Casas was himself a slave owner and prosecutor of indigenous residents in the Caribbean. De las Casas was never a witness nor did he ever travel with Columbus. His first trip to the Americas was in 1507 which was a year after the death of Christopher Columbus. De las Casas himself was guilty of abuse and genocide against Indigenous People. It is true that he repented for his crimes against these people and later became a Catholic Priest. He then became a supporter of Indigenous People.
- **We ask to be treated equally.** Every ethnic group and race in this country is granted an opportunity to celebrate their heritage. The Native Americans celebrate theirs through the Colorado Indian Market each January. The Irish have St. Patrick’s Day, African Americans celebrate Juneteenth and Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Mexicans celebrate Cinco de Mayo; Latino’s celebrate the legacy of Caesar Chavez, Asians celebrate the Dragon Boat Festival, etc.

We ask that you allow the Italian Americans in Colorado to celebrate their great heritage and culture together as Columbus Day.