

Carmen J. Gotti
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**Re: HB 179 Indigenous People's Day - Rule of Interpretation of Columbus Day 2024 -
Statement of OPPOSITION (UNF)**

To the Maryland Health and Operations Committee

As a lifelong resident of the State of Maryland, and a proud Italian American. Upon hearing about the proposition of House Bill 179, I felt compelled to voice my opposition to this spit in the face to myself and to my community. I am disheartened that Representative J. Lewis has not carried out the necessary research to discover the reason for the existence of this holiday. If he has, then he has clearly chosen to ignore and slight the Italian American community. To be clear, my response to the bill, is not in opposition to the celebration of Indigenous People – as they rightfully deserve the celebration of their heritage, but rather, to voice my opposition to erasing the heritage of others.

Columbus Day was created after the 1891 New Orleans lynchings of several Italian Immigrants in New Orleans, Louisiana. This specific incident was the first of many others that occurred in the United States. President Harrison then created Columbus Day as a result of these horrific events (ref: [A Proclamation on Columbus Day, 2022 | The White House](#)). This holiday was later made a permanent holiday by President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Has any representative from the State of Maryland considered a discussion with the Italian American community? Or, have they simply decided to let the Italian American culture be pushed aside and erased? I find it ironic that his holiday is looking to be erased with no discussion with Italian Americans in the State of Maryland. I also find it ironic how the Columbus Statue in Baltimore, Maryland, was torn down by an angry mob – in similar fashion to those Italian immigrants in New Orleans, Louisiana – also lynched by an angry mob.

I am in *strict* opposition to HB 179.

Thank you,

Carmen J. Gotti