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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 202 Session of  
2021

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INTRODUCED BY DiSANTO, PHILLIPS-HILL, BROWNE, REGAN, MARTIN,  
LAUGHLIN, ARGALL, MASTRIANO AND SCAVELLO, OCTOBER 28, 2021

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REFERRED TO RULES AND EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS, OCTOBER 28, 2021

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A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing the month of October 2021 as "Italian-American  
2 Heritage Month" in Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, Explorer Christopher Columbus, the son of a wool  
4 merchant, was born in Genoa, Italy, around 1451; and

5 WHEREAS, Christopher Columbus was determined to find a  
6 quicker route west from Europe to Asia and embarked on what  
7 would become four voyages across the Atlantic Ocean starting in  
8 1492; and

9 WHEREAS, During his initial voyage, Christopher Columbus  
10 landed upon an island in the Bahamas, and his journey was a  
11 catalyst for centuries of exploration of the Americas; and

12 WHEREAS, Columbus set into motion the widespread transfer of  
13 people, plants, animals and cultures between the Old and New  
14 Worlds; and

15 WHEREAS, While Italian adventurers have always been a part of  
16 American history, it was not until the 1820s that Italian  
17 immigrants began moving to the United States in sizable numbers;  
18 and

1       WHEREAS, A feudal society, high unemployment and oppressive  
2 taxes coupled with natural disasters, disease, poverty and  
3 famine, gave many reasons for Italians to look for freedom and  
4 opportunities abroad; and

5       WHEREAS, While educated Italian professionals also emigrated,  
6 many Italian immigrants arrived relatively unskilled, but soon  
7 helped fuel a booming industrial economy by providing labor for  
8 American factories and mines and helping to build roads, dams,  
9 tunnels and other infrastructure; and

10       WHEREAS, As Italian Americans began settling in the country's  
11 major cities, they faced religious and ethnic discrimination  
12 which occasionally led to brutal violence; and

13       WHEREAS, For this reason, Italian Americans started  
14 celebrating the life and accomplishments of Christopher Columbus  
15 as a way for citizens of Italian descent to be accepted by their  
16 new homeland; and

17       WHEREAS, In 1937, President Franklin D. Roosevelt proclaimed  
18 Columbus Day as a national holiday; and

19       WHEREAS, We credit Christopher Columbus with Italian  
20 immigration to the New World and what is now Pennsylvania; and

21       WHEREAS, Currently, there are more than 16 million Americans  
22 of Italian heritage in the United States and more than 1.4  
23 million Americans of Italian heritage residing in Pennsylvania;  
24 and

25       WHEREAS, In 1905, the Order Sons of Italy in America was  
26 formed with the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania to follow in 1913;  
27 and

28       WHEREAS, More recently, the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania  
29 became an independent organization and was renamed the Grand  
30 Lodge of Pennsylvania Sons and Daughters of Italy, existing to

1 promote education, encourage the dissemination of Italian  
2 culture, organize programs for patriotic and humanitarian  
3 purposes and combat discrimination while protecting and  
4 upholding the positive image of Italian heritage; therefore be  
5 it

6       RESOLVED, That the Senate recognize the month of October 2021  
7 as "Italian-American Heritage Month" in Pennsylvania and  
8 acknowledge the important role of the early immigrants in our  
9 Commonwealth's history.