

New York State Commission for Social Justice
2024 Spring Plenary
Report

Brothers and Sisters, I hope all had a very happy and blessed Easter. The month of March was busy for all with our lodges re-installing or installing new members on their executive boards. To all our lodge presidents, I am urging you to have a report given at all your meeting from you liaison to the CSJ. It is important to pass all the information from CSJ to your members.

I would like to welcome John Gregory from the Linguanti Lodge to join our Executive Board representing District 5.

2024 CSJ Luncheon

I want to thank all who attended and/or donated to our CSJ luncheon. It was a success being this was our first luncheon since Covid. I want to congratulate and thank this year's honoree, Anthony Naccarato, and Dr. Joseph Scelsa. I want to thank the luncheon chair Eleanor Jobbagy and all who assisted her in putting this event together. I also want to thank MaryAnn Prince who did a great job with our journal. Our journal is available on our website www.newyorkcsj.org.

Attacks on Columbus and our Holiday

Queens Senator Ramos and Brooklyn Assemblymember Marcela Mitaynes Continue their attack on Columbus

We still have no definitive news on where this legislation is currently. However, we are staying on top of this to be ready to respond when necessary. I am still urging all of you, brothers and sisters, to have a conversation with your state legislators.

We will keep you up to date with any news that we receive regarding this legislation.

Senate Bill S-2970 to Eliminate Columbus Day Holiday

Below are the Senators on the Senate Judiciary Committee with their phone numbers.

Senate Bill S-2970 to eliminate the Federal Columbus Day Holiday, is in this committee. It is vitally important that this bill not pass this committee. This Bill was cosponsored by 13 Democrats, 3 of which are on this committee. We need at least 1 of the Democrat Senators to vote against this Bill in this committee.

We ask everyone to take the time to call these Senators, especially the Democrats, who have the majority, to ask them to vote against this Bill. (A phone call is worth 10 or more emails, so please call.)

When you call you will probably get an Aide – ask them to tell the Senator that you request they vote against Senate Bill S-2970 so that the Federal Columbus Day holiday is not eliminated.

1. *Dick Durbin, Chair (D-IL) 1-202-224-2152*
2. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) 1-202-224-2921
3. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) 1-202-224-3244
4. Chris Coons (D-DE) 1-202-224-5042
5. Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) 1-202-224-2823
6. Mazie Hirono (D-HI) 1-202-224-6361 COSPONSOR
7. Cory Booker (D-NJ) 1-202-224-3224 COSPONSOR
8. Alex Padilla (D-CA) 1-202-224-3553 COSPONSOR
9. Jon Ossoff (D-GA) 1-202-224-3521
10. Peter Welch (D-VT) 1-202-224-4242
11. Laphonza Butler (D-CA) 1-202-224-3841
12. Lindsey Graham (R-SC) 1-202-224-5972

RANKING MEMBER

13. Chuck Grassley (R-IA) 1-202-224-3744
14. John Cornyn (R-TX) 1-202-224-2934
15. Mike Lee (R-UT) 1-202-224-5444
16. Ted Cruz (R-TX) 1-202-224-5922
17. Josh Hawley (R-MO) 1-202-224-6154
18. Tom Cotton (R-AR) 1-202-224-2353
19. John Kennedy (R-LA) 1-202-224-4623
20. Thom Tillis (R-NC) 1-202-224-6342
21. Marsha Blackburn (R-TN) 1-202-224-3344

Syracuse

No update on the fight to save the Columbus Statue in Syracuse. The Mayor's Office appealed the decision of the lower court which ruled in favor of the Columbus Monument Association. We will continue to support our brothers and sisters in Syracuse in this fight.

New York City Department of Education

Once again, the calendar for the Department of Education Schools removed Columbus Day. The calendar reads Italian Heritage/Indigenous Peoples Day, Schools closed. We will continue fighting this removal of Columbus Day from their calendar.

Chicago Proposal to rename Columbus Drive

National President Robert Ferrito notified us of a proposal to rename Columbus Drive after President Barack Obama. As Robert mentioned there are many other streets to name after the former President. To remove Columbus Drive is one more slap in the face to the Italian American community in Chicago. CSJ stands with Ron Onesti, President of the Joint Civic Committee of Italian Americans in Chicago.

Maine Removes Columbus Day

On April 26th Maine's Governor Mills signed legislation to Establish Indigenous peoples Day removing Columbus Day. This legislation passed with bi-partisan support. Unfortunately, We did not get this information before to voice our objection to this legislation. This is the reason we need ears to the ground and immediate communication of these proposed bills.

New Hampshire bill to Eliminate Columbus Day

We have some good news in New Hampshire. The bill HB 1335 to eliminate Columbus Day was in the House Executive Departments & Administrative Committee. The committee recommended to the full New Hampshire House of Representatives that the bill be voted down. I want to thank Mike Daigle, president of The Friends of Italian Americans on fighting this legislation.

Sopranos

There is now an off-Broadway musical coming to Brooklyn called the Sopranos. Members have called and asked us to fight this show. We believe that fighting this and all these shows only gives it press. So, our decision is to ignore these shows.

I do want to say that the biggest audience of these shows are our own community allowing the stigma of organized crime on Italian Americans to continue.

500th Anniversary of Giovanni da Verrazzano's Voyage of North America

The Board of Directors of the Italian American Leadership Forum coordinated a wreath laying ceremony on April 17th, at the Verrazzano statue in Battery Park. OSDIA is a founding member of IALF as well as the National

Commission for Social Justice. Attending this wreath laying was national OSDIA President Michael Polo, NYS President Biagio Isgro, National CSJ chair Robert Ferrito, CFF Angelo Vivolo. Governor Kathy Hochul, Consul General of Italy to New York, Fabrizio Di Michele, Consul General of France in New York M. Laurent Brunet, and New York Parks Commission Suisan Donoghue.

Support for CSJ

I want to thank Robert Graham who set up a tool for people to donate to CSJ with just one click. We are using a protocol "Givebutter" and have a QR code to take on and make the donation. This is a great opportunity for CSJ to raise money from members and those that are not members. Our QR Code will be posted in all our articles and correspondences. Please consider clicking on the QR Code and donating to CSJ.



In closing, I want to thank the CSJ Executive Board and our district liaisons and all my brothers and sisters for all their support for our CSJ. Please continue to keep your ears to the ground and should you hear something negative about our community, please notify me immediately.

Fraternally,
John