

**Assembly Concurrent Resolution**

**No. 68**

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**Introduced by Assembly Members Portantino, Ammiano, Galgiani,  
Gatto, and Hill**

(Principal coauthors: Senators Cannella, La Malfa, and Wyland)

June 8, 2011

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Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 68—Relative to the Italian American Legislator Project.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 68, as introduced, Portantino. Italian American Heritage in California.

This measure would continue designation and observance of the month of October as Italian American Heritage Month. This measure would also encourage the Legislature to continue the Italian American Legislator Project and welcome the exhibit “The Italian American Legislator Project of 2011: A Legacy of Service to the California Legislature” to the State Capitol Building in October 2011 and encourage all Californians, through the K–12 curriculum and otherwise, to learn about the history, role, and contributions of Italian Americans to the State of California.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, Italian Americans have served in the California  
2 State Legislature almost since its first session held on December  
3 15, 1849. The first wave of Italian immigrants arrived in California  
4 before the Gold Rush (1848–52) along with other fortune seekers  
5 from all over the globe. California’s first Legislature reflected this  
6 immigration as not a single member of the first Assembly was a

1 native Californian. Nineteen Members were from northern states,  
2 ten were from southern states, five had an unknown birthplace,  
3 and two were of foreign birth; and

4 WHEREAS, Through the office of Assembly Member Anthony  
5 Portantino in conjunction with the California Italian American  
6 Task Force, the California Research Bureau, and the Office of the  
7 Chief Clerk of the Assembly, “The Italian American Legislator  
8 Project of 2011: A Legacy of Service to the California Legislature”  
9 (the Legacy Project) was recently launched to find and compile a  
10 list of persons of Italian American heritage who have served as  
11 Members of the houses of the California Legislature; and

12 WHEREAS, The Legacy Project survey has already identified  
13 53 Italian Americans who are former or current members of the  
14 California Senate and Assembly. Most, but not all, of those  
15 identified had Italian surnames. This is the first time that a  
16 comprehensive list of Italian American legislators has been  
17 compiled and there is a need for a permanent home for the Legacy  
18 Project so that additional Members of Italian descent may be  
19 identified and added to the survey. The Legacy Project will help  
20 highlight the continuing political accomplishments and  
21 contributions of the Italian American population of California; and

22 WHEREAS, Legacy Project surveyors have tentatively identified  
23 the following former and current Italian American legislators to  
24 date, and are reaching out to current and former legislators and  
25 community members for additional names:

- 26 1. Tom Ammiano (Assembly, 2008–Present)
- 27 2. John Badaracco (Assembly, 1919, 1921, 1923)
- 28 3. Bill Bagley (Assembly, 1961–74)
- 29 4. Frank Belotti (Assembly, 1951–72)
- 30 5. Patty Berg (Assembly, 2003–08)
- 31 6. Paula Boland (Assembly, 1990–96)
- 32 7. Frank G. Bonelli (Assembly, 1954–58)
- 33 8. Tom Bordonaro (Assembly, 1994–98)
- 34 9. Doug Bosco (Assembly, 1978–82)
- 35 10. Marilyn Brewer (Assembly, 1994–2000)
- 36 11. Robert Bulla (Assembly, 1893, 1895; Senate, 1897, 1899)
- 37 12. Anthony Caminetti (Assembly, 1883, 1897, 1899; Senate,  
38 1887, 1889, 1907–13)
- 39 13. Joseph Canciamilla (Assembly, 2000–06)

- 1 14. Victor Canepa (Assembly, 1913, 1915; Senate, 1917–21,  
2 1927, 1929)
- 3 15. Anthony Cannella (Senate, 2010–Present)
- 4 16. Sal Cannella (Assembly, 1990–96)
- 5 17. August Cavagnaro (Assembly, 1901)
- 6 18. Eugene A. Chappie (Assembly, 1965–75)
- 7 19. Larry Chimbole (Assembly, 1976–78)
- 8 20. Dominic Cortese (Assembly, 1981–96)
- 9 21. Louis Devoto (Assembly, 1899)
- 10 22. Leonard Joseph Difani (Senate, 1933, 1935)
- 11 23. Vic Fazio (Assembly, 1975–78)
- 12 24. William Filante (Assembly, 1979–92)
- 13 25. Cathleen Galgiani (Assembly, 2006–Present)
- 14 26. Mike Gatto (Assembly, 2010–Present)
- 15 27. Arlen Gregorio (Senate, 1970–78)
- 16 28. Jerry Hill (Assembly, 2008–Present)
- 17 29. Wally Knox (Assembly, 1994–2000)
- 18 30. Robert Lagomarsino (Senate, 1961–74)
- 19 31. Doug LaMalfa (Assembly, 2002–08; Senate, 2010–Present)
- 20 32. Paul J. Lunardi (Assembly, 1959–63; Senate, 1963–66)
- 21 33. Ennio Martinelli (Senate, 1909, 1911)
- 22 34. Bob Moretti (Assembly, 1965–74)
- 23 35. George Moscone (Senate, 1967–76)
- 24 36. Roger Niello (Assembly, 2004–10)
- 25 37. Egisto Palmieri (Senate, 1885)
- 26 38. Joseph Pedrotti (Assembly, 1921, 1923; Senate, 1925–29,  
27 1931)
- 28 39. Don Perata (Assembly, 1996–98; Senate, 1998–2008)
- 29 40. Anthony Pescetti (Assembly, 1999–2002)
- 30 41. George Plescia (Assembly, 2002–08)
- 31 42. Anthony Portantino (Assembly, 2006–Present)
- 32 43. Paul Priolo (Assembly, 1967–80)
- 33 44. David Roberti (Assembly, 1967–71; Senate, 1971–94)
- 34 45. James Rogan (Assembly, 1994–96)
- 35 46. Don Sebastiani (Assembly, 1980–86)
- 36 47. Augustus D. Splivalo (Assembly, 1867)
- 37 48. Alfred Taliaferro (Assembly, 1852; Senate, 1857, 1858)
- 38 49. Mike Thompson (Senate, 1990–98)
- 39 50. Charles P. Vicini (Assembly, 1917–19)

1 51. Catherine Marinelli Wright (Assembly, 1980–92; Senate,  
2 1993–2000)

3 52. Mark Wyland (Assembly, 2000–2006; Senate, 2006–Present)

4 53. Louis Zocchi (Assembly, 1895)

5 WHEREAS, Italian American legislators have left us with a  
6 legacy of political leadership and accomplishments. Two Italian  
7 American legislators, David Roberti (1980–94) and Don Perata  
8 (2004–08), have served as President pro Tempore of the Senate,  
9 and one Italian American legislator, Bob Moretti (1971–74), has  
10 served as Speaker of the Assembly; and

11 WHEREAS, Eight Italian Americans currently serve in the  
12 California Legislature, three in the Senate and five in the Assembly;  
13 and

14 WHEREAS, California’s Italian American legislators have  
15 worked together to represent the interests of Italian American  
16 people of California. During the 1990s, they authored and  
17 supported a resolution and exhibit highlighting “Una Storia  
18 Segreta—The Secret Story,” a book and exhibit about the World  
19 War II internment and relocation of, and restrictions on, large  
20 numbers of California Italian Americans; authored a resolution  
21 that created the Italian American Taskforce, which is still in  
22 existence today; and authored several pieces of legislation seeking  
23 to include in the K–12 curriculum the history, role, and  
24 contributions of Italian Americans. During the 2000s, they  
25 continued to pursue an Italian American curriculum through various  
26 legislative and administrative efforts. During the past four years,  
27 they have introduced resolutions designating the month of October  
28 as Italian American Heritage Month and have sponsored an annual  
29 Capitol exhibit capturing nearly 150 years of the history and  
30 contributions of Italian Americans in California; and

31 WHEREAS, Columbus Day is a state holiday observed on  
32 October 12 of each year and of special significance to Italian  
33 Americans. Columbus Day is celebrated in Italian American  
34 communities across California with festivals, parades, and activities  
35 that celebrate the history and heritage of the Italian American  
36 community. The designation of October as Italian American  
37 Heritage Month is a recognition of the important role and  
38 contributions Italians have made to the rich cultural fabric of  
39 California; and

1 WHEREAS, Italian Americans are a vital part of California’s  
2 diversity, their rich heritage and traditions are a part of the lives  
3 of all Californians. The 2000 Census counted 1,450,885 Italian  
4 Americans in California, an ethnic group that constituted 4.3  
5 percent of the state’s population, the third largest Italian American  
6 population in the United States; and

7 WHEREAS, Italian Americans have made enormous  
8 contributions to the economic and cultural development and success  
9 of California, and Italian American legislators have made important  
10 contributions to the political life of California through their  
11 dedication to public service and by presenting the interests of the  
12 Italian American community of California; now, therefore, be it

13 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*  
14 *thereof concurring*, That the month of October continue to be  
15 designated Italian American Heritage Month; and be it further

16 *Resolved*, That the Legislature maintain the Legacy Project and  
17 continue annual observances of Italian American Heritage Month;  
18 and be it further

19 *Resolved*, That the Legislature welcomes the exhibit “The Italian  
20 American Legislator Project of 2011: A Legacy of Service to the  
21 California Legislature” to the State Capitol Building during the  
22 month of October; and be it further

23 *Resolved*, That the Legislature encourages all Californians,  
24 through the K–12 curriculum and otherwise, to learn about the  
25 history, role, and contributions of Italian Americans to the State  
26 of California.