

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY SEPTEMBER 9, 2009

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY SEPTEMBER 4, 2009

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY AUGUST 31, 2009

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2009–10 REGULAR SESSION

Assembly Concurrent Resolution

No. 89

Introduced by Assembly Members Galgiani and Portantino
(Coauthors: Assembly Members Ammiano, Hill, and Niello Niello,
Adams, Arambula, Bass, Beall, Bill Berryhill, Tom Berryhill,
Blakeslee, Block, Blumenfield, Brownley, Buchanan, Caballero,
Charles Calderon, Carter, Chesbro, Conway, Cook, Coto, Davis,
De La Torre, De Leon, DeVore, Emmerson, Eng, Evans, Feuer,
Fletcher, Fong, Fuentes, Fuller, Furutani, Gaines, Gilmore,
Hagman, Hall, Harkey, Hayashi, Hernandez, Huber, Huffman,
Jeffries, Jones, Krekorian, Lieu, Logue, Bonnie Lowenthal, Ma,
Miller, Monning, Nava, Nestande, Nielsen, John A. Perez, Ruskin,
Saldana, Silva, Skinner, Smyth, Solorio, Audra Strickland,
Swanson, Torlakson, Torres, Torrico, Tran, Villines, and Yamada)

August 17, 2009

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 89—Relative to Italian American Heritage Month.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 89, as amended, Galgiani. Italian American Heritage Month.

This measure would designate the month of October 2009, and every October thereafter, as Italian American Heritage Month. This measure would encourage public schools to highlight and include Italian American achievements and contributions to the culture of California and to take steps to promote the inclusion of the role and contributions

of Italian Americans to the culture and history of California and the United States in elementary and secondary social science textbooks during the revision process for those textbooks.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, A study published in December 2004 of social
2 science textbooks used in California schools and universities by
3 Lawrence DiStasi and the Italian American Textbook Committee,
4 titled The Treatment of Italian Americans in California Textbooks,
5 found that Italian American contributions were largely absent from
6 elementary, secondary, and postsecondary textbooks used in
7 California; and

8 WHEREAS, Italian Americans are the sixth largest ethnic group
9 in America numbering roughly 25 million people, with nearly 1.5
10 million residing in California. For much of the 20th century, Italian
11 Americans were the largest immigrant group in the United States,
12 yet they are not extended proper credit for their role in shaping
13 American culture; and

14 WHEREAS, As one of the country's greatest success stories,
15 Italian Americans made enormous contributions to our country
16 and state. For example, Amedeo Pietro "A.P." Giannini, born of
17 Italian immigrant parents in San Jose in 1870, established in the
18 Italian neighborhoods across California the first branch banking
19 system in the United States, known today as Bank of America.
20 The philosophy that spurred the success of Bank of America was
21 to invest in common people to stimulate rapid economic growth.
22 Mr. Giannini's investments include the movie industry, the Golden
23 Gate Bridge, the Walt Disney Company, and much of today's
24 agribusiness; and

25 WHEREAS, Italian immigrant Marco Fontana arrived in the
26 United States in 1859 and started the California Packing Company
27 under the Del Monte label. His cannery soon became the largest
28 food processing company in the world. Domenico Ghirardelli
29 settled in San Francisco during the Gold Rush and founded the
30 Ghirardelli Chocolate empire. The movie industry, the fifth largest
31 employer in Los Angeles County, owes much of its success to
32 numerous Italian American artists, including Danny DeVito, John
33 Travolta, Sylvester Stallone, Al Pacino, Vito Russo, Isabella
34 Rossellini, Liza Minelli, and many others; and

WHEREAS, The wine industry in California owes much of its success to Italian Americans. Italian pioneers established the early wine industry in the California foothills of the Gold County following the Gold Rush of 1848. In 1881, Italian immigrant Andrea Sbarboro founded the Italian Swiss Colony at Asti, a cooperative of Italian immigrants from the wine growing areas of Northern Italy. The colony quickly became the largest winery in the Napa and Sonoma Valleys. Later Italian winemakers like Robert Mondavi and the Sebastiani family established world class status for California wines. Beginning in the 1940s, Ernest Gallo and Julio Gallo established the largest family owned winery in the United States in California's central valley. Zinfandel might have disappeared had it not been resurrected by the Robert Trinchero family winery, the first to introduce white Zinfandel from their Sutter Home Winery in the Napa Valley; and

WHEREAS, Italian Americans were among the earliest and largest groups to settle in California, and they played a dominant role in the creation of the state's agriculture, food processing, branch banking, fishing, and wine industries. Little-known facts regarding the experience and contributions of Italian Americans include the following: (1) Between 1880 and 1920, about 4 million Italians immigrated to the United States and nearly one-quarter of Ellis Island immigrants were Italian. Restrictive immigration laws at that time were directly aimed at Italian immigrants and based on anti-Italian attitudes; (2) Although Italians constituted the largest ethnic group in the American military during World War II, an estimated 600,000 Italian immigrants nationwide suffered wartime restrictions including internment and arrest, curfews, and travel restrictions. Some 10,000 Italian Americans were forced to relocate from coastal areas of California; and (3) Italians played a large role in the development of agriculture in California. Their control and development of fruit and vegetable industries in the central valley, truck farming in major urban centers, and their influence on the development of wine and grape industries left a legacy shared by us all; and

WHEREAS, Italian American contributions to California and United States history can be easily incorporated in the current elementary and secondary curriculum content. Including the vital role of Italian Americans in shaping California into the state it is today will help pupils truly understand a significant part of our

1 state's unique culture and will help them understand how the
2 interdependence of people of diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural
3 differences makes our country truly great; and

4 WHEREAS, In 1996, the Legislature established the California
5 Italian-American Task Force. The highest priority of the task force
6 is the inclusion in the public school curriculum of Italian American
7 history, achievements, and contributions; and

8 WHEREAS, Italian American heritage and the contributions
9 made by individual Italian Americans deserve the state's
10 commendation and the designation of a month in their honor for
11 collective reflection and celebration; now, therefore, be it

12 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*
13 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature designates the month of
14 October 2009, and every October thereafter, as Italian American
15 Heritage Month; and be it further

16 *Resolved*, That the Legislature encourages public schools to
17 highlight and include Italian American achievements and
18 contributions to the culture of California and to take steps to
19 promote the inclusion of the role and contributions of Italian
20 Americans to the culture and history of California and the United
21 States in the elementary and secondary social science textbooks
22 during the revision process for those textbooks; and be it further

23 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
24 of this resolution to the author, members of the State Board of
25 Education, the Curriculum Development and Supplemental
26 Materials Commission, and to school districts for appropriate
27 distribution.