

October 8, 2021

To the Kind attention of:
Hon. Eric Johnson, Mayor of Dallas
Dallas City Council Members

Subject: Request of Columbus Day Reinstatement in preparation for the 2022 event.

Dear Mayor Johnson and City Council Members,

On October 8, 2019, Dallas City Council passed a resolution to replace Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples' Day

While we are totally in favor of celebrating a day as Indigenous Peoples' Day, we believe that taking away a celebration day from one group and giving it to another group is not the best way to do it. Italian Americans respect all ethnic group traditions, and we favor the preservation of history, but we want to make sure that the celebration to give tribute to Italian Americans known as "Columbus Day" will remain untouched. We Italian Americans want the same respect in keeping alive and celebrating our traditions and heritage.

In 1892, Italian Americans responded to the horrific slaughter of 11 innocent Italians in New Orleans, the deadliest lynching in U.S. history, with a gift to the people of New York — a monument of Columbus, enshrined in Columbus Circle with the words, "To the world, he gave a world,"

Since 1920, October 12 has been an annual national celebration, and in 1971, the second Monday in October was designated a federal holiday. Columbus Day recognizes countless Italians and Italian American pioneers who, with a great spirit of discovery, pursued the unknown. Indeed, scientists, researchers, and entrepreneurs have all worked together to better the world. Today, about 500,000 Americans of Italian descent reside in Texas. Their hard work and contribution to society is obvious. We, as the Italian American community, strive to make additional contributions to assist the city of Dallas in shaping cultural life and participating in more activities in the future.

The inaugural Columbus Day Parade as well as the subsequent events were held over the unique and historical Continental Bridge Avenue and West Dallas Gateway, today called (Ronald Kirk Bridge-Felix H. Lozada, Sr.) to symbolize the connection of all the communities. As an expression of joy, all participants were provided with live music, Italian food, kids activities, dancing class, art and car exhibition, and the opportunity to experience the scenic view of Downtown Dallas. The celebration of Columbus Day and Italian Festival has an additional meaning: To honor Italy's rich heritage and the enduring bonds between our countries during the month of October, which is dedicated to the Italian language and culture in the world, and to share a moment of friendship with the community at large.

Celebrating Columbus Day as part of our heritage remains critically valuable to our community, not only to Italian Americans, but to all Americans.

Vincenzo Arcobelli
Representative of the General Council for Italians Abroad