ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION No. 161

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

222nd LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED OCTOBER 29, 2026

Sponsored by:
Assemblywoman DAWN FANTASIA
District 24 (Morris, Sussex and Warren)
Assemblyman MICHAEL VENEZIA
District 34 (Essex)
Assemblywoman ROSAURA "ROSY" BAGOLIE
District 27 (Essex and Passaic)

Co-Sponsored by:
Assemblymen Rumpf, Scharfenberger, McClellan, Simonsen, McGuckin, Kanitra, Auth, Azzariti Jr., Barlas, DiMaio, Assemblywoman Flynn, Assemblymen Webber, Sauickie and Inganamort

SYNOPSIS

Recognizes Italian-American Heritage Month and accomplishments and contributions of Italian Americans to NJ and US.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 10/29/2026)

AN ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION recognizing Italian-American Heritage Month and the accomplishments and contributions of Italian Americans to this State and the United States.

WHEREAS, The history of America and the State of New Jersey have been significantly influenced by Italy and its rich heritage; and

WHEREAS, Columbus Day is observed annually in October as a State and federal holiday; and

WHEREAS, Between the years 1820 and 1991, over 5.4 million Italians emigrated to the United States; and

WHEREAS, Despite facing prejudice and discrimination, generations of Italian immigrants and their descendants helped build American communities and made lasting contributions to New Jersey and the United States in science, business, the arts, sports, and public service; and

WHEREAS, Italian immigrants provided labor for American factories, mines, railroads, and farms, helping to build America's infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, Between 750,000 and 1.5 million people of Italian descent served in the United States Armed Forces during World War II; and

WHEREAS, Across various military conflicts, more than 25 Italian Americans received the Medal of Honor for their service; and

WHEREAS, Approximately 1.3 million New Jerseyans, or about 14 percent of the State population, are of Italian descent; and

WHEREAS, Notable Italian Americans from New Jersey have made significant contributions to military service, public service, business, and the arts, including Raritan-raised Medal of Honor recipient John Basilone, Trenton-born United States Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, Newark-born members of Congress Peter W. Rodino Jr. and Marge Roukema, New Jersey Governors James Florio, Donald Thomas DiFrancesco, and Christopher James Christie, and acclaimed entertainers Frank Sinatra of Hoboken, Connie Francis of Newark, and Frankie Valli of Newark; and

WHEREAS, The New Jersey Commission on Italian and Americans of Italian Heritage Cultural and Educational Programs, commonly known as the "New Jersey Italian Heritage Commission," was established in 2002 to survey, design, encourage, and promote the implementation of Italian and Americans of Italian Heritage cultural and educational programs in this State, with responsibility for the coordination of events that will provide appropriate awareness and memorialization of the culture, history, heritage, and language of Italians and Americans of Italian heritage on a regular basis throughout the State; and

WHEREAS, In 2009, Governor Jon Corzine signed AJR-97 following its unanimous passage by both houses of the Legislature, which designated October of each year as Italian-American Heritage Month; and

WHEREAS, It is altogether fitting and proper for this House to recognize Italian American Heritage Month for the numerous accomplishments and contributions of Italian Americans to both the United States and the State of New Jersey; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED *by the General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. This House recognizes October of every year as Italian-American Heritage Month to honor the significant accomplishments and contributions of Italian Americans to both the United States and the State of New Jersey.

2. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State, shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General Assembly to the Governor of this State and the chairman of the New Jersey Italian Heritage Commission.

STATEMENT

This resolution recognizes Italian-American Heritage Month to honor the significant accomplishments and contributions of Italian Americans to both the United States (US) and the State of New Jersey (NJ).

The history of the US and NJ have been significantly influenced by Italy and its rich heritage. Between the years 1820 and 1991, over 5.4 million Italians emigrated to the United States and, despite facing prejudice and discrimination, have helped build American communities and made lasting contributions to the history of the US and NJ in science, business, the arts, sports, and public service. Approximately 1.3 million New Jerseyans, or about 14 percent of the State population, are of Italian descent.

The NJ Commission on Italian and Americans of Italian Heritage Cultural and Educational Programs, commonly known as the "NJ Italian Heritage Commission," was established in 2002 to survey, design, encourage, and promote the implementation of Italian and Americans of Italian Heritage cultural and educational programs in this State, with responsibility for the coordination of events that will provide appropriate awareness and memorialization of the culture, history, heritage, and language of Italians and Americans of Italian heritage on a regular basis throughout the State. In 2009, Governor Jon Corzine signed AJR-97 following its unanimous passage by both houses of the Legislature, which designated October of each year as Italian-American Heritage Month.

Considering the numerous accomplishments and contributions of Italian Americans to both the US and NJ, it is important for this State to recognize Italian-American Heritage Month.