

Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Wojdak
3 Sterling Hill Lane, Apt. 333
Exeter, NH 03833

August 27, 2024

Russell Dean
Town Manager
Exeter Municipal Building
10 Front Street
Exeter, NH 03833

Dear Mr. Dean,

My name is Joe Wojdak and my wife and I are residents of Exeter.

We are also member of the Friends of Italian Americans and attach a letter from the organization's President, Mike Daigle. We wanted to be sure you were aware of the recently enacted HB 1014, which takes effect on September 10th. As Mr. Daigle indicates, this new law requires New Hampshire towns and cities to maintain the named holidays as set forth in state law, which includes Columbus Day.

On August 19, 2024, in compliance with this new law, the City of Portsmouth restored Columbus Day to be the holiday on the second Monday in October. We hope the Town of Exeter will follow suit.

Thank you for your service to our town.

Best regards,



Town Manager's Office

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Received

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DIVISION OF THE PHYSICAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY

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***Friends of Italian Americans
569 Middle St.
Portsmouth, NH 03801
603-929-2256***

August 19, 2024

To Portsmouth City Council,

My name is Mike Daigle and I live on State Street. I am here tonight as a Portsmouth resident and the President of the Friends of Italian Americans, a New Hampshire non-profit organization. Our mission is to promote and preserve Italian American history, culture and heritage and to be a powerful voice for all American immigrants.

As noted on the agenda, NH HB1014 will be reviewed. House Bill 1014 was passed by the NH House and Senate and signed into law by Governor Sununu on July 17, 2024. This bill mandates that NH civics classroom instruction include information on NH laws governing elections and voting. It also requires all school districts, towns and cities to use the official names of State mandated holidays, as found in RSA 288.1, in all "communications, publications, documents, or calendars." This means December 25 is called Christmas, the third Monday in January is called Martin Luther King Day, November 11 is called Veterans Day, the second Monday in October is called Columbus Day, etc. The effective date of this law is September 10, 2024.

The Friends of Italian Americans are forever grateful to the New Hampshire State Legislature and Governor for preserving Columbus Day as a named holiday. Columbus Day was created by President Benjamin Harrison in 1892 as an apology for the 1891 lynching of eleven Italian immigrants in New Orleans, and prevented a potential war with Italy. Known as the Crescent City hangings, this is considered the largest recorded lynching in American history as it is estimated that over 10,000 New Orleans citizens came out to murder the Italians the day after they were acquitted by a jury of a murder they did not commit.

Since its inception, Columbus Day has been the only holiday dedicated to the immigrant community in the United States. It honors all immigrants who tirelessly helped build the United States, with many being persecuted themselves due to

their immigrant status. In fact, on that first Columbus Day on Oct. 12, 1892, more than one million people gathered in New York City to cheer on the 40,000-strong parade of American citizens, immigrants and Native Americans.

October has long been identified as Italian American Heritage Month, and bringing the second Monday in October back as Columbus Day is not an attack on Indigenous People of the United States. In fact, our organization hopes the City and Council will consider another day on the calendar to be proclaimed Indigenous Peoples' Day. August 9th is already identified as Indigenous Peoples' Day by the United Nations, and the third Friday in November is Native American Heritage Day, coinciding with November being Native American Heritage Month.

We do not believe it is in the best interests of any City, Town or District to pit one minority community against another. Having a separate Indigenous Peoples' Day in addition to a separate Columbus Day will honor both minorities with the respect they correctly deserve.

On behalf of the almost 150,000 New Hampshire residents of Italian descent, the Italian Americans who are now or once were Portsmouth residents, and all American immigrants, thank you to NH for bringing Columbus Day back.

Respectfully,



Mike Daigle
President
Friends of Italian Americans