SENATE RESOLUTION

8680

By Senators Fortunato, Miloscia, and Padden

WHEREAS, The Order of the Sons of Italy in America (OSIA) is the largest and oldest national organization for men and women of Italian heritage in the United States; and

WHEREAS, The organization started in 1905 as a mutual aid society for early Italian immigrants; and

WHEREAS, Women have always shared equal rights with men in the Order of the Sons of Italy and have held leadership positions at all levels including national president and vice president; and

WHEREAS, The Sons of Italy Foundation has given more than $164 million to scholarships, medical research, disaster relief, and other causes; and

WHEREAS, OSIA includes an anti-defamation arm called the Commission for Social Justice that is committed to fighting racism, prejudice, and the stereotyping of all races, religions, and cultures; and

WHEREAS, OSIA's mission includes encouraging the study of the Italian language and culture in American schools and universities; and

WHEREAS, OSIA is dedicated to preserving Italian American traditions, culture, history, and heritage; and

WHEREAS, OSIA promotes closer cultural relations between the United States and Italy; and

WHEREAS, OSIA has hundreds of thousands of family members located in all fifty states and the District of Columbia; and

WHEREAS, In its early years OSIA established free schools to teach immigrants English and aid them in becoming U.S. citizens; and

WHEREAS, The first OSIA lodges established orphanages and homes for the elderly, welfare societies, and credit unions to aid members in need; and

WHEREAS, During the world wars OSIA members bought war bonds and war stamps and held competitions between lodges to contribute the most money to the Red Cross; and

WHEREAS, Every president since Woodrow Wilson has publicly acknowledged the contributions of OSIA; and

WHEREAS, An estimated 28,000 OSIA members served in the U.S. armed forces during World War I; and

WHEREAS, In 1947 OSIA launched a letter-writing campaign urging members' relatives in Italy to support pro-democracy candidates in the first democratic election in Italy's history; and

WHEREAS, The Order began to lobby Congress to make Columbus Day a federal holiday in 1932 and was successful in that effort under President Johnson in 1968; and

WHEREAS, OSIA claimed in its membership veterans like Anthony Casamento, recipient of the Medal of Honor; and

WHEREAS, OSIA archives at the University of Minnesota's Immigration History Research Center create the largest collection of Italian American resource materials in the United States and comprise more than 1,200 linear feet; and

WHEREAS, Italian Americans have made major contributions to American art, culture, and cuisine; and

WHEREAS, The Order of the Sons of Italy established its first northwest lodge in 1923 in Pierce County in Tacoma, Washington; and

WHEREAS, Since then the Sons of Italy have spread across the state with lodges established in eighteen Washington cities from Tacoma to the Tri-Cities, Black Diamond to Bellevue, and from Aberdeen to Yakima;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Washington State Senate recognize the legacy and value of this philanthropic and cultural institution which has aided the preservation of Italian-American history, and exemplified the American tradition of creating private philanthropic societies to solve challenges.

I, Brad Hendrickson, Secretary of the Senate,

do hereby certify that this is a true and

correct copy of Senate Resolution 8680,

adopted by the Senate

February 15, 2018

BRAD HENDRICKSON

Secretary of the Senate