

SENATE RESOLUTION

8680

By Senators Fortunato, Miloscia, and Padden

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

6 I, Brad Hendrickson, Secretary of the Senate,  
7 do hereby certify that this is a true and  
8 correct copy of Senate Resolution 8680,  
9 adopted by the Senate  
10 February 15, 2018

11 BRAD HENDRICKSON  
12 Secretary of the Senate