ORDER SONS OF ITALY IN AMERICA
Grand Lodge of Maryland

"Preserve Columbus Day"

Legislation has recently been proposed to *replace* "Columbus Day" with "Indigenous Peoples' Day." We feel that this proposed legislation is unfair to a proud and loyal population in our city and nation, the Italian-American community. At the same time, we support the establishment of "Indigenous Peoples' Day" but on a day other than "Columbus Day."

Since 1937, Columbus Day has been a nationally recognized holiday that celebrates Columbus's world-changing accomplishment. His voyage changed the world! It opened a new land of opportunity to the oppressed masses of Europe. His arrival marked the beginning of important contributions by our European ancestors in the arts, law, government and economics that have become the foundations of this great nation. It is for those contributions that the United States government recognized his journey. For Italian-Americans, as well as other immigrant groups who came to America as oppressed masses in the early 20th century, it was Columbus who served as their champion and gave them hope of a new life, one of opportunity. Thus, for Americans of Italian descent, Columbus Day serves as an opportunity to celebrate our ancestors and the struggles they overcame to assimilate into American culture. Although injustices followed his "discovery," they should not be attributed solely to him nor should a 21st century understanding of morality be ascribed to the people of the 15th century. We are in full support of the establishment of "Indigenous Peoples' Day" but let it not result from the injustice of replacing "Columbus Day," a day of celebration for another proud people!

SIGNATURE	**PRINT NAME**	**ADDRESS (Number, Street, ZIP Code)**

Send completed originals to City Council President Bernard C. (Jack) Young, *Suite 400, with copies to* Councilman Brandon Scott, *2nd District, and* Councilman James B. Kraft/Councilman-elect Zeke Cohen, 1st District, *each Suite 500; all at 100 N. Holliday Street, Baltimore, MD 21202 .*