

Legislation Text

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Designating the week of Monday, October 2 through Monday, October 9, 2017 as “Italian American Heritage Week” in the City of Philadelphia. This is done in celebration of the festivities commemorating Columbus’ historic voyage to the New World and honoring Connie Francis as Grand Marshall of the 2017 Philadelphia Columbus Day Parade.

WHEREAS, Five hundred and twenty-five years ago, an Italian explorer set out on what would become one of the most momentous journeys in the annals of history. Christopher Columbus and the maps he charted to the “New World” were guiding lights to every ship that came to America; and

WHEREAS, The annual Philadelphia Columbus Day Parade began in South Philadelphia in 1957, and has since become one of the City’s premier ethnic celebrations. On October 8, 2017, the 1492 Society will host the annual parade. In addition to the active participation of the Delaware Valley’s Italian American community, the Philadelphia Columbus Day Parade tradition includes the world-famous Philadelphia Mummers string bands, outstanding high school and elementary school marching bands and many other marching groups representing the various ethnic traditions of our great City. The Parade seeks to foster a spirit of multi-culturalism and respect for people of all ethnic backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, Grand Marshall Connie Francis, born Concetta Rosa Maria Franconero, on December 12, 1938 in Newark, New Jersey, is the daughter of first generation Italian American parents. At age 14, Connie won a spot on The Arthur Godfrey Talent Scout Show, on which, every Christmas, rather than featuring the usual adult singers, Godfrey would highlight child performers instead; and

WHEREAS, In 1958, Cashbox, Billboard and the Jukebox Operators of America named Connie Francis as the #1 Female Vocalist. She was named Top Female Vocalist by all the trades for six consecutive years - a record never surpassed. As well, England’s prestigious New Musical Express also named her the World’s #1 Female Vocalist. She earned two gold records for “Who’s Sorry Now?” and “Stupid Cupid”. “Where the Boys Are”, Connie’s song for a movie of the same name, sold over one million copies-selling and was so popular that Connie recorded it in five other languages - Italian, Spanish, French, German and Japanese - it reached #1 in 19 countries. ; and

WHEREAS, Connie appeared on The Ed Sullivan Show more frequently than any other female artist; these famous Sullivan TV appearances including exciting, once-in-a-lifetime shows aired from Paris’ Moulin Rouge, Guantanamo Naval base and at the Berlin Wall; and

WHEREAS, Today, Connie Francis is widely involved in some very interesting and diverse projects. Of greatest importance and passion is to help returning American Veterans of war. Connie Francis is the national spokeswoman for Mental Health America’s S.T.A.R. Campaign (Stress, Trauma, Awareness and Recovery) an important national campaign to raise awareness of what veterans are facing every day of their lives. Another long-awaited autobiography Among My Souvenirs, The Real Story is being officially released this year; and

WHEREAS, In addition to the annual Columbus Day Parade, festivities include an Italian Festival showcasing

the culture and cuisine of the people of Italy. The Italian Festival takes place at Marconi Plaza the day of the Parade and includes food, dance and music from the many diverse regions of Italy; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby designate the week of October 2 through October 9, 2017 as “Italian American Heritage Week” and honor Connie Francis as Grand Marshall of the 2017 Columbus Day Parade.