

Legislation Text

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Designating the week of Monday, October 3 through Monday, October 10, 2011 as “Christopher Columbus/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 Joe Piscopo as Grand Marshall of the 2011 Philadelphia Columbus Day Parade.

WHEREAS, Five hundred and nineteen years ago, a courageous Italian visionary 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 9, 2011, 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 multiculturalism and respect for people of all ethnic backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, The Grand Marshall of the 2011 Philadelphia Columbus Day Parade is the multi-talented star of television, film, and the Broadway and nightclub stage, Joe Piscopo. For over 25 years, Joe Piscopo has proven to be one of the brightest lights in show business with his wide-ranging talents as comedian, celebrity impressionist and actor. He has garnered millions of fans around the world since first joining the cast of Saturday Night Live in 1980. On SNL he developed unforgettable characters, including The Sports Guy, Doug Whiner, and dead-on impressions of David Letterman and, of course, Frank Sinatra. He went on to star in smash hit films, such as “Wise Guys” (with Danny DeVito) and “Johnny Dangerously” (with Michael Keaton). He conquered the Broadway stage with a starring role in “Grease” and now enjoys great success with Club Piscopo at Atlantic City’s Resorts Casino Hotel. His record of charitable works is truly impressive and he has received numerous awards for his efforts. Joe founded the “Positive Impact Foundation” helping at-risk youth and generously donates his time and energy to numerous charitable causes, including Big Brother Big Sister, and Boy’s and Girl’s Clubs. No stranger to Columbus Day Parades, Joe co-hosts the New York City parade with Maria Bartiromo. Honoring his parents and grandparents who emigrated from Italy, Joe has been a recipient of the Ellis Island Medal of Freedom and New Jersey’s highest civilian award, the Commendation Medal; and

WHEREAS, In addition to the annual parade, Columbus Day festivities include an Italian Festival showcasing the culture and cuisine of the people of Italy. The annual 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

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby designate the week of October 3 through October 10, 2011 as “Christopher Columbus/Italian American Heritage Week” and honor Joe Piscopo as Grand Marshall of the 2011 Columbus Day Parade.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That Engrossed copies of this resolution be presented to the Grand Marshall of the Parade, Joe Piscopo, and to the 1492 Society as evidence of the sincere sentiments of this legislative body.

Introduced By: Anna C. Verna, Council President