

Testimony in Support of Colorado State Bill HB17-1327 to repeat Columbus Day in Colorado

By Amy Zuckerman, 2109 Mapleton Avenue, Boulder, CO 80304

Dear Mr. or Madam Chair,

I would like to share with you three points regarding my support of this bill.

First, when I was Chair of the City of Boulder Human Relations Commission, we passed a permanent Resolution establishing Indigenous Peoples Day. I would like to share with you results of research I conducted in that process that found almost no institutions that observe Columbus Day in all of Boulder County, including at the University of Colorado – a state institution.

Second, this issue is a discussion of values for our state, wherein the Italian American community wishes to continue to align itself with an historical figure that was so brutal he was rejected by his own Italian monarchy upon his return from this land.

Third, as a Jew, I am quite familiar with the concept of genocide and extermination. My history is bound up with the history of Native Americans. Adolph Hitler often praised the “efficiency of America’s [attempt at] extermination,” and used the Indian reservation system for his design of concentration camps.¹ But it’s not just about these two ethnic groups; we must jointly solve our societal problems.

To my first point, I found that the day is not observed at the following institutions:

- CU-Boulder – state employees – classes are in session
- City of Boulder – business as usual
- Saint Vrain Valley Schools – classes are in session
- Western Disposal (trash service) – business as usual
- Boulder Valley School System – teacher in-service day, children do not attend school

Boulder’s permanent resolution passed August 2, 2016, is as follows (abbreviated text is presented below):

- Section 1: those of us living on ancestral lands recognize harm was done and we have a shared responsibility to address the past.
- Sections 2/3: Indigenous Peoples Day aims to unify communities, combat prejudice
- Section 4: City Manage will work with City departments to correct omissions of Native Americans in public places, resources and cultural programming
- Section 5: City enters into a Memorandum of Understanding with local tribes, including the naming of a City Park

¹ Hitler’s concept of concentration camps as well as the practicality of genocide owed much, so he claimed, to his studies of English and United States history. He admired the camps for Boer prisoners in South Africa and for the Indians in the Wild West; and often praised to his inner circle the efficiency of America’s extermination - by starvation and uneven combat - of the red savages who could not be tamed by captivity.” P. 202, “Adolph Hitler” by John Toland!

- Section6: Implement accurate curricula

To my second point concerning values: why does the Italian American community align itself to a chief exterminator? We must be able to describe in detail our heroes in this country: what did they do to help our society achieve "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness?"

Third, I cannot fathom how it would be for me and my ethnic community to live in a country that would create a national holiday honoring Adolph Hitler.

Social problems require collective solutions and this is our chance to right history. Thank you for this opportunity to demonstrate right and ethnic action.

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