

Good Afternoon Mister Chair and the Representatives of the State Veterans and Military Affairs Committee. My name is Dr. Rita DeFrange and I thank you for the opportunity to present to you today.

Once again Americans of European descent and now Christians, but more specifically Italians find ourselves defending our privilege to celebrate a Federal holiday, Columbus Day. You have heard testimony from your constituents, presenters before me on historical facts, population numbers, etc. and I want to highlight a few more areas in the bill which should be questioned.

The bill suggests replacing Columbus Day with a floating holiday in October for state workers only and a fiscal note in my mind that is missing hard costs like software updates to payroll systems and soft costs such as people management.

If read the fiscal note correctly, the savings projection is for CDOT workers, and not having to pay overtime for Columbus Day and for 40K workers the math works out to be \$1.60 per employee per year – so why not eliminate MLK Day, Presidents Day, and Veteran’s Day – and replace with a floating holidays in January, February and November for more savings? I am sure my statements sound crazy, but then so does the proposal for removing Columbus Day.

The bill proposes that Columbus’ legacy is responsible for underfunding of the Indian Health Service and the Bureau of Indian Education. First those statements have no credibility, given the multiple-century gap between Columbus landing in Hispaniola (in the West Indies, not the Americas) and the establishment of these organizations in the United States and second, I doubt today’s leadership within the Agency’s has met Columbus, so I ask how Columbus is influencing or responsible for the decision making of these leaders? I would think they have the capability to think on their own, request more funding like any other agency, correct?

Let me tell you a story. My family settled in a small town in Krebs, OK back in the early 1800s. Krebs is a town that to this day is 90+% Italian. The town is bordered by the Choctaw Nation. Back in the 1800s the tribe would leave the reservation and move into Krebs creating almost a “shanty town” to escape what we know today as tornado season. Today, there are some Native Indian descendants that still migrate once a year to the town and are welcomed as they are allowed to practice their beliefs.

All I ask is that each of you realizes there are inconsistencies and inequalities proposed in the Bill and you vote no on HB 1327 , thus like the small town in OK who respects others rights, allow the Italians to continue to celebrate their heritage with Columbus Day here in CO.

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