

106TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1909

To provide for the preparation of a Government report detailing injustices suffered by Italian Americans during World War II, and a formal acknowledgment of such injustices by the President.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

NOVEMBER 10, 1999

Mr. TORRICELLI introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To provide for the preparation of a Government report detailing injustices suffered by Italian Americans during World War II, and a formal acknowledgment of such injustices by the President.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Wartime Violation of
5 Italian American Civil Liberties Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 The Congress makes the following findings:

1 (1) The freedom of more than 600,000 Italian-
2 born immigrants in the United States and their fam-
3 ilies was restricted during World War II by Govern-
4 ment measures that branded them “enemy aliens”
5 and included carrying identification cards, travel re-
6 strictions, and seizure of personal property.

7 (2) During World War II more than 10,000
8 Italian Americans living on the West Coast were
9 forced to leave their homes and prohibited from en-
10 tering coastal zones. More than 50,000 were sub-
11 jected to curfews.

12 (3) During World War II thousands of Italian
13 American immigrants were arrested, and hundreds
14 were interned in military camps.

15 (4) Hundreds of thousands of Italian Ameri-
16 cans performed exemplary service and thousands
17 sacrificed their lives in defense of the United States.

18 (5) At the time, Italians were the largest for-
19 eign-born group in the United States, and today are
20 the fifth largest immigrant group in the United
21 States, numbering approximately 15,000,000.

22 (6) The impact of the wartime experience was
23 devastating to Italian American communities in the
24 United States, and its effects are still being felt.

1 (7) A deliberate policy kept these measures
2 from the public during the war. Even 50 years later
3 much information is still classified, the full story re-
4 mains unknown to the public, and it has never been
5 acknowledged in any official capacity by the United
6 States Government.

7 **SEC. 3. REPORT.**

8 The Inspector General of the Department of Justice
9 shall conduct a comprehensive review of the treatment by
10 the United States Government of Italian Americans dur-
11 ing World War II, and not later than 1 year after the
12 date of enactment of this Act shall submit to the Congress
13 a report that documents the findings of such review. The
14 report shall cover the period between September 1, 1939,
15 and December 31, 1945, and shall include the following:

16 (1) The names of all Italian Americans who
17 were taken into custody in the initial roundup fol-
18 lowing the attack on Pearl Harbor, and prior to the
19 United States declaration of war against Italy.

20 (2) The names of all Italian Americans who
21 were taken into custody.

22 (3) The names of all Italian Americans who
23 were interned and the location where they were in-
24 terned.

1 (4) The names of all Italian Americans who
2 were ordered to move out of designated areas under
3 the United States Army's "Individual Exclusion
4 Program".

5 (5) The names of all Italian Americans who
6 were arrested for curfew, contraband, or other viola-
7 tions under the authority of Executive Order 9066.

8 (6) Documentation of Federal Bureau of Inves-
9 tigation raids on the homes of Italian Americans.

10 (7) A list of ports from which Italian American
11 fishermen were restricted.

12 (8) The names of Italian American fishermen
13 who were prevented from fishing in prohibited zones
14 and therefore unable to pursue their livelihoods.

15 (9) The names of Italian Americans whose
16 boats were confiscated.

17 (10) The names of Italian American railroad
18 workers who were prevented from working in prohib-
19 ited zones.

20 (11) A list of all civil liberties infringements
21 suffered by Italian Americans during World War II,
22 as a result of Executive Order 9066, including in-
23 ternment, hearings without benefit of counsel, illegal
24 searches and seizures, travel restrictions, enemy
25 alien registration requirements, employment restric-

1 tions, confiscation of property, and forced evacuation
2 from homes.

3 (12) An explanation of why some Italian Ameri-
4 cans were subjected to civil liberties infringements,
5 as a result of Executive Order 9066, while other
6 Italian Americans were not.

7 (13) A review of the wartime restrictions on
8 Italian Americans to determine how civil liberties
9 can be better protected during national emergencies.

10 **SEC. 4. SENSE OF THE CONGRESS.**

11 It is the sense of the Congress that—

12 (1) the story of the treatment of Italian Ameri-
13 cans during World War II needs to be told in order
14 to acknowledge that these events happened, to re-
15 member those whose lives were unjustly disrupted
16 and whose freedoms were violated, to help repair the
17 damage to the Italian American community, and to
18 discourage the occurrence of similar injustices and
19 violations of civil liberties in the future;

20 (2) Federal agencies, including the Department
21 of Education and the National Endowment for the
22 Humanities, should support projects such as—

23 (A) conferences, seminars, and lectures to
24 heighten awareness of this unfortunate chapter
25 in our Nation's history;

1 (B) the refurbishment of and payment of
2 all expenses associated with the traveling ex-
3 hibit “Una Storia Segreta”, exhibited at major
4 cultural and educational institutions throughout
5 the United States; and

6 (C) documentaries to allow this issue to be
7 presented to the American public to raise its
8 awareness;

9 (3) an independent, volunteer advisory com-
10 mittee should be established comprised of represent-
11 atives of Italian American organizations, historians,
12 and other interested individuals to assist in the com-
13 pilation, research, and dissemination of information
14 concerning the treatment of Italian Americans; and

15 (4) after completion of the report required by
16 this Act, financial support should be provided for the
17 education of the American public through the pro-
18 duction of a documentary film suited for public
19 broadcast.

20 **SEC. 5. FORMAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.**

21 The United States Government formally acknowl-
22 edges that these events during World War II represented
23 a fundamental injustice against Italian Americans.

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