

105TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2090

Ordering 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 HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 26, 1997

Mr. LAZIO of New York (for himself, Mr. ENGEL, Mrs. MORELLA, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. KING, Mr. MILLER of California, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. PALLONE, Mrs. KELLY, Mr. MASCARA, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. ACKERMAN, Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island, Mr. MANTON, Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, and Mr. MCGOVERN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

Ordering 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”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 The Congress makes the following findings:

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

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

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

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

20 (5) At the time, Italians were the largest for-
21 eign-born group in the United States, and today are
22 the fifth largest immigrant group in the United
23 States, numbering approximately 23,000,000.

24 (6) The impact of the wartime experience was
25 devastating to Italian American communities in the
26 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 (8) This story needs to be told in order to ac-
8 knowledge that these events happened, to remember
9 those whose lives were unjustly disrupted and whose
10 freedoms were violated, to help repair the damage to
11 the Italian American community, and to discourage
12 the occurrence of similar injustices and violations of
13 civil liberties in the future.

14 (9) Federal agencies, including the Department
15 of Education and the National Endowment for the
16 Humanities, should support projects such as—

17 (A) conferences, seminars, and lectures to
18 heighten awareness of this unfortunate chapter
19 in our Nation’s history;

20 (B) the refurbishment of and payment of
21 all expenses associated with the traveling ex-
22 hibit “Una Storia Segreta”, to be exhibited at
23 major cultural and educational institutions
24 throughout the United States; and

1 (C) documentaries to allow this issue to be
2 presented to the American public to raise their
3 awareness.

4 (10) An independent, volunteer advisory com-
5 mittee should be established comprised of represent-
6 atives of Italian American organizations, historians,
7 and other interested individuals to assist in the com-
8 pilation, research, and dissemination of information
9 concerning the treatment of Italian Americans.

10 (11) After completion of the report required by
11 this Act, financial support should be provided for the
12 education of the American public through the pro-
13 duction of a documentary film suited for public
14 broadcast.

15 **SEC. 3. REPORT.**

16 The Inspector General of the Department of Justice
17 shall conduct a comprehensive review of the treatment by
18 the United States Government of Italian Americans dur-
19 ing World War II, and within 12 months of the date of
20 enactment of this Act shall submit to the Congress a re-
21 port that documents the findings of such review. The re-
22 port shall cover the period between September 1, 1939,
23 and December 31, 1945, and shall include the following:

24 (1) The names of all Italian Americans who
25 were taken into custody in the initial roundup fol-

1 lowing the attack on Pearl Harbor, and prior to the
2 United States declaration of war against Italy.

3 (2) The names of all Italian Americans who
4 were interned or taken into custody.

5 (3) The locations where Italian Americans were
6 interned.

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

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

14 (6) Documentation of FBI raids on the homes
15 of Italian Americans and an explanation of the au-
16 thority under which each such action was taken.

17 (7) A list of ports from which Italian American
18 fishermen were restricted.

19 (8) The names of Italian American fishermen
20 who were unable to pursue their livelihoods.

21 (9) The names of Italian Americans whose
22 boats were confiscated.

23 (10) A list of Italian American railroad workers
24 who were prevented from working in prohibited
25 zones.

1 (11) A list of all civil liberties infringements
2 suffered by Italian Americans during World War II,
3 including internment, hearings without benefit of
4 counsel, illegal searches and seizures, travel restric-
5 tions, enemy alien registration requirements, employ-
6 ment restrictions, confiscation of property, and
7 forced evacuation from homes.

8 (12) An explanation of why the civil liberties in-
9 fringements occurred.

10 (13) An explanation of why some Italian Ameri-
11 cans were subjected to civil liberties infringements
12 while others were not.

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

16 **SEC. 4. FORMAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.**

17 The President shall, on behalf of the United States
18 Government, formally acknowledge that these events dur-
19 ing World War II represented a fundamental injustice
20 against Italian Americans.

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