

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.

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## 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

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## 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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