

106TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 2442

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

NOVEMBER 16, 1999

Received

NOVEMBER 19, 1999

Read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

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## AN ACT

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,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

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

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

5 The Congress makes the following findings:

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

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

17 (3) During World War II thousands of Italian  
18 American immigrants were arrested, and hundreds  
19 were interned in military camps.

20 (4) Hundreds of thousands of Italian Ameri-  
21 cans performed exemplary service and thousands  
22 sacrificed their lives in defense of the United States.

23 (5) At the time, Italians were the largest for-  
24 eign-born group in the United States, and today are  
25 the fifth largest immigrant group in the United  
26 States, numbering approximately 15 million.

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

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

10 **SEC. 3. REPORT.**

11           The Inspector General of the Department of Justice  
12           shall conduct a comprehensive review of the treatment by  
13           the United States Government of Italian Americans dur-  
14           ing World War II, and not later than one year after the  
15           date of the enactment of this Act shall submit to the Con-  
16           gress a report that documents the findings of such review.  
17           The report shall cover the period between September 1,  
18           1939, and December 31, 1945, and shall include the fol-  
19           lowing:

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

24           (2) The names of all Italian Americans who  
25           were taken into custody.

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

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

8           (5) The names of all Italian Americans who  
9 were arrested for curfew, contraband, or other viola-  
10 tions under the authority of Executive Order No.  
11 9066.

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

14           (7) A list of ports from which Italian American  
15 fishermen were restricted.

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

19           (9) The names of Italian Americans whose  
20 boats were confiscated.

21           (10) The names of Italian American railroad  
22 workers who were prevented from working in prohib-  
23 ited zones.

24           (11) A list of all civil liberties infringements  
25 suffered by Italian Americans during World War II,

1 as a result of Executive Order No. 9066, including  
2 internment, hearings without benefit of counsel, ille-  
3 gal searches and seizures, travel restrictions, enemy  
4 alien registration requirements, employment restric-  
5 tions, confiscation of property, and forced evacuation  
6 from homes.

7 (12) An explanation of why some Italian Ameri-  
8 cans were subjected to civil liberties infringements,  
9 as a result of Executive Order No. 9066, while other  
10 Italian Americans were not.

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

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

15 It is the sense of the Congress that—

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

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

4           (A) conferences, seminars, and lectures to  
5 heighten awareness of this unfortunate chapter  
6 in our Nation’s history;

7           (B) the refurbishment of and payment of  
8 all expenses associated with the traveling ex-  
9 hibit “Una Storia Segreta”, exhibited at major  
10 cultural and educational institutions throughout  
11 the United States; and

12           (C) documentaries to allow this issue to be  
13 presented to the American public to raise its  
14 awareness;

15           (3) an independent, volunteer advisory com-  
16 mittee should be established comprised of represent-  
17 atives of Italian American organizations, historians,  
18 and other interested individuals to assist in the com-  
19 pilation, research, and dissemination of information  
20 concerning the treatment of Italian Americans; and

21           (4) after completion of the report required by  
22 this Act, financial support should be provided for the  
23 education of the American public through the pro-  
24 duction of a documentary film suited for public  
25 broadcast.

1 **SEC. 5. FORMAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.**

2       The President shall, on behalf of the United States  
3 Government, formally acknowledge that these events dur-  
4 ing World War II represented a fundamental injustice  
5 against Italian Americans.

        Passed the House of Representatives November 10,  
1999.

Attest:

JEFF TRANDAHL,

*Clerk.*