

## 2017-J5580

Senate Resolution No. 5580

BY: Senator GRIFFO

MEMORIALIZING Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim October 2018, as Italian Heritage and Culture Month in the State of New York

WHEREAS, This year is the 50th Anniversary of the New York Conference of Italian-American State Legislators; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to pay tribute to those whose true purpose and worthy accomplishment foster a spirit of community as they promote and recognize the goals and ideals of the rich cultural heritage of the Italian community; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim October 2018, as Italian Heritage and Culture Month in the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Founded in 1976, the Italian Heritage and Culture Committee (IHCC) of New York is a not-for-profit organization; founding Chairman Dr. Angelo Gimondo has played a leadership role since its inception; its Board of Directors is comprised of prominent representatives of New York's Italian-American community, and Joseph Sciamè continues to ably serve as its President and Chairman; and

WHEREAS, IHCC's Board of Directors announced the 2018 theme as:

Celebrating "Italian Women in America: Breaking Barriers"; and

WHEREAS, During the year, there will be events with a special focus on highlighting the contributions of Italian Women in America who have been trail blazers, from early immigrant mothers who entered the work force to women such as Rosa Ponselle, Bonnie Tiburzi, Geraldine Ferraro, Nancy Pelosi, and numerous other Italian women of accomplishment; there will be related film and theatre presentations, symposia, seminars, a student essay contest, tributes, and proclamations at every level of government in collaboration with the Italian Consulate, educational institutions and other community organizations; and

WHEREAS, It is important to recognize from a historical perspective that in the spring of 1976, New York City Mayor Abraham Beame, proclaimed the First "Italian Culture Week," from May 17th - 23rd; the idea for such progress was proposed to Dr. Leo Bernardo, Director of the Bureau of Foreign Languages, who was easily persuaded of the value and importance of this project; Dr. Bernardo appointed Dr. Angelo Gimondo as citywide Coordinator, resulting in the first celebration of Italian Culture Week under the auspices of the Bureau of Foreign Languages of the Board of Education of the City of New York; and

WHEREAS, Nine years later, in 1985, the festivities moved to October to coincide with various Columbus Day celebrations; by then, a week had become too short to encompass the range of programs so the week was transformed to "Italian Heritage and Culture Month"; as the years passed, the Governor of the State of New York and the President of the United States joined in acknowledging this significant annual

celebration by issuing proclamations in recognition of the heritage and culture of Italians and Italian-Americans; and

WHEREAS, The celebration of Italian Heritage and Culture, which began as a week-long event, has grown to a month-long celebration of special events and programs organized and hosted by cultural associations, community centers, libraries, schools and universities during the month of October; and

WHEREAS, Each October is dedicated to a specific theme or personality representative of the history and culture of Italy and Italian-Americans; and

WHEREAS, Italian-American cultural events and programs venerating Italian history, culture, and the many significant contributions of Italians, Italian-Americans, Italian culture, and especially the contributions of Italian Women to America will take place throughout New York State during this special month for people of all cultures to enjoy; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim October 2018, as Italian Heritage and Culture Month in the State of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York; and Joseph Sciamè, President and Chairman of the Italian Heritage and Cultural Committee of New York, Inc.