



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

## Addabbo calls on the "She Built NYC" initiative to include voters' top choice in statue controversy

SENATOR JOSEPH P. ADDABBO, JR. September 19, 2019

| ISSUE: **SHE BUILT NYC, MOTHER FRANCES CABRINI, ADDABBO**

After learning that the city's First Lady Chirlane McCray and her selection panel for the 'She Built NYC' initiative ignored the people's choice of Mother Frances Cabrini and failed to include the saint for being acknowledged with a statue, State Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. wrote the Mayor's wife a letter asking for an explanation.

The 'She Built NYC' initiative previously held a vote where members of the public could choose which influential women who helped shape New York City they would want to see the city erect a statue of. Those results were recently released and Mother Frances Cabrini, an Italian-American who came to New York in the 1800s and who helped support the Italian immigrants here by creating orphanages, schools, hospitals and more, won with more than double the votes of the second place selection.

However, Mother Cabrini was not included in the final selection of which women would get statues. The panel chose five other women for that honor.

"I am not disputing the women chosen by the panel for this initiative, but I am questioning why 'She Built NYC' would hold a public poll and then decide to ignore the voice of the people by not including the woman who finished with the most votes by a large margin,"

stated Senator Addabbo, who is also the President of the Conference of Italian American Legislators. “It makes little sense to hold a vote and then go against the overwhelming winner of that vote. In my letter to the First Lady, not only did I asked for an explanation of the voting process and why Mother Cabrini wasn’t selected after being voted the clear winner, but also for the ‘She Built NYC’ panel to reconsider adding her for this honor.”

Mother Cabrini was born in Italy in 1850 and came to the United States where she founded the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, several schools, orphanages, and hospitals right here in New York City, helping countless children and Italian immigrants. After her death, she was canonized by the Catholic Church and is recognized as the United States’ first saint.

“Mother Cabrini’s contributions to New York City and the burgeoning immigrant community cannot be overlooked,” Addabbo added. “If there was ever a woman who deserved to be honored with a statue in her image for her work in helping to shape New York City, I believe Mother Cabrini was a great choice selected by the people.”