

**Assembly Bill No. 1863**

\_\_\_\_\_

Passed the Assembly August 31, 2008

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Chief Clerk of the Assembly*

\_\_\_\_\_

Passed the Senate August 30, 2008

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Secretary of the Senate*

\_\_\_\_\_

This bill was received by the Governor this \_\_\_\_\_ day  
of \_\_\_\_\_, 2008, at \_\_\_\_\_ o'clock \_\_\_\_M.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Private Secretary of the Governor*

## CHAPTER \_\_\_\_\_

An act to add Section 51221.45 to the Education Code, relating to pupil instruction.

## LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1863, Portantino. Pupil instruction: social science.

Existing law requires that the adopted course of study for grades 1 to 12, inclusive, include instruction in social science.

This bill would encourage schools to include the role and contribution of Italian Americans in the instruction they provide in social science and would encourage the State Board of Education to include the role and contribution of Italian Americans in the curriculum frameworks in the social sciences at the next revision of those frameworks.

The bill also would make findings and declarations relating to the important contributions that Italian Americans have made to California and the United States of America.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(a) A study published in December 2004 of social science textbooks used in California schools and universities by Lawrence DiStasi and the Italian American Textbook Committee, titled "The Treatment of Italian Americans in California Textbooks," found that Italian American contributions were largely absent from elementary, secondary, and postsecondary textbooks used in California.

(b) Italian Americans are the sixth largest ethnic group in America numbering roughly 25 million people, with nearly 1.5 million residing in California. For much of the 20th century, Italian Americans were the largest immigrant group in the United States, yet they are not appropriately extended proper credit for their role in shaping American culture.

(c) As one of the country's greatest success stories, Italian Americans made enormous contributions to our country and state.

For example, Amedeo Pietro “A.P.” Giannini, born of Italian immigrant parents in San Jose in 1870, established in the Italian neighborhoods across California the first branch banking system in the United States, known as Bank of America. The philosophy that spun the success of Bank of America was to invest in common people to stimulate rapid economic growth. Mr. Giannini’s investments include the movie industry, the Golden Gate Bridge, the Walt Disney Company, and much of today’s agribusiness.

(d) Italian immigrant Marco Fontana arrived in the United States in 1859 and started the California Packing Company under the Del Monte label. His cannery soon became the largest food processing company in the world. Domenico Ghirardelli settled in San Francisco during the Gold Rush and founded the Ghirardelli Chocolate empire. Andrea Sbarboro is credited as one of the major founders of the California wine industry and Robert Mondavi was instrumental in establishing world-class credibility for California’s wine industry. The movie industry, the fifth largest employer in Los Angeles County, owes much of its success to numerous Italian artists, including Danny DeVito, John Travolta, and Al Pacino.

(e) Italian Americans were among the earliest and largest groups to settle in California, and they played a dominant role in the creation of the state’s agriculture, food processing, branch banking, fishing, and wine industries. Little-known facts regarding the experience and contributions of Italian Americans include all of the following:

(1) Between 1880 and 1920, about 4,000,000 Italians immigrated to the United States and nearly one-quarter of Ellis Island immigrants were Italian. Restrictive immigration laws at that time were directly aimed at Italian immigrants and based on anti-Italian attitudes of the time.

(2) Although Italians constituted the largest ethnic group in the American military during World War II, an estimated 600,000 Italian immigrants nationwide suffered wartime restrictions including internment and arrest, curfews, and travel restrictions. Some 10,000 Italian Americans were forced to relocate from coastal areas of California.

(3) Italians played a large role in the development of agriculture in California. Their control and development of fruit and vegetable industries in the central valley, truck farming in major urban

centers, and their influence on the development of the wine and grape industries left a legacy shared by us all.

(f) Italian American contributions to California and United States history can be easily incorporated in the current elementary and secondary curriculum content. Including the vital role of Italian Americans in shaping California into the state it is today will help pupils truly understand a significant part of our state's unique culture and will help them understand how the interdependence of people of diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural differences makes our country truly great.

(g) In 1996, the Legislature established the California Italian American Task Force. The highest priority of the task force is the inclusion in the public school curriculum of Italian American history, achievements, and contributions. The task force and scholars have tried to use current law as a basis to promote inclusion of the contributions of Italian Americans in current curriculum, but have been advised that express legislative authority or encouragement is necessary to achieve this goal.

SEC. 2. Section 51221.45 is added to the Education Code, as immediately following Section 51221.4, to read:

51221.45. Schools are encouraged to include the role and contribution of Italian Americans to the economic, political, and social development of California and the United States of America in the instruction they provide in social science. The state board is encouraged to include the role and contribution of Italian Americans to the economic, political, and social development of California and the United States of America in the curriculum frameworks in the social sciences at the next revision of those frameworks.







Approved \_\_\_\_\_, 2008

---

*Governor*