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Testimony of Representative Carlo Leone in Support of HB 557 AN ACT DESIGNATING IRISH-AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH AND ITALIAN-AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

Government Administration and Elections Committee Public Hearing

Friday, February 25, 2011

Chairman Slossberg, Chairman Morin, Members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee, for the record my name is Carlo Leone, State Representative for the 148th District in Stamford.

Thank you for this opportunity to present testimony in support of establishing an Italian-American Heritage month to honor the long history and vast contributions of Irish-Americans and Italian-Americans in our state. After several amendments and attempts at introducing this bill, I hope this is the year we can get it passed. In fact, Rep. Morin I have proud in the past to try to include you name as co-sponsor of the legislation we have tried.

As the son on Italian immigrants I support this legislation as a way to honor those of Italian descent who have come before me and given me and others the opportunities we have today. They have given us the chance to realize the American Dream and I feel this would be a fitting honor. Connecticut already has a proud tradition of honoring Italian heritage with such events as the Columbus Day Parade and I think we have the most active Italian-American Legislative Caucus' and perhaps some of the most dedicated Italian-American cultural organizations and societies in the state.

If anyone on the committee should have questions regarding the impact that the Italian community has had on our state, you need look no further then a recent article in this Monday's Hartford Courant where Connecticut was given most Italian status based on the number of residents who have Italian-American descent. In the article it is estimated that 20 percent of Connecticut residents surveyed by census takers in 2009 said they had some type of Italian heritage, making us number one in the nation.

Again thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony and I look forward to working with the committee to getting this legislation passed.