



CHIRLA

Coalition for Humane
Immigrant Rights

July 24, 2017

Los Angeles City Council
200 N. Spring St.
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Establishing Indigenous Peoples Day

Dear Los Angeles City Council,

The Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA) writes to express our strong support for abolishing Columbus Day in the City of Los Angeles, and establishing Indigenous Peoples' Day on the second Monday of October. In addition, we reject the proposal to establish Immigrants' Day on the second Monday of October as the month of June has already been designated as immigrant heritage month and recognizes the contributions of immigrants, including Indigenous migrants.

The notion that Columbus discovered the Americas stems from the idea that indigenous peoples were less than human, and for that reason, the Americas were a "vacant" land. These ideas have no place in today's contemporary society, and must be, once and for all be rejected. Columbus is a pivotal figure in the large-scale genocide and colonization of indigenous peoples in the Americas. That legacy of slavery, exploitation, rape and torture that should no longer be celebrated and codified by the City of Los Angeles.

Columbus' actions have negative consequences that have continued through the generations for Native peoples. Today, Native Americans and indigenous peoples suffer the worst outcomes on almost every socio-economic indicator of wellbeing – including rates of poverty, high school completion, life expectancy, youth suicides and representation in the child welfare and criminal justice systems. Native peoples also the only group to still be treated as mascots and called derogatory names by major public figures.

The City of Los Angeles, home to the largest urban indigenous communities in the United States, has not only the opportunity, but the responsibility, to stand on the right side of history. To adopt Indigenous People's Day is a step towards healing and reconciliation in Los Angeles that is so critically needed, and as such, we appeal to you to adopt Indigenous People's Day on the second Monday of October and abolish the designation of that day as Columbus Day. By doing so, you will be granting Native Americans the rights that all Americans deserve – the right to feel safe, respected and included as part of this country's cultural and historical legacy.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Isabel J. Sanchez, CHIRLA's Policy Advocate, at isanchez@chirla.org or at (213) 353-1334.

Sincerely,

Angelica Salas
CHIRLA's Executive Director