

ASSEMBLY STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION No. 63

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

DATED: MARCH 17, 2022

The Assembly State and Local Government Committee reports favorably Assembly Joint Resolution No. 63.

This Joint Resolution designates the month of March of each year as “Irish-American Heritage Month” and amends P.L.1997, J.R.2.

The Irish have immigrated to the United States and settled in states like New Jersey for centuries. The Irish settled in the United States to escape poverty and hunger in their native land. The Irish resilience is legendary because despite being starved out of their land by the Great Hunger of the 1840s, the Irish people survived and prospered. Irish-Americans often accepted difficult and dangerous jobs other Americans found undesirable, such as coal mining and the building of roads, bridges, and railroads. An estimated 150,000 Irish-Americans fought for the Union Army in the Civil War, suffering casualties of over 40 percent. Based on the hard work of the first immigrants, second, third, and fourth generations of Irish-Americans continued contributing to American economic growth and culture by becoming teachers, policemen, lawyers, artists, and soldiers, among other professions. Today, approximately 32 million people in the United States and 1.3 million people in New Jersey claim Irish ancestry.

The Irish are as important to the economic prosperity and culture of the State of New Jersey as they are to the country as a whole. Notable individuals with Irish ancestry from New Jersey include President Grover Cleveland, musician Bruce Springsteen, actor Anne Hathaway, and Supreme Court Justice William J. Brennan, among many others.

March is an important month to Irish-Americans because the Feast of Saint Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, is celebrated on March 17. March 17 has become over time the day to recognize Irish-American heritage, history, culture, and contributions through parades and celebrations.

The week of March 17 is already recognized as “Irish-American History and Heritage Week” in the State of New Jersey.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS

The committee amended to the resolution to differentiate the terms the “Great Famine” and the “Great Hunger,” by explaining that there was food in Ireland in the 1840s, but it was inaccessible to the Irish people.