



The Ancient Order of
HIBERNIANS
Irish · Catholic · American

Office of the Florida State Secretary

Greg Seán Canning

Grioghár Seán Ó Canannáin

National Deputy Secretary, Past National Director & Past FL State President

20 January 2026

Mayor Mike Wilkinson
Belleair Town Hall
901 Ponce de Leon Blvd
Belleair, FL 33756-1034

Dear Mayor Wilkinson,

Once again, Florida's Irish American community will be celebrating its Irish heritage during the month of March. Ever since the military governorship of Irish American Andrew Jackson, Irish Americans in Florida have provided leadership and service to their state, counties, and local communities. Irish Floridians can look back with pride on the legacy of their Irish forebears, who have contributed significantly to education, business, sports, literature, science, engineering, medicine, science and the arts. Today, we continue to recognize and honor the service of our current State, County and Town/City Council leaders and the contributions of fellow Irish Floridians.

In the past, March has been designated "Irish American Heritage Month" throughout the United States to coincide with the celebration of St. Patrick's Day on the 17th. Across the State of Florida, the Ancient Order of Hibernians and other Irish organizations will be conducting parades, celebrations, and cultural events.

The Florida Ancient Order of Hibernians respectfully requests that your office issue a Proclamation designating **March 2026** as "Irish American Heritage Month" in recognition of the long history of Irish American contributions to the State of Florida. To assist you in this request, I have taken the liberty of providing a few "WHEREAS" for your consideration and possible use.

On behalf of the Ancient Order of Hibernians in America, I would like to thank you for your kind consideration of this request. Should you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

In Friendship, Unity, & Christian Charity,

Greg Seán Canning

AOH National Deputy Secretary and Florida State Secretary
Past Florida State President and National Director



Suggested “WHEREAS” for Irish American Heritage Month

WHEREAS, by 1776 nearly 300,000 Irish nationals had emigrated to the American colonies and played a crucial role in America’s War for Independence; and

WHEREAS, five signers of the Declaration of Independence were of Irish descent and three signers were Irish born; and

WHEREAS, Irish Americans helped to fashion a system of government for our young Nation; and

WHEREAS, twenty-two Presidents have proudly proclaimed their Irish American heritage; and

WHEREAS, in 1792 Irish born James Hoban provided the architectural plans for the the White House and served as one of the supervising architects for the construction of the Capitol; and

WHEREAS, Irish born Commodore John Barry was recognized by the United States Congress in September of 2002 as the “First Flag Officer of the United States Navy”; and

WHEREAS, Commodore John Barry fought the last sea battle of the American Revolution off the coast of Florida; and

WHEREAS, in 1813, Captain Oliver Perry, An Irish American, achieved a major naval victory in the Battle of Lake Erie; and

WHEREAS, in 1942, the 5 Sullivan brothers made the ultimate sacrifice for democracy and freedom during the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal and later had the Destroyer USS Sullivan commissioned in their memory; and

WHEREAS, the Irish first came to Spanish “*La Florida*” in the 1500s - first as missionaries and mercenary soldiers and then as planters, traders, businessmen, doctors and administrators; and

WHEREAS, three of the Spanish Governors of “*La Florida*” were actually Irish military officers; and

WHEREAS, Fr. Richard Arthur, an Irish-born priest from Limerick who was appointed parish priest for St. Augustine in 1597 and ecclesiastical judge of “*La Florida*,” established the first public school in America and opened it to both boys and girls of all races; and

WHEREAS, Andrew Jackson, whose family came from County Antrim, served as Florida’s military governor following its acquisition by the United States; and

WHEREAS, Irish Americans, since America’s inception, have provided and continue to provide leadership and service to this nation’s political, business and religious establishments; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting and proper to celebrate the rich cultural heritage and the many valuable contributions of Irish Americans

