

City Council**Notice of Motion**

MM38.6	ACTION			Ward:All
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Raising of the Vietnamese Heritage and Freedom Flag in recognition of Journey to Freedom Day at Toronto City Hall - by Mayor John Tory, seconded by Councillor Chin Lee

** Notice of this Motion has been given.*

** This Motion is subject to referral to the Executive Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

Recommendations

Mayor John Tory, seconded by Councillor Chin Lee, recommends that:

1. In recognition of Journey to Freedom Day and that both the Federal and Provincial governments display the Vietnamese community's Heritage and Freedom Flag at their respective legislatures, City Council amend the City of Toronto Flag Raising Policy to allow the Vietnamese Heritage and Freedom Flag to be raised at Toronto City Hall.

Summary

Since the 1950s, the Vietnamese community has called Toronto its home. A community that places a strong importance on education, the initial community members were students and professionals completing their studies. But after the Fall of Saigon in 1975, millions of refugees fled Vietnam with thousands settling in Canada.

Fleeing political persecution, close to 2 million refugees fled their homeland escaping onto broken and make-shift boats. Known as "The Boat People", they faced deadly storms, starvation and attacks by pirates. Over 250,000 perished in the search for freedom. Those who were able to escape found new homes in countries like the United States, France, Australia and Canada.

Canadians from all walks of life opened their arms to thousands of displaced refugees. The Federal government developed a private sponsorship program, which allowed voluntary and religious organizations to sponsor a refugee family. But for each person sponsored, the government accepted another refugee under its own care. Over 120,000 refugees found a new home in Canada, with more than 30,000 settling in Toronto.

Toronto is now home to over 50,000 Vietnamese-Canadians. The community is hard working and many have found success in business, politics, the arts and humanitarian activities. To recognize their struggles and success, Journey to Freedom Day, observed every April 30th, is a

national day of commemoration of the thousands that perished fleeing for freedom and recognizes the success of the Vietnamese-Canadian community.

In commemoration of Journey to Freedom Day, the Vietnamese-Canadian community raises their community flag known as the Vietnamese Heritage and Freedom Flag. A flag, which they have adopted as their own, was the former flag of Vietnam, and now a symbol of their cultural heritage and strength.

These flag raising ceremonies are an expression of gratitude and thankfulness to Canada by Vietnamese Canadians across the country, but also a sign of understanding and appreciation by Canadians of those who fought to uphold the virtues of freedom and democracy.

Over the years, this community flag has been recognized in many jurisdictions around the world including American, French and Australian cities and states. More importantly, the flag has been raised and displayed in 2017 at both Parliament Hill and the Legislative Assembly of Ontario in recognition of Journey to Freedom Day.

With both the Federal and Provincial governments raising the Vietnamese Heritage and Freedom flag, I believe it is time to allow our Vietnamese community, which is the largest in Canada, the ability to raise their community flag at Toronto City Hall. As Toronto is the most multicultural city in the world, we have become a model where all religions, faiths and beliefs are respected and accepted. We strive to support and celebrate our diverse communities, which is why this Motion is necessary to allow our Vietnamese community to celebrate and take pride in all their work and success.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM38.6