



BY-EMAIL

May 14, 2026

Olivia Chow
Mayor- City of Toronto

City Councillors
City of Toronto
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Re: Councillor Lily Cheng's Motion: Recommendation to Parliament for a Canadian Chinese Heritage Month / May 20 Council Agenda Item MM41.7

Dear Mayor Chan and City Councillors,

Toronto Council will consider a motion on next week's Council agenda presented by your colleague Lily Cheng calling on Parliament to enact a Canadian Chinese Heritage Month. The motion is similar to ones adopted over the last weeks by Vaughan, Markham, York Region, Clarington, Durham Region, Guelph and others.

These motions respond to a campaign launched by a coalition that now includes 29 organizations and which has asked Parliament to adopt a motion that creates an annual Canadian Chinese Heritage Month similar to the existing heritage months that celebrate the contributions that have been made to Canada's well being by our diverse ethnic and racial groups.

Our message is simple - Asians have contributed enormously to Canada's success. According to the Census, over 8 million people in Canada, approximately a fifth of our population, reports having Asian origins, making it the largest population group in the country.

However, the appellation Asian does not mean that the diverse groups who trace their origins to Asia have much in common with each other. This fast-growing, diverse population is driven largely by immigration, with South Asian and Chinese groups being the largest, followed by Filipinos.

Canada currently celebrates 68 important commemorative months and days each year including Asian Heritage Month. While that month is marked by annual declarations from the Government of Canada, it attracts less attention than other heritage months including from within the Asian community.

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That may be due to certain heritage months also being recognized for specific Asian groups. For example, April is Sikh Heritage Month and June is Filipino Heritage Month. Both these months receive significant attention in these two communities and are more widely celebrated than is Asian Heritage Month.

While not specific to Asians, Parliament has also recognized October as Canadian Islamic Heritage Month and November as Hindu Heritage Month. These months are meaningful to many people of Asian heritage.

Some 1.8 million Canadians are of Chinese origin or heritage. Some 700,000 reside in the Greater Toronto Area. They comprise one of Canada's largest minority groups yet are not recognized by a heritage month of their own.

Ontario officially passed the Chinese Heritage Month Act in 2024, proclaiming the month of February as Chinese Heritage Month.

<https://www.ola.org/en/legislative-business/bills/parliament-43/session-1/bill-183>

But there is no national recognition for a community which has played a key role throughout Canada's history. The Chinese community seeks the same recognition as accorded to others.

Parliament is now considering adding an Ukrainian Heritage Month and Arab Heritage Month. Bills to advance both have passed second reading. For many people it highlights the glaring omission of a Canadian Chinese Heritage Month

Moreover between 1885, when Canada first imposed a head tax on Chinese migrants, until 1947, when Parliament revoked the discriminatory Chinese exclusion act legislated in 1923, the Chinese have confronted barriers in Canada faced by no other ethnic or racial group. Despite official discrimination, the Chinese put down deep roots in Canada, persevered and have contributed to Canada's growth.

While we will support the celebration of Asian Heritage Month, we believe that Parliament needs to add to the list of recognized heritage months. Most glaring is the lack of recognition for Chinese Canadians. We thus support the creation of a Canadian Chinese Heritage Month.

A motion of support by Toronto Council is a statement of solidarity with the Chinese community in Canada and the national campaign for a Canadian Chinese Heritage Month.

Yours truly,



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