



CANADIAN GUYANESE CONGRESS - LEGAL CIRCLE

July 29, 2026

Mayor Olivia Chow and Members of Toronto City Council

Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Re: Support for Motion MM43.4 – Proclaiming July as Caribbean Heritage Month

Dear Mayor Chow and Members of Council:

I am writing in my capacity as the Chair of the Legal Circle of the Canadian Guyanese Congress to express our strong support for Motion MM43.4, brought forward by Councillor Neethan Shan and seconded by Councillor Chris Moise, which would proclaim July as Caribbean Heritage Month in the City of Toronto. I am a Partner at Miller Thomson LLP, where I practice corporate/commercial and competition and regulatory law. I am currently the Past President of the South Asian Bar Association (SABA) Toronto; and Vice-President of Canada - Advocacy for SABA North America. I have been lucky enough to be a recipient of numerous legal and community leadership awards, including recognition as one of Canadian Lawyer's Top 25 Most Influential Lawyers in Canada. Throughout my career, I have been committed to advancing mentorship, diversity, inclusion, and leadership within the legal profession and the broader community.

My own journey illustrates both the strength and the challenge of the Indo-Caribbean experience in Canada. Like many Indo-Caribbean Canadians, I found opportunities for mentorship, professional development, and community through organizations such as SABA Toronto. Those experiences were invaluable, and I remain deeply grateful for them. During my tenure as President, Toronto Mayors like Mayor Tory and Mayor Chow graciously attended and addressed our SABA Gala, demonstrating their longstanding commitment to supporting Toronto's diverse communities. At the same time, the reality for many Indo-Caribbean Canadians is that we often participate in South Asian organizations because of shared ancestry and cultural connections, while our distinct Caribbean history, identity, and lived experience are not always fully reflected in those spaces. Our belonging in such organizations is meaningful, but it is not total. We are often situated between communities, connected to both South Asian and Caribbean traditions, while lacking institutions dedicated specifically to celebrating and advancing our own heritage.

That gap is one of the reasons the Canadian Guyanese Congress established the Legal Circle. Our goal is to create a lasting institution where lawyers, law students, judges, academics, and other legal professionals of Guyanese heritage can connect, mentor one another, develop professionally, and inspire the next generation of leaders. Representation matters. Young Indo-Caribbean Canadians should be able to see examples of success within their own community and feel pride in a heritage that is both Caribbean and deeply intertwined with the Canadian story. Recognition of Caribbean heritage is

therefore not simply about celebrating culture; it is about affirming identities, preserving histories, building community institutions, and creating opportunities for future generations to thrive.

Toronto's Caribbean community has played an indispensable role in shaping the city's cultural, economic, and social fabric. More than 315,000 Torontonians of Caribbean heritage contribute immensely to the life of this city as entrepreneurs, professionals, educators, public servants, artists, tradespeople, and community leaders. Caribbean-owned businesses have strengthened neighbourhoods across Toronto, including Little Jamaica, Scarborough, North York, and Etobicoke, while Caribbean Canadians have made lasting contributions to law, politics, healthcare, education, business, sports, music, and public life.

The influence of Caribbean communities can be seen throughout Toronto. The Toronto Caribbean Carnival has become one of Canada's most celebrated cultural events and a defining feature of the city's identity. Beyond the Carnival, Caribbean Canadians have helped shape the linguistic, culinary, musical, and social character of Toronto, making our city one of the most diverse and vibrant urban centres in the world.

For Guyanese Canadians in particular, Toronto is home to one of the largest Guyanese diaspora communities outside of Guyana. Our community has contributed significantly to the city's growth and success while maintaining strong traditions of education, entrepreneurship, volunteerism, public service, and civic engagement. Proclaiming July as Caribbean Heritage Month would help ensure that these contributions, and the contributions of all Caribbean peoples, receive the recognition they deserve.

The timing of this motion is especially significant. The introduction of Bill S-248, the Caribbean Heritage Month Act, in the Senate of Canada reflects growing national recognition of the importance of Caribbean communities to the Canadian experience. By proclaiming July as Caribbean Heritage Month, Toronto has an opportunity to demonstrate leadership and reaffirm its commitment to celebrating the diverse communities that have helped build this city.

On behalf of the Canadian Guyanese Congress – Legal Circle, I respectfully urge Toronto City Council to adopt Motion MM43.4 and formally proclaim July as Caribbean Heritage Month in Toronto on a permanent basis. Such recognition would honour the contributions of generations of Caribbean Canadians, strengthen community pride, and inspire future generations to continue contributing to the economic, cultural, and civic life of our city.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued leadership in building a city where every community can see itself reflected, celebrated, and valued.

Yours very truly,

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