

Legislative  
Assembly  
of Ontario



Assemblée  
législative  
de l'Ontario

1ST SESSION, 43RD LEGISLATURE, ONTARIO  
2 CHARLES III, 2024

# Bill 81

*(Chapter 6 of the Statutes of Ontario, 2024)*

## **An Act to proclaim Croatian Heritage Day**

**Ms D. Skelly**

1st Reading	March 20, 2023
2nd Reading	April 18, 2023
3rd Reading	March 21, 2024
Royal Assent	April 25, 2024



## An Act to proclaim Croatian Heritage Day

### Preamble

For more than a century Canadians of Croatian heritage have made incredible contributions to business, politics, medicine, science, sport and culture in Ontario.

Croatian immigrants escaping the oppression of the Communist regime began arriving in Ontario in the 1920s seeking a better life. They worked in steel mills in Hamilton and Sault Ste. Marie, in mines in northern Ontario and on construction sites across Ontario. They established vibrant communities across the province, including in Windsor, Welland, Hamilton, Mississauga, Toronto and further north in Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie.

Today, Ontario is home to over 100,000 people of Croatian descent, the largest Croatian population in Canada.

The contributions of Ontarians of Croatian descent have been numerous. For example, Robert Herjavec, best known for being an investor on *Dragon's Den* and *Shark Tank*, came to Ontario with his family destitute and is now living the "Canadian dream". Scientist Asaf Durakovic was an expert in nuclear and radiation medicine.

Athleticism is an important part of the Croatian identity. This dedication to sport has given Ontario world-class athletes. Boxer George Chuvalo was a five-time Canadian heavyweight champion who is best known for having never been knocked down in his 93 bout professional career, including in fights against Muhammad Ali, Joe Frazier and George Foreman.

Brothers Frank and Peter Mahovlich, who grew up in Timmins, played for the National Hockey League (NHL) and became Stanley Cup winners. Matt and Marty Pavelich, who were raised in Sault Ste. Marie, also made their mark in the NHL, and Oakville's Tony Mandarich played 7 seasons in the National Football League (NFL).

Figure skaters Sandra and Val Bezic were a sister and brother team from Toronto who won Canadian figure skating championships in the 1970s and who represented Canada at the 1972 Olympics.

People of Croatian heritage have helped build Ontario into one of the best places in the world to live. By proclaiming May 30 as Croatian Heritage Day, the Province of Ontario recognizes the remarkable contributions of Ontarians of Croatian descent, as well as the values they bring and the important role they have played in shaping the identity of Ontario.

Therefore, His Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario, enacts as follows:

### Croatian Heritage Day

1 May 30 in each year is proclaimed as Croatian Heritage Day.

### Commencement

2 This Act comes into force on the day it receives Royal Assent.

### Short title

3 The short title of this Act is the *Croatian Heritage Day Act, 2024*.

---

### EXPLANATORY NOTE

*This Explanatory Note was written as a reader's aid to Bill 81 and does not form part of the law.  
Bill 81 has been enacted as Chapter 6 of the Statutes of Ontario, 2024.*

The Bill proclaims May 30 in each year as Croatian Heritage Day.