

Legislative
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of Ontario



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Bill 50

An Act to proclaim Hungarian Heritage Month

Mr. R. Cuzzetto

Private Member's Bill

1st Reading November 17, 2021

2nd Reading

3rd Reading

Royal Assent



EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Bill proclaims the month of October in each year as Hungarian Heritage Month.

An Act to proclaim Hungarian Heritage Month

Preamble

For over a century, Hungarian Canadians have made invaluable contributions to every sphere of life in Ontario — in the arts, business, industry, law, medicine, science, sports and technology. Hungarian immigrants began to arrive in Ontario in the early 20th century to work in Ontario's steel industry, and to help build the Welland Canal. The Hungarian Self Culture Society of Welland celebrated its 100th anniversary this year. Other Hungarians escaped to Canada following the Nazi occupation of Hungary in 1944, including businessman and philanthropist Peter Munk.

Canada welcomed over 37,000 Hungarians following the Hungarian Uprising on October 23, 1956. They escaped communist tyranny, found refuge in Canada, and once again made important contributions across Ontario, including from the hundreds of young engineers from the University of Sopron who helped to build the forestry industry in northern Ontario. Thirty-three years later, Hungarians celebrated the collapse of the oppressive communist regime, as Hungary became a democratic parliamentary republic on October 23, 1989.

The architectural studio Hello Wood created an installation titled “Tunnel Through Time,” poignantly symbolizing the journey of these Hungarian refugees. The installation was first displayed in Budapest Park in Toronto and is now permanently located in Arpád Park in Niagara Falls. Composed of 37,565 pieces — one for each Hungarian refugee accepted into Canada following the uprising — it begins with a Hungarian flag with a hole in the middle, representing how the revolutionaries cut the communist coat of arms from the flag during the uprising. The installation then morphs into an exit shaped like a Canadian maple leaf.

Today Canada is home to over 350,000 people of Hungarian and Magyar descent, as well as Hungarian-speaking immigrants from other areas of Europe, including Transylvania. Nearly half live in Ontario, where they have made remarkable contributions to fields as diverse as accounting, cinematography, finance, government, music and statistical analysis. From Grammy and Juno Award-winning musician Alanis Morissette, to Paul Szabo, honoured as the “Hardest Working” Member of Parliament, to producer Robert Lantos, a member of the Order of Canada, many are leaders in their respective fields.

Many also continue to set fine examples as role models for young Canadians, including Tamás Buday, a retired Olympic sprint canoer and coach who has been instrumental in the success of both Canada's national canoe/kayak sprint team, and in the growth of the Mississauga Canoe Club, where he received the CEO's Award of Coaching Excellence from Canoe Kayak Canada. Other Hungarian Ontarians have helped to introduce sports to Canada at a competitive level, including water polo and fencing. Their rich traditions and values continue to strengthen our communities.

By proclaiming the month of October as Hungarian Heritage Month, the Province of Ontario recognizes the incredible and innumerable contributions of Ontarians of Hungarian descent, and esteems their important role in the economy, culture, politics and identity of Ontario. It also recognizes the importance of the acceptance of Hungarian refugees to Canada in 1956-57 as a turning point, which has helped to shape our open and welcoming immigration policies, and our respect for diversity, multiculturalism and inclusion.

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

Hungarian Heritage Month

1 The month of October in each year is proclaimed as Hungarian Heritage Month.

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 *Hungarian Heritage Month Act, 2021*.