

Legislative  
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of Ontario



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de l'Ontario

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(Hansard)**

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(Hansard)**

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Mardi  
14 mai 2024

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Clerk: Trevor Day

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott  
Greffier : Trevor Day

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 14 May 2024

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 14 mai 2024

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PRIVATE MEMBERS'  
PUBLIC BUSINESS

CHINESE HERITAGE MONTH  
ACT, 2024

LOI DE 2024 SUR LE MOIS  
DU PATRIMOINE CHINOIS

Mr. Ke moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 183, An Act to proclaim the month of February as Chinese Heritage Month / Projet de loi 183, Loi proclamant le mois de février Mois du patrimoine chinois.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Pursuant to standing order 100, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr. Vincent Ke:** Acknowledgement is a gift. It is a sign of respect and an act of esteem. Acknowledgement says, "I see you," and "I hear you." It says, "I recognize your value and know your worth." When we acknowledge Ontarians of Chinese heritage, we are essentially saying, "Welcome home. You belong here," as valued members of our province and culture.

Speaker, today I stand before you as a proud Canadian citizen, and as an equally proud Ontarian who feels honoured to represent the people in my riding of Don Valley North. I'm also a person of Chinese origin. I feel grateful to live in the province of Ontario, where I'm free to openly express pride in my Chinese heritage and culture.

Speaker, with Bill 183, An Act to proclaim the month of February as Chinese Heritage Month in Ontario, we acknowledge as peers and equals our fellow Canadians of Chinese descent. They are our neighbours, colleagues and friends. They are a part of the Ontario family.

Heritage is a place of comfort. It reminds us of our history, customs, language and traditions. Ontario is full of history and heritage. It is also the central economic engine for this vast union made of provinces and territories, Indigenous communities, and dynamic cities and towns, all inhabited by people whose origins represent a panoramic snapshot of the wider world.

As we in Ontario accept and celebrate differences, we realize that we are stronger together when united in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. Speaker, according to the 2021 census, over 820,000 individuals of Chinese descent call Ontario home. They represent almost 6% of Ontario's total population. Over 32,000 people of Chinese

ethnicity live in my riding of Don Valley North. They are the people who occupy their rightful place in our history and a promising place in our future. As Ontarians, they are one of us.

Statistics Canada reports, "The Chinese population in Canada is made up of people with a wide spectrum of experiences, from those who have recently immigrated to those whose families have contributed to the fabric of Canada for generations."

The presence of people of Chinese heritage in Ontario enhances Canada's reputation as an open, welcoming society which is known and revered for its dynamic multicultural landscape. Speaker, together we have the chance today to demonstrate to everyone watching and listening that our people, our nation, our province, and our cities and towns stand proudly by our claims of diversity, inclusion and multiculturalism.

There are many Canadians of Chinese heritage who serve and succeed in the fields of education and health care, commerce and banking, business and industry, science and technology, communications, IT and AI, law and public policy, construction and engineering, innovation and research, charitable endeavours and cultural activities, just to name a few. And some, like me, venture into politics, hoping to make a difference for others.

Chinese immigrants have a deep desire to participate in all aspects of Canadian life. Speaker, the immigrant experience is not always easy, but as the Chinese philosopher Lao-tzu reminds us: *Remarks in Mandarin*.

In English, this means, "The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step." Today, we can take that first step together with Bill 183, An Act to proclaim the month of February as Chinese Heritage Month.

Heritage and culture are complex and personal experiences, first cultivated in one's birthplace and shared through generations. Heritage is one's past, whose legacy lives on for the future. Chinese culture is steeped in the tea of shared experience and is naturally understood by Ontarians of Chinese origin, whose storied heritage spans centuries.

There are many emblematic traits and values associated with Chinese people, whose ancient culture is significant and diverse. Among them is a keen sense of duty and service to others, the desire and discipline to pursue education, the commitment to achievement and success through hard work, a sincere respect for elders in society, and a strong attachment to family, faith, children and community.

A big part of Chinese culture includes a love of the arts, games and sporting activities such as dance, calligraphy, table tennis tournaments, music recitals, poetry performances, boxing matches and Toronto's annual dragon boat

festival competition, the latter of which I have participated in very often.

For Ontarians of Chinese descent, the widely celebrated Lunar New Year features familiar traditions that highlight Chinese culture and heritage. It is a special time of reflection, reunion and renewal. Speaker, 2024 is the Year of the Dragon. The dragon symbolizes character, confidence and courage.

According to a StatsCan Plus report, “Chinese New Year, also known as the Spring Festival, marks the beginning of the new year based on the lunisolar Chinese calendar. Filled with celebrations, feasting and gatherings, it is an important holiday among many in East Asian countries along with their diaspora around the world.”

Yes, the Lunar New Year is certainly a festive time. With food being a vital ingredient of Chinese culture, it is a time to prepare and share a wide variety of traditional foods with those we love. The flavours and foods of Chinese heritage are popular among Ontarians, who love to experience a taste of Chinese culture.

People of Chinese descent also shaped a significant part of our Canadian history, as we acknowledge the incredible feat of building the Canadian Pacific Railroad and, later, the harsh imposition of the Chinese head tax.

Chinese Canadians endure. They contribute substantially to the glory of celebrated achievements—such as actor Simu Liu’s rise to fame in the popular Marvel movie *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings*.

Speaker, let’s acknowledge the impressive win by the EEC Debate team, which is comprised of many high school students of Chinese ancestry, and who recently competed and won the prestigious Harvard world schools debating tournament, which showcased the high calibre of Ontario students and education on the international stage.

As well, let’s acknowledge the Chinese Canadian figure skating star, Patrick Chan, an outstanding world champion and Olympian who proudly competed for Canada on the ice to bring home the coveted gold medal in a team event at PyeongChang in 2018.

There are countless examples of Chinese Canadians who represent us all to the world with the true Ontario spirit and genuine Canadian pride.

While there are numerous instances of excellence among people of Chinese origin, there also exists the truth that at times they face anti-Asian sentiments that stay silently under the surface, only to boil over during times of crisis, such as the SARS epidemic and the COVID-19 pandemic, which attracted to them unfair blame and shame. Chinese Canadians have often been tested and their loyalty questioned. Yet, despite the challenges they face, they continue to triumph over adversity. Their hard work and determination to succeed and rise above hatred and discrimination deserve recognition.

Speaker, during the pandemic Ontarians of Chinese heritage were among the first to rally together to donate money and personal protective equipment supplies and distribute them to people in our communities, especially the most vulnerable seniors in long-term-care homes, and hospitals, and the brave health care workers who care for them.

When Ontarians need help, people of Chinese origin are often the first to show up.

The role models I mention are merely a few examples of a visible minority of major importance, especially for young people of Chinese ethnicity, who need to see themselves reflected in others like them—

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** I apologize to the member. It’s time for further debate.

**1800**

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** It is an honour to rise today in support of Bill 183, An Act to proclaim the month of February as Chinese Heritage Month. This important recognition provides an opportunity to celebrate the immense contributions and rich cultural traditions that Chinese Canadians have brought to our province while also acknowledging our commitment to learn from our painful history of prejudice and discrimination.

The first Chinese immigrants arrived in the late 1700s, seeking economic opportunities and a better life. Despite facing language barriers and racial discrimination, this resilient community persevered, taking on incredibly difficult labour, such as building the Canadian Pacific Railway through the Rocky Mountains.

Although Chinese Canadians helped build the infrastructure and economic foundations of our nation, they continued to face institutionalized racism and discrimination. Canadian governments enforced decades of unfair policies like the Chinese head tax and the Chinese Immigration Act, which restricted immigration from China.

But despite these hardships and injustices, the Chinese Canadian community not only persevered but thrived. Their resilience, courage and determination laid the groundwork for the vibrant communities we have today, making immeasurable contributions across sectors like science, medicine, business, arts and public service.

The deep connections between Canada and China began—well, didn’t begin, but it is remarkable when we look at that deep affection that was engendered because of Dr. Norman Bethune. He was a Canadian humanitarian who was revered in China. He served in China by providing medical aid under fire and training the wounded during World War II. Dr. Bethune embodied humanitarianism, sacrificing his life in 1939. He’s revered in China. His legacy inspires Canada-China connections forged through co-operation and selflessness.

Throughout the 20th century, iconic Chinatowns emerged across Ontario. We see them in all of our communities in Ontario as cultural hubs and providing a sense of place to celebrate traditions, cuisine and language together. Today, over 800,000 Ontarians proudly claim Chinese heritage, the largest ethnic minority in our province.

We celebrate renowned authors like Evelyn Lau and Wayson Choy, who gave voice to the Chinese Canadian experience, and have left indelible marks. I would be remiss if I didn’t mention Adrienne Clarkson, who was the first visible minority and the first Chinese Canadian to be appointed as Canada’s Governor General, the 26th Governor General. She served from 1999 to 2005.

So, as we commemorate Chinese Heritage Month, we honour the trailblazers who overcame adversity through

sheer determination and celebrate the ways Chinese traditions have become woven into the diverse social fabric of our province.

However, we must also reflect on the discrimination and racism that Chinese Canadians have faced historically and often continue to battle today. The unsettling rise in anti-Asian racism and hate crimes, not just targeting Chinese Canadians but all people, particularly during the pandemic, from verbal harassment to violent physical attacks, is unacceptable and tarnishes our values of inclusion and respect for all. We must face down such hatred through education and solidarity and stand united against the forces of intolerance and division.

This bill is about an important recognition. It's about giving us all an opportunity to appreciate and celebrate the incredible richness that Chinese heritage has brought to Ontario while working towards an even more just and equitable society for all.

Thank you, Speaker. Congratulations on that important bill.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Further debate?

**Mr. Aris Babikian:** I rise today with great pride to speak on the second reading of Bill 183, the Chinese Heritage Month Act, 2024. As the member of provincial Parliament for Scarborough–Agincourt, I am honoured to represent a riding where over 40% of the residents are of Chinese descent. Their rich cultural heritage and vibrant contributions to our community enrich our community every day.

Madam Speaker, before I delve into the significance of this bill, allow me to take a moment to reflect on the remarkable history of the Chinese people and their contributions to humanity. From the invention of paper and printing to the development of gunpowder and compass navigation, Chinese civilization has gifted the world with countless innovations that we often take for granted today.

While we commemorate Asian Heritage Month in May, it is equally vital to dedicate a specific month to celebrate the unique contributions of the Chinese community in Ontario. That's why I am proud to co-sponsor this bill, alongside my colleague Vincent Ke, MPP for Don Valley North, to officially recognize February as Chinese Heritage Month.

As we want to celebrate the establishment of Chinese Heritage Month in February, it is important to recognize that this month holds a special significance for the Chinese Canadian community. The lunar new year, celebrated during this time, marks a new beginning and symbolizes hope and prosperity for the year ahead.

Over 400 people attended my inaugural Scarborough–Agincourt Chinese lunar new year celebration and enjoyed authentic food and entertainment with their families. It was truly amazing to see residents from all ages and backgrounds attending the event.

The Chinese community has made immense contributions to Canada and Ontario, shaping our social, economic and cultural landscapes. From pioneering advancement in science and technology to driving innovation in business and arts, Chinese Canadians have left an indelible mark on our society.

Speaker, we cannot talk about the Chinese Canadian experience without acknowledging the challenges they have faced, including discriminatory policies such as the head tax. Moreover, let us not forget the significant role that Chinese immigrants played in building Canada's trans-continental railway, connecting the east to the west and contributing to a united Canada from sea to sea to sea. Their tireless labour under harsh conditions helped to lay the foundation for the economic, political and social development and growth of our country. Despite these obstacles, the resilience and the determination of early Chinese immigrants have paved the way for future generations to thrive in this land we call home.

In Ontario, we are fortunate to have many exemplary Chinese Canadians who have achieved successes in various fields, from trailblazing scientists and entrepreneurs to celebrated artists and cultural icons. Their achievements serve as a testament to the strength and diversity of our community. It is worth mentioning some of these trailblazers.

—Quen Lee Chow, who led the class action to secure the federal government's apology for Canada's discriminatory policy against Chinese Canadians;

—Jean Lumb, the first Chinese Canadian woman and restaurateur Order of Canada recipient;

—Kew Dock Yip, the first lawyer of Chinese origin in Canada, awarded the Law Society of Upper Canada medal for outstanding service to the legal profession;

—Domee Shi, Academy Award-winning director, writer and storyboard artist for Pixar;

—Honorary Lieutenant-Colonel Nancy M. Siew, citizenship judge and honorary lieutenant-colonel;

—Madam Justice Avvy Yao-Yao Go, the first Chinese Canadian to be appointed to the Federal Court;

—the Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson, 26th Governor General, broadcaster and journalist;

—Senator Vivienne Poy, senator, historian and fashion designer;

—Patrick Chan, figure skater;

—Dr. Tak Wah Mak, microbiologist and immunologist;

—Dr. Lap-Chee Tsui, geneticist;

—Dr. Joseph Wong, family doctor and co-founder of the Association for Learning and Preserving the History of WWII in Asia;

—Dr. Ming-Tat Cheung, who led the Toronto community to build the Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Toronto, the largest Chinese cultural centre in North America;

—Olivia Chow, mayor of Toronto;

—Rosa Chan, community leader; and

—Michael Lee-Chin, businessman and philanthropist.

#### 1810

What sets the Chinese Canadian community apart is their unwavering commitment to overcoming adversity with a positive attitude and unwavering productivity. They have not only embraced their heritage but have also embraced the values of diversity, multiculturalism and inclusion, enriching the fabric of our society in the process.

As we move forward, let us use Chinese Heritage Month as an opportunity to celebrate the past achievements, present

contributions and future potential of the Chinese community in Canada. By doing so, we honour their legacy and reaffirm our commitment to building a more inclusive and equitable Ontario for all.

Therefore, I ask and urge all my colleagues to support this bill and recognize the importance of officially designating February as Chinese Heritage Month in Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Further debate?

**Mr. Logan Kanapathi:** I'm happy to rise today and speak on Chinese Heritage Month.

Nín hǎo. Nín hǎo ma. Dàjiǎ hǎo.

Thank you to my colleague from Scarborough–Agin-court for his leadoff words and the member from Don Valley North for his leadership in drafting this bill, Bill 183, Chinese Heritage Month Act.

As the MPP for Markham–Thornhill and the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism, I have been able to see first-hand how the diversity of our communities contributes to the strength of our province. I have had the honour and privilege to represent Chinese constituents and residents in Markham for almost two decades.

Markham is the most ethnically diverse riding in all of Canada according to the census. Speaker, you don't need to travel outside of the country to see the world. You can see the world right here in Markham and in Ontario—especially the food, the culture and the dances.

The different faiths, cultures and backgrounds that make up our communities are precisely what make Ontario a beacon of diversity that is known around the world as an accepting and inclusive place for all. As a part of this diversity, we proudly observe numerous heritage months, weeks and dates throughout the year, all of which celebrate the many diverse communities who have contributed and continue to contribute so much to our province.

This month alone, Ontario is celebrating Armenian, Dutch, Jewish, Polish and Asian heritage months. And in June, we will proudly observe Filipino, Italian and Portuguese heritage months. Our government is proud to mark and celebrate these important days and heritage months because they provide us all with opportunities to reflect and recognize the unique contributions and histories these communities are making.

Speaker, Ontario's Chinese communities should be no different. As the largest Chinese population in Canada and one of the largest in the world outside of China, Chinese Ontarians have a long and storied history in Ontario. Chinese Ontarians' stories and history are Ontarian history and Canadian history.

However, Chinese Ontarians don't yet have a legislated time that recognizes them and their history here in Ontario. Speaker, there is no diversity without inclusivity. By proclaiming February as Chinese Heritage Month, we are sending a strong message that all peoples deserve to have their contributions to this great province be recognized.

With that said, I am proud to support this bill and encourage my colleagues to join me in supporting it as well.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Further debate?

**Mr. Billy Pang:** Thank you to my colleagues from Don Valley North, Scarborough–Agin-court and Markham–Thornhill for their words.

It's such an honour to conclude the government's remarks during second reading debate of Bill 183, Chinese Heritage Month Act. *Remarks in Mandarin.*

As an Ontarian of Chinese origin, this bill is very close to my heart and one that I know will be well received by the members of the community in Markham–Unionville, as we are home to one of the largest Chinese communities in Ontario—66.6% Chinese in my riding.

This bill, which recognizes the long-standing history of the community and its rich cultural traditions, is an important step to show our support and appreciation for the over 820,000 Ontarians of Chinese origin who call our province home, and for all they are here to be a stronger and more vibrant Ontario.

If passed, this bill will not only give the community the recognition they deserve but ensure that Ontarians for years and generations to come will remember all the ways in which the Chinese community has helped shape our province into everything it is today.

I'm proud to have the opportunity to rise today and show my support for the important bill alongside my colleagues and reaffirm our commitment to celebrate the diversity and inclusivity that is central to who we are as Ontarians.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Further debate?

**Mr. Joel Harden:** I want to thank the member for Don Valley North. Xie xie, from the bottom of my heart, from our community—a very vibrant Chinese community in our city, Speaker.

I'm very proud to name a few people while I have a moment now. I want to name Professor Jamie Chai Yun Liew who has just produced a phenomenal book called *Dandelion* which tells the story, I'll read from the excerpt here: “multi-generational coming-of-age tale, part suspense-filled mystery/adventure, part gastronome's journal, part sociological treatise and in many ways a ghost story, each aspect blended with the others to create a lyrical yet emotionally taut and complex narrative that carries readers first from a BC coal-mining town to Ottawa's Chinatown....”

This is phenomenal; it was long-listed for Canada Reads this year. I want to congratulate Professor Liew. I also want to congratulate the business community in Ottawa Centre, particularly the executive director of the Chinatown business improvement association, Mr. Yukang Li, and Mr. Peter So, who do incredible work promoting the work of small businesses in Chinatown. And I want to invite everybody in this House and everybody watching, if you happen to be in Ottawa, you cannot miss the Chinatown night market from May 31 to June 2. If you believe my son—and I believe him for many things—it is the best food available in our city at any time of year. So, please come, and what you will taste and what you will



sample has to do with conscious small businesses that do wonderful work in our community.

I want to also acknowledge Professor Xioabei Chen at Carleton University, who is an expert on Sino-Canadian, Sino-North American relations, and who has done a lot at Carleton University to welcome students coming from China, and also to educate us about, as some of my other colleagues have mentioned, the disturbing rise of anti-Asian racism.

I want to recount for the record one particular moment which was disturbing to me as the member for Ottawa Centre. There were a few gentlemen during the pandemic who, given their opposition to pandemic measures, decided for some reason to protest outside the Kowloon Market. It's one of our wonderful Asian Canadian grocers in Chinatown. They were targeting that business—if you can believe it, Speaker, going inside the business and prevention people from leaving—because they were challenging the decision to patronize that business. I want to thank the owners of the Kowloon Market and I want to thank the patrons that day who kept their cool and waited for police to arrive.

And I want to hope that those people who, for whatever reason, thought it necessary to protest that very important business—I hope they've had a reawakening. I hope, whatever silo they've fallen down on social media, they find a way to recognize that that market is actually one of the best markets to buy produce in Ottawa Centre, and it's no threat to our security.

I want to welcome Chinese Heritage Month as an opportunity for us to understand in Ontario all of the contributions of Chinese Canadians to our great province. As I end, Speaker, I feel compelled to shout out two other people, one already mentioned by the member from Scarborough—Agincourt: the great Olivia Chow, mayor of this city, one of my organizing mentors, who is one of those politicians who got knocked down and got back up again; who lost elections but rose with wisdom later to become mayor of this terrific city. I look at the organizing approach that Olivia brings to politics across party lines, that Olivia does in particular her efforts to welcoming youth.

**1820**

I'll share some secrets as I offer this speech. She was very discerning when she came to our organizer group in Ottawa Centre about who she wanted to come out and help in her campaign. She wanted young people, and particularly young multi-linguistic people, to come and organize in the greater city of Toronto, but in particular in Scarborough; people who had the opportunity to reach out to neighbours, people you were speaking about, my friend. Wow, what a resonance, what an approach, what a leader.

I also want to salute Kristyn Wong-Tam, who I am proud to sit with here on this side of the House, who has served here only for a short two years. I've been here six years, but I can say, in the way MPP Wong-Tam treats others and the way they hold force in this chamber, I learn something new every single time I get the opportunity to interact with that member.

I will just end again by thanking the member for Don Valley North for bringing this forward. I salute it is an

opportunity for us to learn more about our country, and particularly Chinese Canadian contributions to it. Again, Xie Xie.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Further debate?

**Mr. John Fraser:** I'm pleased to rise today and speak to Bill 183, Chinese Heritage Month Act, and I want to thank my colleagues from Scarborough—Agincourt and Don Valley North for bringing it forward. My colleague Ted Hsu from Kingston and the Islands could not be here this evening. He really wanted to be here but he had to go to Oxford, so I said I'd say a few words on his behalf.

I first want to talk about how important heritage month bills are to communities. We live in very, very diverse communities. In my community of Ottawa South, people from over 125 countries of origin speaking more than a hundred languages all live in that, and most of our ridings are like that. Heritage bills mean so much to communities so they can not just express to their children their heritage and where they came from, their values, but also expose all of us to the contributions that Canadians who came from other places in the world, whether it be China or Lebanon—I did a Lebanese Heritage Month bill. They can talk about the contributions they have made to our country. That's something very important for their children to learn and for all of us to learn.

The other thing I think that's really important—and it goes with literally all cultures—is that all cultures have food. Food is so central to culture that it's important to be able to share that. As my colleague from Ottawa Centre mentioned, the night market that is on Somerset at the end of this month is just great, it's fantastic. It's full. In Ottawa, we've got a Chinatown because a former colleague here, Bob Chiarelli, worked with the community to get an archway built. It's a beautiful archway that still stands and it really defines the community. I think sometimes people look at the bills and they think, "What are they doing?" They're really, really, really important, and I want to thank my colleagues for bringing it forward.

I do also want to give one other shout out to the Chinese community in Ottawa. My colleague from Ottawa Centre just about covered everything, but the Glebe Centre, the community—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Fraser:** Yes, I noticed you missed that; I don't think you intended to.

The Glebe Centre has a unit of, I think, 32 long-term-care beds that's specifically for the community. The community worked hard to get that built but, even more importantly, continues to work hard every year to supplement what the government pays for long-term care to make sure that the food, the language and the culture is there for people as they age at the end of their lives. It's quite a spectacular thing. They raise, I think, well into six figures every year to make sure that happens for their seniors, and I want to thank them for that, congratulate them, and thank my colleagues for bringing it forward. I'll be supporting the bill.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** The member from Don Valley North now has two minutes for response.

**Mr. Vincent Ke:** Thank you to MPP Aris Babikian for your vocal support of this bill as co-sponsor. Together, for our constituents of Chinese ethnicity, we hope to make a difference. To the government and opposition MPPs—MPP Kanapathi, MPP Pang, MPP Shaw, MPP Harden and MPP Fraser—who commented thoughtfully on Bill 183, thank you for your valuable contributions.

I say to all distinguished members of this House, your support of this bill is not merely a symbolic gesture; it is a substantial act of acknowledgement and respect.

To my fellow Ontarians of Chinese descent, let us remind you today and always that you belong here, and this is our home. Let's stand together today to tell our fellow Canadians and Ontarians of Chinese descent that we see you, we hear you, we care about you and we thank you for your contributions to our Canada and the province we all love and call home.

To my colleagues, a Chinese proverb advises, "The pen of the tongue should be dipped in the ink of the heart." Its English equivalent from poet Maya Angelou says, "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

Thank you for standing with me today to make Ontarians of Chinese origin feel worthy of being seen, heard and acknowledged with the support of Bill 183, an act to proclaim February each year as Chinese Heritage Month. Thank you so much.

I want to especially thank my staff, Cathy, Christina and Wendy. They're sitting up there to come to support this bill.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** The time provided for private members' public business has now expired.

Mr. Ke has moved second reading of Bill 183, An Act to proclaim the month of February as Chinese Heritage Month. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Pursuant to standing order 100(h), the bill is referred to the Committee of the Whole House, unless the member would like to refer it to a standing committee.

**Mr. Vincent Ke:** Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Is the majority of the House in favour of this bill being referred to the standing committee on heritage? Agreed.

All matters relating to private members' public business having been completed, we now have a late show.

Pursuant to standing order 36, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

## ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

### CABINET DU PREMIER MINISTRE

#### OFFICE OF THE PREMIER

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** The member for Ottawa South has given notice of dissatisfaction with

the answer to a question given by the government House leader. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the member has five minutes to reply.

I recognize the member from Ottawa South.

**M. John Fraser:** Merci à tous, la table et mon collègue de Whitby pour votre présence.

It's another late show. My opponent for Whitby is back again. I'm pleased to have him here.

Je vais parler français un peu pour la première partie de ma déclaration.

Nous savons que nous avons le bureau le plus cher dans l'histoire de notre province. En cinq ans, le premier ministre a plus que doublé le budget et triplé le nombre d'employés qui perçoivent des salaires à six chiffres. Le salaire moyen est plus de deux fois le revenu familial médian. Pendant un temps quand les familles luttent pour garder la tête hors de l'eau, le bureau du premier ministre nage dans la sauce.

Quand est-ce que le premier ministre arrêtera le wagon de sauce, ce qui est son bureau?

I was very dissatisfied with the answer simply because the Premier didn't answer the question. The Premier's Office now has 49 people. It was 48; they added one more in eastern Ontario that's going to be a six-figure salary. That's more than three times what it has ever been in the Premier's Office for people on the sunshine list, for people with six-figure salaries. I just simply want to know why that's necessary. The budget has more than doubled.

#### 1830

The point I'm trying to make with the Premier is—I'm trying to use words that the Premier understands, because he talked about the gravy train a lot—or en français, le wagon de sauce—in previous times, and I was trying to use that as a metaphor for what's happening. Families are struggling these days just to keep their heads above water, just to pay the bills, and the Premier's office, like I was trying to say, it's swimming in gravy—swimming in gravy.

Here's the thing: The average salary of those earning six figures in the Premier's office is double the median family income—double the median family income. It's hard for people outside of this building—it's actually hard for us inside the building—to understand why that is. I was joking last week. I was saying to some of the front-bench ministers, "Maybe you should apply for the job, because you'll get paid more, your benefits will be better, and you won't have to go through an election or sit here and listen to me heckle." There has to be some accountability for that. It's not reasonable to triple the number of staff making six figures. I think if the Premier was on the other side of the aisle, or any of the members were on this side of the aisle, and we were over there, they would be saying exactly what I'm saying right now.

I just want to know what the Premier's going to do to fix that. I don't mean parking the people in other ministries and still having them there but making the other ministers pay for them. That's not what I'm suggesting. Or at least come here and stand up and say, "I need these people because they do all these wonderful things."

I sent the Premier, as well as a few other members, a list of everybody who works in the office who makes six figures.

To his credit, I did see him looking at it. He was looking at every name. There were only first names and salaries. I'm not sure he knew everybody on the list, but somebody does the job of hiring people and managing that office, and the ultimate person who's responsible for that office is the Premier himself.

In his response to me, one of the things he said is, "I've never expended a dime; I've never expended a chocolate bar." Thank God, because if you expense a chocolate bar, that's usually generally pretty bad news.

**Mr. Dave Smith:** How about orange juice?

**Mr. John Fraser:** Orange juice is really bad, too.

It's not the stuff in here that I'm worried about. It's not the money in here that I'm worried about. It's not the expenses. That's the stuff we can see. It's the stuff that we can't see that I'm trying to get at, the stuff outside of this building, outside of government operations. That was my point.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Further debate?

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** I've said this before, but let me put it on the record again: We will take no lessons from these out-of-touch Liberals who governed for over 15 years and left our province in a shambles, chasing 300,000 jobs away, firing nurses, raising taxes and cutting medical school seats year after year. On this side of the House, we are rebuilding a province that was left in economic decline because of these costly Liberals. The most expensive Premier's office in the history of Ontario was the one that preceded this government, because they bankrupted the province and cost us 300,000 jobs.

Since 2018, under the leadership of Premier Ford, we've been rebuilding Ontario after the Liberals left it in a shambles. Our government has created over 700,000 jobs, we've made record investments in infrastructure, and our health care sector is supporting over 80,000 new nurses and 12,500 new doctors.

Not only are we increasing spending in the areas people need; we're cutting costs and keeping taxes low for all Ontario families. As their federal cousins raise taxes and keep increasing the carbon tax on the backs of hard-working Canadians, we're the only government in the history of Ontario that has never raised a tax on hard-working families. In fact, we've implemented a suite of measures designed to keep costs low for families. We've cut income tax for 1.1 million low-income workers, saving the average person \$300 a year. We extended the gas tax cut, saving the average household \$320 at the pumps. We cut licence plate and sticker fee renewals and we introduced the One Fare program, saving transit riders an average of \$1,600 a year.

Speaker, their rhetoric is quite rich, coming from the member opposite whose own party gave \$163 million to their largest corporate donor, who created the \$6-million man at Hydro One, who raised the price of gas over four cents a litre with their horrible cap-and-trade scheme, who hiked transit fees and imposed tolls on Highways 412 and 418 in the region of Durham and who awarded energy contracts to companies that donated over \$1 million to the governing Ontario Liberal Party.

Now their new leader, Bonnie Crombie, supports the federal carbon tax and is threatening to bring back the gas tax we removed. While the members opposite are content to keep raising taxes and cutting affordability measures, on this side of the House, we're committed—absolutely committed—to building an economy that works for the people of Ontario.

Speaker, we will continue to fix the mess they left behind and get it done for the people of this province.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** There being no further matter to debate, pursuant to standing order 36(c) I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried.

This House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow morning.

*The House adjourned at 1836.*



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Edith Dumont, OOnt  
Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative: Hon. / L'hon. Ted Arnott  
Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day  
Deputy Clerk / Sous-Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim  
Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Julia Douglas, Meghan Stenson,  
Christopher Tyrell, Wai Lam (William) Wong  
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Tim McGough

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Anand, Deepak (PC)	Mississauga—Malton	
Andrew, Jill (NDP)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London—Fanshawe	
<b>Arnott, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (PC)</b>	Wellington—Halton Hills	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
<b>Barnes, Patrice (PC)</b>	Ajax	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Begum, Doly (NDP)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
<b>Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)</b>	Pickering—Uxbridge	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Blais, Stephen (LIB)	Orléans	
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Bowman, Stephanie (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Brady, Bobbi Ann (IND)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
Bresee, Ric (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
Byers, Rick (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	
<b>Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)</b>	Markham—Stouffville	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement Minister of Legislative Affairs / Ministre des Affaires législatives
<b>Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)</b>	Scarborough North / Scarborough- Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
<b>Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Stan (PC)</b>	Willowdale	Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée
Clancy, Aislinn (GRN)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds— Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
<b>Collard, Lucille (LIB)</b>	Ottawa—Vanier	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Crawford, Stephen (PC)	Oakville	
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Dixon, Jess (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Dowie, Andrew (PC)	Windsor—Tecumseh	
<b>Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)</b>	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
<b>Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)</b>	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Minister of Colleges and Universities / Ministre des Collèges et Universités
<b>Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)</b>	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Flack, Hon. / L'hon. Rob (PC)</b>	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Associate Minister of Housing / Ministre associé du Logement
<b>Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)</b>	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
		Premier / Premier ministre
		Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales
<b>Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Michael D. (PC)</b>	York South—Weston / York-Sud—Weston	Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism / Ministre des Affaires civiques et du Multiculturalisme
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Grewal, Hardeep Singh (PC)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hazell, Andrea (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Holland, Kevin (PC)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Hsu, Ted (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Jama, Sarah (IND)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	
<b>Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)</b>	Dufferin—Caledon	Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
		Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre
Jones, Trevor (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Jordan, John (PC)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
<b>Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)</b>	Parkdale—High Park	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Ke, Vincent (IND)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
<b>Kerzner, Hon. / L'hon. Michael S. (PC)</b>	York Centre / York-Centre	Solicitor General / Solliciteur général
<b>Khanjin, Hon. / L'hon. Andrea (PC)</b>	Barrie—Innisfil	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
		Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	
Leardi, Anthony (PC)	Essex	
<b>Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)</b>	King—Vaughan	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
<b>Lumsden, Hon. / L'hon. Neil (PC)</b>	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean	
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Mantha, Michael (IND)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
<b>McCarthy, Hon. / L'hon. Todd J. (PC)</b>	Durham	Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery / Ministre des Services au public et aux entreprises
McCrimmon, Karen (LIB)	Kanata—Carleton	
McGregor, Graham (PC)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
McMahon, Mary-Margaret (LIB)	Beaches—East York	
<b>Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)</b>	York—Simcoe	President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
		Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Parsa, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (PC)</b>	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires
Pasma, Chandra (NDP)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	
<b>Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)</b>	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de l'Immigration, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
Pierre, Natalie (PC)	Burlington	
<b>Pirie, Hon. / L'hon. George (PC)</b>	Timmins	Minister of Mines / Ministre des Mines
Quinn, Nolan (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
Rae, Matthew (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Kaleed (IND)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	
<b>Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)</b>	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Northern Development / Ministre du Développement du Nord Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Riddell, Brian (PC)	Cambridge	
Romano, Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
<b>Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)</b>	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Sarrazin, Stéphane (PC)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Saunderson, Brian (PC)	Simcoe—Grey	
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	
Shamji, Adil (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
<b>Skelly, Donna (PC)</b>	Flamborough—Glanbrook	Deputy Speaker / Vice-Présidente Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, David (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Graydon (PC)</b>	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Smith, Laura (PC)	Thornhill	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)</b>	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)</b>	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
<b>Tangri, Hon. / L'hon. Nina (PC)</b>	Mississauga—Streetsville	Associate Minister of Small Business / Ministre associée déléguée aux Petites Entreprises
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain / Hamilton-Mountain	
<b>Thanigasalam, Hon. / L'hon Vijay (PC)</b>	Scarborough—Rouge Park	Associate Minister of Transportation / Ministre associé des Transports
<b>Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)</b>	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
<b>Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)</b>	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué au dossier de la Santé mentale et de la Lutte contre les dépendances
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
Vaugois, Lise (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
<b>Williams, Hon. / L'hon. Charmaine A. (PC)</b>	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity / Ministre associée des Perspectives sociales et économiques pour les femmes
Wong-Tam, Kristyn (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	
Vacant	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	
Vacant	Milton	