

Hon. Michael Chong, M.P.
Wellington-Halton Hills



CANADA

L'hon. Michael Chong, député
Wellington-Halton Hills

December 21, 2021

Hon. Erin O'Toole, P.C., M.P.
Leader of the Official Opposition
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Erin,

As part of our ongoing efforts to reach out to Canadians across the country, particularly those in ethnocultural communities, roundtables were organized to solicit the views of Canadians in the Chinese community about Conservatives and their policies. The Honourable Alice Wong, Mr. Kenny Chiu, Mr. Bob Saroya, and I hosted 24 leaders from the community in three roundtables, one held in the Greater Toronto Area and two in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia. A diverse group of community leaders were consulted from the Taiwanese, Hong Kong, and mainland Chinese communities, ranging in age from 21 to over 70. All participants spoke Mandarin, Cantonese, or both languages. This letter summarizes what we heard and concludes with recommendations.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. They indicated that social media had become an

important means of communication within the community, and that it is important to have staff who can communicate in both Cantonese and Mandarin, as well as in written traditional and simplified Chinese. A number of participants expressed concern that disinformation spread on social media platforms had not been countered by Conservatives. For example, a couple of weeks before the election, messages were circulating on WeChat that the "Conservatives are not good". [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Numerous participants raised concerns about coverage of Conservatives in Chinese language newspapers, television, and radio broadcasting. It was noted that there have been changes in Chinese language media ownership in recent years. New owners and new editors have closer ties to the government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) than previously. Consequently, this has influenced editorial positioning and reporting. For example, Chinese language media misinterpreted Conservative messaging from “we need to stand up to China” to “we are against and need to confront China”. Several participants noted a significant increase in content supportive of the PRC narrative and a significant decrease in content critical of the PRC. One participant asserted that, on average, only 20% of media would include content critical of the PRC's policies.

Participants noted the increasing prevalence of self-censorship and censorship on radio and television stations. One participant said that two hosts on a local radio station in Vancouver, AM 1320, were instructed not to interview MP Kenny Chiu or mention his name on any broadcast. One host interviewed MP Kenny Chiu and was terminated. Another host had his broadcast hours reduced for having mentioned MP Kenny Chiu's name on air. (This information has been conveyed to CSIS for their information and investigation.)

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Participants also raised concerns about the rise in anti-Asian hate and discrimination, [REDACTED]. In addition, participants expressed fear of the PRC's power in Canada. Many believe that Canadian authorities cannot protect them from the communist leadership in Beijing and are therefore afraid to criticize the PRC or be affiliated with those critical of the PRC. Participants also pointed out that many in the community have business ties to the PRC and want to maintain good relationships with the government of the PRC.

Here follow recommendations that address what we heard during our roundtable consultations.

Conservative policy toward China should remain unchanged. It is vital that Conservatives advance policies to protect Canada's national and security interests by countering the threats posed by the government of the PRC.

The frequency and tempo of Conservative communications about Canada's policies on China – in opposition supply day motions, question period, statements, the election platform, etc. – should be proportionate to the other issues facing the community and the country, such as the economy and the pandemic.

Conservative communications about Canada's policies on China should continue to make clear that our criticism is directed toward the government of the PRC and not toward the Chinese people. Communications should also not give the impression that we are seeking partisan advantage, but rather seeking to protect the national interest and security of Canada.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Every opportunity should be taken to denounce anti-Asian hate and discrimination when it arises, as should every opportunity to celebrate the contributions of the Chinese community in Canada. This needs to be ongoing and sustained in our communications, so that the community hears from Conservatives not only criticism of the PRC but also a defense and celebration of the community here in Canada.

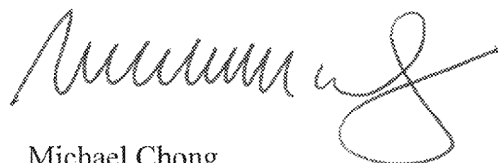
Conservatives should continue to press the Government of Canada to implement a robust plan to counter the PRC's intimidation operations against the Chinese community here on Canadian soil. Many in the community are afraid of the PRC and afraid of being seen supporting the Conservatives. A robust plan to counter this intimidation will instill confidence in the community and allow them to show their support for Conservatives.

Finally, in-person engagement with the Chinese community needs to be frequent and ongoing. As the pandemic winds down, it is important that engagement revert to normal face-to-face interaction at community banquets and other events. It is particularly important that you, as Conservative leader, attend a number of in-person events to deliver a positive message about the

community and its importance to Conservatives. This will rebuild trust, counter disinformation, and communicate clear positive messages that will resonate with the community.

My hope is that this information and these recommendations will be useful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Chong". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

Michael Chong

cc: Mr. James Cumming

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]