

# THE HONOURABLE YONAH MARTIN



## Senator's Message

Today is the 102nd anniversary of the 1919 March 1st Independence Movement (삼일절/Samiljeol) of the Korean people against Japanese rule. I am told that my grandfathers were freedom fighters of the movement; and my parents were born during the colonial period in the 1930's. On this day, I am reminded once more that "freedom is not free" – that Korea's freedoms were hard fought and won by the patriots of the independence movement, their compatriots including my grandparents, and Canadians like Dr. Francis Schofield. Five years later, the Korean War broke out and tens of thousands of Canadians, once more, stood shoulder to shoulder with the Korean people in defense of their freedoms. Their service and sacrifices 70 years ago can and will never be forgotten. This year, we continue the 70th anniversary #KoreanWarForgottenNoMore campaign with important commemorative events and legacy projects (in progress). Looking back on the month of February, there were many notable events and significant developments on Parliament Hill that kept our office busy around the clock. You can read more about them in the features highlighted in this March 1st news bulletin. Together, my dedicated staff and I are inspired by the legacies of our beloved veterans of the Korean War and those who built the foundation upon which we stand. We are honoured to

have the opportunity to be their voice and the voice of all those whose concerns or needs we are called to champion and represent, as the Office of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate and the Senate of Canada.

At your service,

## February Highlights

February rang in the Lunar New Year of the metal (or white) ox, bringing hope of renewal, good health and opportunities for all families and businesses across Canada and the world. February also began and ended with celebrations of Black History Month. Sen. Martin participated in a webinar co-hosted by MP Kenny Chiu and MP Richard Bragdon featuring The Hon. Erin O'Toole and one of Canada's most prominent black conservative politicians, Dr. Leslyn Lewis. Sen. Martin was also reminded of the significant contributions of black Canadians throughout history, including the first black conservative MP and Cabinet Minister, the late Lincoln Alexander; and retired Nova Scotia senator, The Hon. Donald Oliver. Sen. Martin had the honour of serving with Sen. Oliver (former Speaker Pro Tempore), who on Sen. Martin's first day on the Hill, welcomed her with the kindest of remarks to help her feel like an integral part of the team and mentored her in helpful ways. He served as the first black male senator in Canadian history, with distinction, until his retirement from the Upper Chamber. February was full of long hours in the Senate, many official meetings (of committees, Senate Leadership, BC Caucus, Senate Caucus, National Caucus, bilateral and special meetings), advocacy work and meetings with stakeholders on various issues, special and on-going commemorative projects for the 70th anniversary of the Korean War campaign and more. As always, Sen. Martin's dedicated staff worked tirelessly behind the scenes to assist Sen. Martin and serve their constituents with care and compassion.





## Bilateral Engagements

There are many bilateral and multilateral parliamentary associations and groups to which senators and MPs can choose to belong. These associations and groups work in partnership with the respective Embassy or High Commission of the country in question; and aim to establish and deepen the bilateral relationships with the counterpart Parliamentary groups of those countries. Together, they engage in meaningful discussions and organize bilateral events on and off Parliament Hill. Sen. Martin serves as Co-Chair of Canada-Korea and Canada-Bulgaria Inter-parliamentary Friendship Groups; is Co-Vice-Chair of Canada- Philippines and Canada-China; and Director of several other groups. In February, Sen. Martin co-hosted a special lunar new year event with MP Nelly Shin for the national Korean Canadian community; The Hon. Erin O'Toole made a surprise visit and joined the virtual celebration. Among several other bilateral events, Sen. Martin and MP Shaun Chen had the honour of co-hosting a historic Canada-Bulgaria inter-parliamentary event. Bulgarian legislators and Canadian senators and MPs met virtually to celebrate the significance of 2021 being the 55th anniversary of bilateral relations; and discussed ways to deepen economic and people to people relations between Canada and Bulgaria. It was a memorable gathering that reminded everyone of the more than century old history of Bulgarians in Canada. Sincere best wishes to the Bulgarian community across Canada as they celebrate the National Day of Bulgaria on March 3rd; Niagara Falls, Vancouver City Hall and other places of significance will be lit in the colours of the Bulgarian flag on this day!

[Click here for full Canada-Bulgaria gallery.](#)



## Bill C-7: Matter of Life & Death

C-7 (Medical Assistance in Dying or MAiD) was studied at the Senate Legal & Constitutional Affairs Committee where more than 130 witnesses provided compelling testimonies for or against the Bill. Concerns were raised by expert witnesses, particularly advocates and members of the disabilities community, indigenous groups, palliative care institutions and medical professionals who raised concerns about assisted suicide and the existing MAiD regime. C-7 is a government bill that responds to a Quebec lower court decision to expand MAiD, but critics of the bill expressed the dangers of expanding eligibility to assisted death, without a thorough review of the regime that was developed after the passage of C-14 which legalized MAiD (with restricted access) in Canada. Upon careful reflection of witness testimony and review of emails and meetings with concerned citizens, Sen. Martin spoke against Bill C-7 at 3rd Reading and moved an amendment to remove the "greater certainty" clause. Unfortunately, the amendment was defeated. Sen. Martin voted against C-7 (with amendments), but it was adopted at 3rd Reading; and a Message was sent to the House. Currently, the House is debating the Message from the Senate and once adopted, it will be sent back to the Senate for further debate in the Chamber. The March sittings are expected to be filled with robust debates and the long-awaited budget. The Government has delayed tabling a budget for nearly two years, making Sen. Martin and her colleagues wonder about the true figures of Canada's ballooning national debt and the Government's record high deficit spending.

[Click here for full Korean Lunar New Year gallery.](#)



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