

# My Journey

Mimi Lee, April 4, 2025

The Purple Wave – Issue 178



Canada has always been a country shaped by the contributions of immigrants, and I am proud to be part of this legacy. My journey to Canada began unexpectedly during my high school years, a pivotal time in anyone's life. I had no idea that I would soon leave behind my hometown, my friends, and all that was familiar to me. The relocation was sudden—from the moment my mother told me we were moving from Hong Kong to Canada to the day I arrived, was just about a month. It felt like a whirlwind, much like the time frame of this campaign. My arrival in Toronto November 1987 marked a new chapter in my life, one that began with the chill of a Canadian winter, both literally and figuratively.

Adapting to my new environment wasn't an immediate process. Since my home school is a semester school, I couldn't start classes until February of the following year. This unexpected gap gave me a few months to familiarize myself with the city I now called home. The cultural differences were apparent right away. Although Hong Kong functioned under a British-inspired system, Canada's way of life was markedly distinct, offering both challenges and opportunities for growth.

Determined to integrate into this new world, I put all my effort into connecting with my schoolmates. Looking back, I'm proud of how well I managed to adapt. My circle of friends included both locals and Canadian Europeans, and I even participated in a "buddy system" to help other newcomers settle into their new surroundings. These early experiences fostered a sense of community and shared resilience. However, one area that remained challenging was humor—Canadian jokes often flew over my head. Even today, I occasionally struggle to fully grasp their nuances, a small but persistent reminder of cultural differences.

As the years passed, I witnessed significant changes in Canada and the world, shaping my perspective and driving me toward action. My awakening came in 2012 when I saw troubling developments. By that point, I had wholeheartedly embraced life in Canada, building a successful financial services business with a predominantly Canadian clientele—95% of my clients were local families. My work was deeply rooted in a

commitment to empowering these families, helping them uphold Canadian values, achieve financial stability, and secure brighter futures. Through tailored strategies and guidance, I supported families in saving as well as investing wisely. Witnessing the positive transformations in their lives was incredibly rewarding, and it reinforced my dedication to making a tangible difference in the community, one family at a time.

Beyond my professional endeavors, I also served as a mentor to several individuals who were navigating their own paths in the Canadian workforce. I took great pride in helping these mentees integrate smoothly into workplace environments, equipping them with the knowledge, confidence, and skills to thrive. The process was about more than just career guidance—it was about fostering a sense of belonging and connection to the Canadian way of life. These experiences further deepened my appreciation for the power of community and the impact we can have when we lift others up.

Then, the changes in Hong Kong over the last decade reminded me of my roots and were deeply unsettling. They also suggested how fortunate I had been during my upbringing, shielded from much of the world's turbulence—or perhaps blissfully unaware of it at the time.

Witnessing the deterioration of Hong Kong was heartbreakingly. Alongside fellow Canadian Hongkongers, I engaged with a few Members of Parliament from various political parties to raise awareness about the unfolding crisis. This experience fueled my resolve to collaborate with other Hongkongers around the globe in lobbying our governments. Together, we advocated for vigilance against the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) interference in Hong Kong. These collective efforts emphasized the critical need to defend freedom and uphold democratic principles. Ultimately, the introduction of the Hong Kong Pathway by the Canadian government offered Hongkongers an opportunity to escape the grip of the CCP and begin anew.

My other major initiatives include Petition 2835, which called on Canada to take stronger action against foreign interference. This effort directly led to the introduction of Motion M-55, reaffirming concerns about foreign interference and urging a robust government response. The establishment of the Foreign Interference Commission in 2024 was a significant milestone. Through public hearings, the commission examined the 2019 and 2021 elections, and the subsequent passing of Bill C-70 demonstrated that change is achievable.

However, there is still much work to be done. The severity of foreign interference and infiltration in Canada cannot be overstated. Establishing a foreign agent registry is crucial. Why should officials prioritize the interests of foreign governments over those of Canadians? If they are not serving the people, why are we paying them? Every Member of Parliament should be dedicated to serving Canadians, placing our interests above all else—certainly above foreign influences.

I expect many had already heard of the incident on Paul Chiang, a current MP and the Liberal candidate for Markham-Unionville, suggested during a local Chinese-language media news conference in January that Canadians should claim the bounty from Hong Kong on Joe Tay, who is currently running for the Conservatives in the Don Valley North in Toronto. This brings out a much deeper thought on how severe foreign influences are

in Canada. Note that this MP was a newly elected MP in the riding, and he was a police officer before he got elected.

Beyond Petition 2835, I also initiated Petitions 3293 and 3094, both addressing critical issues in global affairs and national security. My commitment to public service extends to my active involvement in policy development within the Green Party of Canada (GPC). Despite being relatively new to politics at the time, I collaborated with other members to draft a proposal that was adopted by the party in 2021. For me, running for office represents the most effective way to introduce real, lasting change that benefits the broader population. It's not just about making a difference—it's about ensuring a better future for all Canadians.

The pandemic brought additional challenges, not only internationally but even more so here in Canada. The invocation of the Emergency Act by our government felt alarmingly authoritarian, exceeding measures taken by other Western nations. It was a wake-up call for me. I realized that instead of relying on others—Members of Parliament, for instance—to drive change, I needed to step into the system myself and work to enact meaningful reforms.

My journey from being a candidate for the GPC to joining the Peoples Party of Canada (PPC) was shaped by my skepticism of vaccine mandates during the pandemic (although GPC did not mandate us to get vaccinated), my alignment with Maxime Bernier's support for non-vaccinated citizens was clear. After researching the PPC platform and engaging in discussions with informed individuals, a call from Bernier himself solidified my decision to represent the party in the next Federal election.

This awakening also comes when we see how even though Canada had launched the Hong Kong Pathway to attract young adults and young families from Hong Kong by offering open work permits and student visas, broadening their pathways to permanent residency. Many are now facing expiring visas and permits because of a backlog within Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). This leaves the permit holders unable to legally work or stay in Canada. Unemployment, denial of provincial healthcare coverage, and financial strain for affected families adding unnecessary stress. The average processing time for permanent residency applications has increased to 15 months, with only 80% of applicants expected to receive their status within this timeframe. This delay also disrupts life plans and creates frustrations.

In stark contrast to those who genuinely come to Canada to study and contribute, there are individuals who exploit our student visa system. Many of them are classified as "no-shows" at their designated colleges and universities, meaning they fail to attend the institutions they were supposed to be enrolled in. This blatant violation of their study permits undermines the integrity of our immigration system. Instead of pursuing education, many of these individuals are believed to be working in Canada, potentially with the intention of settling permanently through illegal means. Such actions not only breach the rules but also have far-reaching consequences for our society.

These overstays disrupt the social fabric of our communities, taking jobs that could otherwise go to local youth and exploiting the leniency of our justice system. The issues I've outlined here are merely the tip of the iceberg. Canada urgently needs

comprehensive reforms to address these challenges and ensure that the lives of Canadians are prioritized and improved.

This election is pivotal—it's not just another vote; it's a chance to redefine our nation's trajectory. For years, voters have adhered to the same patterns, casting their ballots without fully considering how much the world—and our country—has evolved. Many fail to recognize how drastically our national parties have changed over time. This election, however, offers a unique opportunity to break free from outdated habits and embrace a voting approach that truly aligns with Canadian values.

Our current electoral system often pushes voters toward “strategic voting,” which essentially means voting against what they don’t want rather than for what they truly believe in. When dissatisfaction with the Liberals arises, people turn to the Conservatives, and vice versa. This cyclical back-and-forth between the two major parties has done little to improve the country, instead makes things worse. Look at how our nation has gone in the last few decades; meaningful changes were out of reach.

If we continue down this path, how can we ever expect the transformative change we desire to materialize? As the saying goes, the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again while expecting different results. It's time to break the cycle, challenge the status quo, and vote for a future that reflects the values and aspirations of all Canadians.