



Richmond candidate attacked on WeChat for proposed 'Foreign Influence' legislation



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Kenny Chiu said as an elected official, his mission is to represent and protect his constituents' values and interests. | File Photo

A private member's bill introduced to the House of Commons last spring by Conservative candidate Kenny Chiu - who is running for re-election in Steveston-Richmond East - is being criticized among some within the Chinese-speaking community.

However, Chiu argues those critical are actually misrepresenting the facts.

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According to a summary of Chiu's Bill C-282, "This enactment enacts the Foreign Influence Registry Act, which imposes an obligation on individuals acting on behalf of a foreign principal to file a return when they undertake specific actions with respect to public office holders.

"It also provides for the establishment of a public registry in which all returns must be kept."

Chiu said the goal of the bill is to ensure elected officials are required to report situations where they are approached by agents, acting on behalf of a foreign regime, for the purpose of influencing Canadian government policy.

However, according to an "explanation" of the bill written in Mandarin and circulated on WeChat, the bill will have harmful repercussions for Canada's Chinese community.

"This bill is going to have extremely negative consequences for immigrants from mainland China. It will also harm economic, cultural and technological exchanges between Canada and China," reads the posting.

"Although the bill doesn't list which countries belong to the foreign forces, considering the soured relationship between Canada and China...(and Chiu's) anti-China background, undoubtedly this bill is targeting mainland Chinese associations and aims to control or monitor mainland Chinese speech and behaviours," the post continues.

These are false accusations, according to Chiu.

"I am afraid," Chiu noted, "this is telling us that there are people out there trying to exploit and manipulate certain members in the Chinese community who are quite isolated and don't have access to mainstream media. Their intent is to twist and present fake news by accusing Kenny Chiu of being anti-Chinese," which is really ridiculous, he added.

As a Canadian elected official, Chiu said his mission is to represent and protect his constituents' values and interests, especially when Canada is being pressured by foreign forces, such as Russia, Iran and China.

"I need to speak up as an elected official of the Canadian people. I have an obligation to uphold the Canadian core values of freedom, democracy and the rule

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of law," said Chiu.

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