

# Sikh Heritage Month – “Our Story is a Canadian Story”

## Challenge

Sukh Dhaliwal, Surrey-Newton’s Member of Parliament, authored and introduced [Bill C-376](#), an Act to Designate April as “Sikh Heritage Month.” It was the first time any country in the world outside of India formally recognized the Sikh diaspora in this manner. Our challenge was to gain maximum positive media exposure for this month of celebration and recognition.

## Process

Burrard was tasked with developing a narrative that would be compelling for Canadian families with immigrant backgrounds of any kind, and to the news outlets they would normally watch. We also wanted to make it easy for the “legacy media” to share our footage, and align with our narrative, to mitigate against any risk that this important story would not be covered properly due to unforeseen circumstances.

In the video we produced, “[Our Story is a Canadian Story](#),” we felt that it was important to remind Canadians about how deep the Sikh community’s roots are in Canada and to show how integral Sikhs are to our cultural mosaic

today. Using publicly available sources and archives from the National Film Board, we found footage from pioneering days and integrated this with our own footage to demonstrate how Sikh leaders can now be found in every sector of Canadian society, including law, business, medicine and politics. The story was narrated by a young, second-generation female Sikh journalist, comfortable in both Canadian and Punjabi culture, which helped to make it more relatable to young people from any background.

We also showed Mr. Dhaliwal in Parliament, explaining that the bill “seeks to recognize the significant contributions that Sikh Canadians have made to Canada’s social, economic, political and cultural fabric.” Prime Minister Trudeau’s formal apology in Parliament for the Komagata Maru incident was also featured. In 1914, a steamship with hundreds of Indian migrants on board (many of them Sikh) arrived at Vancouver’s Coal Harbour. Canada denied them entry, forcing them to sail to India, where they were met by hostile British soldiers, and many were jailed and killed as a result.

The video was circulated via a press release and shared on Mr. Dhaliwal’s social media channels. We amplified distribution further through a paid digital campaign.

The Bill received Royal Assent on April 30, 2019.

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#### Outcome



**Branding:** Created original graphics for Facebook and Instagram



**Narrative Development:** Compelling story for Canadian families with immigrant backgrounds that highlights contributions Sikhs have made to Canada throughout history



**Content Creation:** [Our Story is a Canadian Story](#) video



**Content Amplification:** 7 Custom Digital Audiences; 278,889 Digital Impressions; and 5 Digital Products



**Earned Media:** As seen in: Global News BC, IndoCanadianVoice.ca, The Straight, Times of India, Sikh Siyasat News

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