

From: Margot Francis ✓
Sent: June-27-19 11:24 AM
To: EGirt@hamiltonpolice.on.ca
Cc: KWeatherill@hamiltonpolice.on.ca; Morin, Lois; info@hamiltonpolice.on.ca; compliments@hamiltonpolice.on.ca
Subject: Letter to Chief Girt
Attachments: Letter to Hamilton HPS.doc

Please see attached letter to Chief Girt.

Margot Francis

Margot Francis, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Women's and Gender Studies/Sociology
Brock University
500 Glenridge Avenue
St. Catharines Ontario
L2S 3A1
Phone: 905-688-5550 ext. 5381

June 26, 2019

Commander-in-charge Chief Eric Girt
Hamilton Police Services
Hamilton, Ontario

Dear Chief Girt,

We write to you as private citizens who are considering purchasing a home in Hamilton. As the Commander of the Hamilton Police Services we are very concerned with your response to discriminatory speech and physical violence over the past year at City Hall and at Pride last weekend.

We had hoped that Hamilton was a progressive urban centre that reflects our values. However your actions are causing us to have second thoughts about re-locating to your community.

1. The City of Hamilton has tolerated weekly gatherings of racist and homophobic hate groups at City Hall for over a year with no effective oversight from HPS. These 'alt-right' gatherings have provided a space for groups like the Yellow Vests, Proud Boys, Soldiers of Odin, and Canadian Nationalist Party to build connections and plan further violent actions – most recently at Hamilton Pride. Indeed, the non-profit Canadian Anti-Hate Network has recently expressed concern about Hamilton becoming the “Front Line” of hate-group activity in Ontario.

If the City of Hamilton and HPS expects progressive young citizens to move to your community to bolster its economic and social fabric, the HPS must act to ensure that hatred will not be welcomed or supported in Hamilton.

2. You recently said if HPS had been invited to officially participate in Pride, the police would have responded more effectively to the protest. This is outrageous! It is the sworn duty of HPS to protect the Hamilton community. These comments indicate you endorse troubling and discriminatory attitudes towards the 2SLGBTQ+ community. You also fail to acknowledge the long history of police and state discrimination and harassment towards 2SLGBTQ+ communities which is now being repeated in the events of these past weeks.
3. The HPS has failed to arrest members of the hate groups who came to Pride to advocate and enact discrimination and violence. While hate group members are clearly identifiable on video violently attacking members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community, the HPS has instead chosen to lay charges of parole and probation violations against two queer and trans activists, one of whom was not even at Pride, but spoke out against police at City Hall last week. As prison is a very unsafe space for trans people we ask you to consider if there is any reason why this activist must remain there while awaiting a hearing with the Parole Board,

especially given the large number of very credible reports that they were not even present at Pride.

Retaliation by police against trans/queer activists – while hate group members who initiated the violence are left at large – also smacks of discriminatory policing.

4. We call on you to address the concerns raised earlier this year about the lack of diversity on the Hamilton Police Services Board. Incidents such as those detailed in this letter and raised by progressive protesters this week only confirm the importance of diversifying the HPSB.

If you believe hate groups have no place in the City of Hamilton, then act now. We urge you to:

- Work with City Hall to take immediate action to stop hate groups like the Yellow Vests, Proud Boys, Soldiers of Odin, and Canadian Nationalist Party from routinely congregating at City Hall.
- Ensure the HPS pursues members of hate groups who attacked the 2SLGBTQ+ community at Pride.
- Work with members of the 2SLGBTQ+ and Black, Indigenous, and racialized communities to redress the deepening tensions between these groups and police.

We hope that you would want to ensure that all citizens of Hamilton are protected from hate speech and violence in your community. We call on your to address the issues highlighted above to ensure that members of 2SLGBTQ+ communities, Indigenous and racialized people begin to believe that they matter to the Hamilton Police Services.

Respectfully,

Margot Francis, PhD
Associate Professor
Centre for Women's and Gender Studies/Sociology
Brock University, St. Catharines, ON

Tamara El-Hoss, PhD
Associate Professor
Modern Languages, Literatures &
Cultures
Brock University, St. Catharines