

Monday, October 30, 2023

Members of the Planning Committee at the City of Hamilton,

I am writing to express our full support for item 12.1 on your agenda, a motion by Councillor Maureen Wilson, to direct staff to report back on the feasibility of regulating the distribution and display of graphic images both in advertising spaces and through mail distribution.

The sight of graphic and gory depictions of fetuses can be disturbing to everyone. This imagery promotes misinformation about reproductive healthcare and seeks to shock and traumatize recipients. In a home mailbox, it could be found by children and young people whom parents do not want exposed to such harmful messages and images.

Whether received in public or at home, these images can be especially cruel to those who have exercised their right to have an abortion and those who have experienced pregnancy loss. Furthermore, the misinformation is designed to stop women from exercising their right to manage their health – despite the fact that access to abortion literally saves women's lives.

Actions taken to regulate distribution of these images in sealed envelopes, with a clear content warning and the name and address of the distributing organization can add accountability and allow residents to make informed choices about viewing graphic content, while protecting other vulnerable household members.

As an organization serving women, girls and gender-diverse people, we actively work to build and defend a world where all reproductive care and access to abortion is respected for every woman and pregnant person. The regulation of harmful images that challenge reproductive rights and endangers women is part of our work to build and defend gender equality.

Other municipalities in Ontario and across the Country have moved to regulate the distribution and visibility of this content, and we are grateful to see this action locally.

We ask that you vote in favour of this motion.

Thank you,

Medora Uppal

CEO, YWCA Hamilton