

Pilon, Janet

Subject: Charter Rights & Freedom of Speech

From: letter@easymail.arpacanada.ca <letter@easymail.arpacanada.ca>

Sent: February 29, 2024 2:26 PM

To: Office of the Mayor <Officeofthe.Mayor@hamilton.ca>

Cc: Ward 1 Office <ward1@hamilton.ca>; Ward 2 <ward2@hamilton.ca>; Office of Ward 3 City Councillor Nrinde Nann <ward3@hamilton.ca>; Ward 4 <ward4@hamilton.ca>; Francis, Matt <Matt.Francis@hamilton.ca>; Jackson, Tom <Tom.Jackson@hamilton.ca>; Pauls, Esther <Esther.Pauls@hamilton.ca>; Ward 8 Office <ward8@hamilton.ca>; Clark, Brad <Brad.Clark@hamilton.ca>; Beattie, Jeff <Jeff.Beattie@hamilton.ca>; Tadeson, Mark <Mark.Tadeson@hamilton.ca>; Ward 12 Office <ward12@hamilton.ca>; Ward 13 <ward13@hamilton.ca>; Spadafora, Mike <Mike.Spadafora@hamilton.ca>; McMeekin, Ted <Ted.McMeekin@hamilton.ca>

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Dear Hamilton City Council,

I am writing to you out of concern because I have become aware of a proposal in the City of Hamilton to enact restrictions on sharing a pro-life message in public.

Thank you for the work you do on the Hamilton City Council. I appreciate that you have an important role in safeguarding our freedoms as Canadians. I am asking you to continue to do so even on a contentious issue like abortion.

I am sure that you are well aware of your responsibility under the *Charter* to not unjustifiably infringe freedom of expression. That *Charter* guarantee is designed to promote conversations, even when they're challenging.

Canadian courts have made it abundantly clear that the *Charter* right to freedom of expression extends to all non-violent expressive activity that conveys meaning, even if it may be offensive or disturbing to some people, and even if the message is unpopular.

Why is the City of Hamilton targeting one particular group and one particular message for special restrictions? In a democracy, the government should not be stifling speech from one side of a debate on a contentious issue.

Many people are thankful to hear about the pro-life perspective and the local community support available in Hamilton, and it can be critical information for people who are trying to make a fully informed choice about a difficult pregnancy.

Many people are helped by hearing the pro-life message. While some people are offended by any expressed opposition to abortion, many people want to be fully informed and appreciate that photos of pre-born children are an important part of a challenging conversation.

Will you vote against any by-laws that target the pro-life movement and place restrictions on speech?

God Bless,

Fr. John Lemire