

Motion regarding Harassment of Elected Local Government Officials

Moved by: Councillor Shahid

Seconded by: Councillor Roy

That we recommend to Regional Council:

Whereas in recent years, there has been an alarming rise in incidents of harassment, intimidation and acts of violence aimed at elected local government officials, compounding the already strenuous work conditions faced by many local leaders and hindering their retention;

Whereas women, particularly Black and racialized women, are disproportionately targeted by violence and harassment toward elected officials;

Whereas increasing the number of elected women, Black and racialized, and 2SLGBTQIA+ representatives in Canada is a priority for local governments and the federal government;

Whereas severe abuse, both online and in-person, has the potential to discourage underrepresented groups from joining and remaining engaged in local politics, limiting the diversity of opinion needed in healthy democracies; and

Whereas all elected officials have an ability to show leadership on this issue by modeling behaviour, and should always strive to elevate debate, embrace differences of opinion, disagree respectfully and focus on issues of policy and substance;

Now therefore, be it resolved:

- A) That the Regional Municipality of Durham request that the federal government work with provinces, territories, and local governments, including through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, to identify and implement measures to protect elected local government officials, their family members, and staff – especially women, members of Black and racialized communities, and 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals, persons with disabilities, and Indigenous people – from harassment, intimidation, and threats, thereby reinforcing a unified front to safeguard democracy; and
- B) That the Region of Durham calls on all elected officials of all orders of government to lead by example, demonstrating civility and mutual respect for their political counterparts.