


Town of Whitby
575 Rossland Road East,
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whitby.ca



October 10, 2025

Via Email

Robin Jones
President
Association of Municipalities of Ontario
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	Corporate Services Department Legislative Services Division
Date & Time Received:	October 14, 2025 9:58 am
Original To:	CIP
Copies To:	
Take Appropriate Action	<input type="checkbox"/> File <input type="checkbox"/>
Notes/Comments:	

Re: Supporting a Healthy and Inclusive Democratic Environment

Please be advised that at its meeting held on October 6, 2025, the Council of the Town of Whitby adopted the following as Resolution # 181-25:

Whereas democracy is healthy when everyone is able to participate fully, safely, and without discrimination, contributing to the well-being of their community; and,

Whereas we are witnessing the dissolution of democratic discourse and respectful debate across all levels of government and in neighbouring jurisdictions; and,

Whereas Ontario's municipally elected officials are dealing with increasingly hostile, unsafe work environments facing threats, intimidation, and harassment, which undermine not only personal safety but also public confidence in democratic institutions; and,

Whereas social media platforms have amplified both legitimate criticism and, at times, abusive or threatening conduct, with disproportionate effects on women, racialized candidates, Indigenous peoples, LGBTQ+ persons, and persons with disabilities, discouraging them from seeking office; and,

Whereas freedom of expression is a cornerstone of democracy and must be safeguarded alongside efforts to combat unlawful harassment, discrimination, and violence; and,

Whereas better decisions are made when democracy is respectful and constructive and the voices of diverse genders, identities, ethnicities, races, sexual orientations, ages, and abilities are heard and represented around municipal council tables; and,


Whereas the Association of Municipalities of Ontario's Healthy Democracy Project has identified concerning trends with fewer people voting in local elections and running for municipal office; and,

Whereas initiatives such as the Elect Respect campaign www.electrespect.ca, developed by HER (Halton Elected Representatives), and the Canadian Association of Feminist Parliamentarians' Parliamentary Civility Pledge demonstrate a growing movement to foster safe, inclusive, and respectful environments for elected representatives;

Now Therefore Be It Resolved:

1. That Whitby Council supports the Elect Respect campaign and pledges to:
 - Uphold freedom of expression while rejecting unlawful harassment, threats, discrimination, and personal abuse;
 - Reject and call out harassment, abuse, and personal attacks;
 - Treat others with dignity and respect in all spaces, including public, private, and online;
 - Focus debate on policies and ideas, not personal attacks;
 - Help build a culture of safety, inclusion, and respect where people of all backgrounds feel safe and empowered to run for and hold office;
 - Call on relevant authorities to investigate and respond to threats or harassment targeting elected officials, consistent with the law; and,
 - Model integrity and accountability by holding one another to the highest, clear, and transparent and legally grounded standards of conduct.
2. That Whitby Council encourages elected officials, organizations, and community members to support the Elect Respect campaign and sign the pledge at www.electrespect.ca; and,
3. That a copy of this resolution be sent to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, Ontario's Big City Mayors, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Mayors and Regional Chairs of Ontario, Whitby's MP and MPP, the Region of Durham, the local municipalities in Durham, the Durham Regional Police Service, the Ontario Provincial Police, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Should you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact the Office of the Town Clerk at 905.430.4330.



Sr. Manager of Legislative Services/Deputy Clerk
clerk@whitby.ca

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