

Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario

Sent via email

May 17, 2023

SUBJECT: Legislative Amendments to Improve Municipal Codes of Conduct and Enforcement

Please be advised that at its meeting held Tuesday, May 16, 2023, the Council of the City of Burlington approved the following resolution:

Whereas all Ontarians deserve and expect a safe and respectful workplace; and

Whereas municipal governments, as the democratic institutions most directly engaged with Ontarians need respectful discourse; and

Whereas several incidents in recent years of disrespectful behaviour and workplace harassment have occurred amongst members of municipal councils; and

Whereas these incidents seriously and negatively affect the people involved and lower public perceptions of local governments; and

Whereas municipal Codes of Conduct are helpful tools to set expectations of council member behaviour; and

Whereas municipal governments do not have the necessary tools to adequately enforce compliance with municipal Codes of Conduct; and

Whereas Burlington City Council support the efforts of MPP Stephen Blais who has introduced the Private Members Bill 5, Stopping Harassment and Abuse by Local Leaders Act, 2022 which has been endorsed by a number of municipal councils across Ontario, as well as Ontario's Big City Mayors caucus (OBCM), comprised of the 29 largest municipalities across Ontario representing nearly 70% of Ontario's population; and

Whereas a fundamental, underlying principle of broadening diversity, equity, and inclusion in politics rests on the assumption that the workplace is safe; and

Whereas we believe that municipal elected officials should be held to account in this way, we also believe that federal and provincial elected officials should take similar actions to hold themselves to account.

Therefore, be it resolved that:

Burlington City Council supports the call of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and OBCM for the Government of Ontario to introduce legislation to strengthen municipal Codes of Conduct and compliance with them in consultation with municipal governments or in the alternative, Burlington City Council supports the province ordering Bill 5 for second reading to expedite this matter; and

That, the legislation encompasses the Association of Municipalities of Ontario's recommendations for:

1. Updating municipal Codes of Conduct to account for workplace safety and harassment,
2. Creating a flexible administrative penalty regime, adapted to the local economic and financial circumstances of municipalities across Ontario,
3. Increasing training of municipal Integrity Commissioners to enhance consistency of investigations and recommendations across the province,
4. Allowing municipalities to apply to a member of the judiciary to remove a sitting member if recommended through the report of a municipal Integrity Commissioner, and
5. Prohibit a member so removed from sitting for election in the term of removal and the subsequent term of office, and
6. The Province of Ontario considers creating a single Code of Conduct applicable to all Municipalities, that can be amplified with additional content; and

That, Burlington City Council requests that municipalities and their respective Integrity Commissioners be consulted on the development of any regulations related to the proposed legislation; and

That, this motion be circulated to the Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, the Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario, the Honourable David Lametti, Minister of Justice, the Honourable Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Kate Manson-Smith, Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Scott Pierce, Federation of Canadian Municipalities Acting President, Colin Best, President of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and the Honourable Parm Gill Minister of Red Tape Reduction; Natalie Pierre, MPP Burlington, and Effie Triantafilopoulos, MPP Oakville North-Burlington, Halton Region and the Ontario's Big City Mayors.

If you have any questions, please contact me at extension 7702 or the e-mail address above.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kevin Arjoon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kevin" and last name "Arjoon" clearly distinguishable.

Kevin Arjoon
City Clerk

Copy:

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, the Honourable David Lametti, Minister of Justice, the Honourable Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Kate Manson-Smith, Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Scott Pierce, Federation of Canadian Municipalities Acting President, Colin Best, President of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and the Honourable Parm Gill Minister of Red Tape Reduction; Natalie Pierre, MPP Burlington, and Effie Triantafilopoulos, MPP Oakville North-Burlington, Halton Region and the Ontario's Big City Mayors