

To: Corporate Services Committee

From: Councillor Redekop

Subject: Motion – Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and the Damaging Impacts of Hate and Intolerance

WHEREAS respect for the views and opinions of others is a hallmark of civil discourse in our society;

WHEREAS freedom of expression is a fundamental value of a free and democratic society;

WHEREAS speech that threatens violence, intimidates, abuses or bullies is not and should not be protected as free expression;

WHEREAS there have been many recent instances of violence, threats of violence, intimidation, abuse, and bullying by some individuals in the Niagara region against others for a variety of reasons other than legitimate differences of political views or opinions;

WHEREAS some elected officials in Niagara have been the subject of violent attacks, online harassment, and physical intimidation over the past several months;

WHEREAS Regional Council approved on February 17, 2022, a Resolution at the Corporate Services Committee that condemned those acts of violence, harassment, and intimidation against members of Regional Council and local area municipal councils, all public servants, and all health care providers;

WHEREAS elected officials are obligated to adhere to the provisions of codes of conduct that regulate their behaviour when serving the public; and

WHEREAS there is no excuse for bad behaviour by any individual against another.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That Regional Council **AFFIRMS** that equity, diversity, and inclusion are core values that it supports and will continue to promote;
2. That the Niagara Regional Police Service **BE REQUESTED** to take a more assertive approach to responding to complaints of threats of violence, intimidation, and bullying of elected officials in Niagara;

3. That staff **BE DIRECTED** to investigate the following and provide a report to the Corporate Services Committee as soon as reasonably practical:

- a) Creation of a program to educate the public on the benefits of equity, diversity and inclusion and conversely the damaging impacts of hate and intolerance;
- b) Whether Council should consider the creation of a residents or citizens code of conduct to guide individuals engaging elected officials or attending meetings of Regional Council and its Committees and various advisory committees;
- c) Any further information, data or recommendations that Council should consider to alleviate incidents of hate and intolerance in Niagara;

4. That the Provincial Government **BE REQUESTED** to develop legislation and/or policies to protect elected officials from violence, threats of violence, intimidation, abuse, and bullying by other individuals; and

5. That a copy of this Resolution **BE SENT** to the Premier of Ontario, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, all municipalities in Niagara, all Niagara MPPs and MPs, and the Chief of the Niagara Regional Police Service for consideration and support.