

“ELECT RESPECT” CAMPAIGN

WHEREAS democracy is healthy when everyone is able to participate fully and safely and contribute to the well-being of their community;

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

WHEREAS Ontario’s municipally elected officials are dealing with increasingly hostile, unsafe work environments facing threats and harassment;

WHEREAS social medial platforms have exacerbated disrespectful dialogue, negative commentary, and toxic engagement which disincentivizes individuals, especially women and candidates from diverse backgrounds from running for office;

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

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;

WHEREAS in 2024, female elected representatives from across Halton formed a group called H.E.R. (Halton Elected Representatives) which pledged to speak out against harassment and negativity in politics and call on elected officials to uphold the highest standards of conduct;

WHEREAS H.E.R. has launched a campaign called “Elect Respect” to promote the importance of a healthy democracy and safe, inclusive, respectful work environments for all elected officials that encourages individuals to participate in the political process; and

WHEREAS on June 5, 2025 the Canadian Association of Feminist Parliamentarians launched a non-partisan ‘Parliamentary Civility Pledge’ to encourage all parliamentarians to commit to end workplace harassment and increase civility on Parliament Hill, modelled after the pledge developed in Halton by representatives of H.E.R.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That Niagara Regional Council **SUPPORTS** the 'Elect Respect' pledge and commits to:
 - a) Treat others with respect in all spaces; public, private, and online,
 - b) Reject and call out harassment, abuse and personal attacks,
 - c) Focus debate on ideas and policies, not personal attacks,
 - d) Help build a supportive culture where people of all backgrounds feel safe to run for and hold office,
 - e) Call on relevant authorities to ensure the protection of elected officials who face abuse or threats, and
 - f) Model integrity and respect by holding one another to the highest standards of conduct.
2. That Niagara Regional Council **CALLS** on elected officials, organizations, and community members to support the 'Elect Respect' campaign and sign the online 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, Niagara's MPs and MPPs, Niagara Regional Police, the Ontario Provincial Police and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.