

Statement of Support for City Pride Funding From Planned Parenthood Toronto

Pride Toronto is more than a parade, more than a gathering of LGBTQ people. It's more than a fun summer event, more than an economic boon, a collection of sponsorship opportunities, or tourism magnet.

Pride Toronto is a statement; it is a statement first that Toronto's LGBTQ population is strong, resilient, vibrant and, yes, proud.

Pride's success through the years is a statement that Toronto has an LGBTQ population that is vibrant and valuable; a statement that Toronto, unlike a chillingly large number of places, does not attempt to hide this population away or quiet them down, but rather welcomes their important contributions and is eager to celebrate their spirit while they declare loudly the pride to be found in their long-marginalized identities. It is a statement that even those in the city that don't identify similarly will nevertheless support this celebration, join in, and come to laugh, learn, and share in the struggles for understanding and acceptance that still are ongoing. It is a statement of much-needed support.

Choosing to deny funding to such a statement is a mistake. Pride is not just a parade, not just a gathering, not just a fun event, not just a cultural engine, not just an economic boon or tourism magnet – but it also is all of those things. Its draw has never been that it is free from controversy. At one point Pride meant pure protest, against the forces that would ask (or force) this population to hide away and deny their identities. It has grown into a celebration of art, joy, diversity and understanding, and continues to shift and change, as any living thing must. It will continue to do so with or without funding, but the spiteful denial of resources and opportunity to this important event on unwarranted grounds is itself a statement – one that carries whispers from the past, and one that is below the dignity of our great City.



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