

May 18th 2018

Mayor John Tory
City Hall, 100 Queen St W,
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Mayor John Tory

We are writing for your support to **vote YES** on the proposals concerning Staff Report LS25.2 and its impact on the proposed elimination of the exception for Fraternities and Sororities under Chapter 285 (aka The Rooming House Act).

Regulation of housing for fraternities and sororities is vital for a number of reasons. As you are aware from 2013 until March this year, the city received more than 160 complaints related to 15 of the 19 fraternity and sorority houses in Ward 20, the report notes.¹ Fraternities have indicated they follow internal protocols including an annual visit by their International Chapter. However, they are not governed by regulations. Best practices around housing regulations for fraternities and sorority housing include advisors who have gone through criminal record checks including monthly visits and meetings about programming, including explicit support from university student life.² One annual visit is not sufficient given the scope of complaints and lack of regulation of these housing units that is why we support the new annual reporting requirements for fraternity and sorority houses proposed by the City of Toronto.

As anti-gender based violence organization we urge you to contextualize regulations of fraternity and sorority houses as they relate to sexual and gender based violence. Statistics show that more than 80 percent of rapes that occur on college and university campuses are committed by someone known to the victim³. In addition numerous studies have found that men who join fraternities are three times more likely to rape, that women in sororities are 74% more likely to experience rape than other college women, and that one in five women will be sexually assaulted in four years away at school.⁴

636,000 sexual assaults occur every year in Canada, the highest group that is targeted is young women between that ages of 16 - 24. We also know that most people do not report sexual violence especially if there is external pressure to stay silent. Our concern is that too often fraternities and sororities have a culture of initiation and partying that is highly confidential. When sexual violence occurs in those spaces, there is an added pressure to not speak out.

The epidemic of campus sexual violence extends beyond the geographical location of the university. On numerous occasions during orientation week, fraternities have solicited students on our campus and others to attend parties that have resulted in allegations of sexual assault.⁵ If the city continues to support the lack of regulations of housing for fraternities and sororities, we are failing to address sexual violence that occurs within these spaces.

¹ Review of Fraternity and Sorority Houses Exemption to Chapter 285, Rooming Houses
<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2018/ls/bgrd/backgroundfile-114429.pdf>

² Foubert, John D., et al. "Behavior Differences Seven Months Later: Effects of a Rape Prevention Program." *NASPA Journal*, vol. 44, no. 4, 2008, doi:10.2202/0027-6014.1866

³ "Canadian Federation of Students ." *Sexual Violence on Campus*, [cfsontario.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Factsheet-SexualAssault.pdf](https://www.cfsontario.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Factsheet-SexualAssault.pdf).

⁴ Foubert, John D., et al. "Behavior Differences Seven Months Later: Effects of a Rape Prevention Program." *NASPA Journal*, vol. 44, no. 4, 2008, doi:10.2202/0027-6014.1866

⁵ <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/city-frat-regulations-1.4647465>

Vote YES on the proposals concerning Staff Report LS25.2 and its impact on the proposed elimination of the exception for Fraternities and Sororities under Chapter 285 (aka The Rooming House Act). For Toronto to thrive, we need safety for all, The Rooming House Act is one tool to get us there.

Sincerely,

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cc'd Toronto City Council

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