



Dear Mayor John Tory,

LS25.2.13

I am submitting a letter requesting that you vote NO to item LS25.2.

Thank you for your consideration,

Lucrezia Spagnolo

Founder & CEO

Vesta Social Innovation Technologies, Inc



May 22nd 2018
Mayor John Tory
City Hall, 100 Queen St W,
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Mayor John Tory,

I am writing for your support to vote NO on the proposals concerning LS25.2 and its impact on the proposed elimination of the exception for Fraternities and Sororities under Chapter 285 (aka The Rooming House Act). This issue was brought to my attention when an erroneous correlation was made between licensing and reduced incidents of sexual assault on college and university campuses.

I am the Founder and CEO of Vesta Social Innovation Technologies. Vesta SIT is a social enterprise building an end to end platform that breaks down the barriers to reporting and investigating sexual harassment and sexual assault complaints. In order to get a holistic view of the challenges faced by both survivors and the members of criminal justice system, I have spent the last 18 months interviewing survivors, social workers, victim services, law enforcement, crown prosecutors, judges, clinical psychiatrists, social epidemiologists, among others. All offered insights, possible contributing factors and offered expert opinions on possible solutions, yet none suggested the licensing of sororities and fraternities as one of the possible solutions.

The Rooming House Act states that licensed rooming houses are inspected annually for fire, safety and property standards violations. It does not address the complexity surrounding the issue of sexual assault.

The provincial government's plan to address sexual assault, *It's Never Okay: An Action Plan to Stop Sexual Violence and Harassment*, outlines concrete actions to help change attitudes, provide more support for survivors and make workplaces and campuses safer and more responsive to complaints of sexual violence and harassment. It also addresses housing, and provides survivors of domestic violence with priority access to social housing over regular chronological applicants. Various stakeholders were consulted and when campus safety and when housing were discussed, the licensing of fraternities and sororities was not one of the recommendations made and as such, is not part of the multi-year action plan.

Sexual assault is a complex issue with many variables, and while it seems convenient to point to the licensing of fraternities and sororities on campuses as a quick fix, it is not. We all want to reduce incidences of sexual assault, but doing so requires a coordinated response with community involvement.

Reducing the incidences of sexual assault in the city is something everyone wants and as a survivor of sexual assault, as an alumna of a women's fraternity, and as a social entrepreneur I believe in building bridges, not point fingers. When it happened to me, I turned to my sorority sisters. They were my first point of disclosure and my support system. When voting on this issue, I urge you and Council to consider that politicizing sexual assault does more harm than good. This vote is not about sexual assault; let's not confuse the issue and what is being voted on.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Lucrezia Spagnolo
Founder & CEO
Vesta Social Innovation Technologies, Inc

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