



United Way
Toronto

MM52.8.11

Susan McIsaac
President and Chief Executive Officer

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

All Members of Toronto City Council
Via City Clerk's Office
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West, Suite C51
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Re: City Council Meeting Item MM52.8 - Requirement to Register with the Lobbyist Registrar's Office

Dear Councillor,

I am writing to caution City Council in moving forward with this proposed motion that would end the exemption for all non-profit organizations, unions and all community organizations from the requirement to register with the Lobbyist Registrar. The motion would also add a new element by including grass roots organizations to this category.

As part of Toronto's vibrant community sector, United Way Toronto is proud to be a partner with the City in a number of important areas: investing in programs and services that ensure everyone in our city has an opportunity to succeed, investing in youth success, supporting newcomers, revitalizing tower communities and advancing economic opportunities for all our residents. These are a few of the many ways United Way Toronto works with the City of Toronto on behalf of residents.

In all these partnerships—and throughout every facet of our work—United Way Toronto strives to maximize our impact along with our commitment to being effective, transparent and accountable to our community.

In the case of this proposed motion, however, we believe that careful consideration is required on a number of significant issues in order to avoid unintended consequences related to the community sector's partnerships with the City. A previous motion similar to this one was considered by the City and the sector and was rejected. At the time, there were doubts as to whether such a process would capture what it was intended to track. Questions were also raised about the efficiency, expense and, ultimately, workability of such a process.

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These issues again deserve due deliberation. Consider, for example, that the current proposal would require all non-profits and grass roots organizations to register every communication with the City on "issues other than their own funding process." Given the vast range of partnerships and relationships between the sector and the City, it would be important to understand what the repercussions would be of such a move:

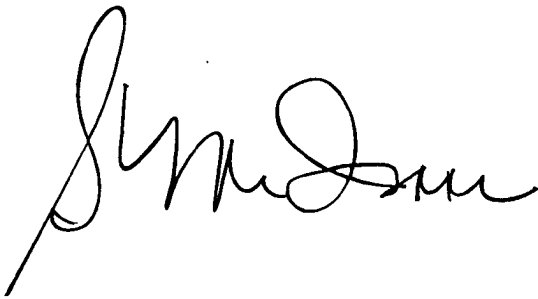
- Would the City be collecting appropriate and useful information for its intended purposes?
- What would be the impact on the sector's civic and strategic engagement with the City, and on resident leadership?
- What would be the resource considerations for the City and the sector?
- And, importantly, if this motion were to carry, would United Way Toronto and the City be able to continue to build on the work we have been doing while this exemption has remained in place?

We believe that it would be in everyone's best interests to fully understand the repercussions of this decision. Therefore we echo the concerns that have been raised by many community sector leaders and urge you to give thorough consideration to the civic and financial implications of such a decision on the effective operation of the community sector in Toronto, and beyond. As such, we request that this matter be referred to Executive Committee in order that there can be some opportunity to properly consider this proposal.

As always, we look forward to working with City Council, the Lobbyist Registrar, as well as all City staff to ensure the highest degree of effectiveness, impact, transparency and accountability throughout all our joint activities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan McIsaac". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left.

Susan McIsaac

Cc: Members of Toronto City Council