



Re: CC30.5 - Proposed By-law Amendment to Provide Access to Social Infrastructure

To Mayor Olivia Chow and Councillors,

We are writing you today as trade union organizations representing hundreds of thousands of workers living and working in Toronto. At its May 21st meeting, Toronto City Council will be considering a by-law which would place restrictions on our Charter rights to free speech and free assembly in the city. We oppose any restrictions or infringements on the Charter rights won by working people through generations of struggle.

We believe it is no coincidence that this proposed by-law comes after a high water mark for trade union activity in 2023 and 2024. Responding to a cost-of-living crisis that has gripped working people across the country, and seeing their real-wages and living standards decline, workers struck back - and won important gains. Restrictions to our right to demonstrate, picket, and strike is a direct attack on these gains and the gains made by working people in Toronto over decades.

While some say these restrictions would not apply to peaceful, lawful protests, including picket lines held by the labour movement, the by-law's loudest proponents on Council have been clear: they believe unions should be targeted by these types of by-laws. In February, Councillor James Pasternak attacked healthcare workers, lauded as heroes during the pandemic, for taking to the streets to bargain for better wages and working conditions. He said he believed demonstrations like these should be restricted in Toronto. Comments like these from Councillor Pasternak make it clear: it is a direct threat to our unions and our members.

Right now, our basic rights and our sovereignty are also under threat from U.S. President Trump. Trump is restricting protests in the US, because he understands that restricting and limiting these rights will allow him to more easily undermine democracy everywhere – these rights stand as a bulwark against the corporate agenda that Trump and his Canadian counterparts push. To fight back against U.S. aggression and protect our democracy, City Council should be doing everything it can to defend and strengthen our rights, not restrict and weaken them.

Rights to free speech and free assembly are central components of our democracy, and their use is a reflection of its vibrancy and health - they are precious, fragile things which must be defended, especially at times like these. We call on City Council to defend the rights of working people and reject this anti-democratic and anti-worker by-law.

We the undersigned,

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| • AMAPCEO | • IUPAT Local 1891 | • SMWIA Local 30 |
| • ATU Canada | • LiUNA Local 3000 | • Society of United Professionals |
| • ATU 113 | • Ontario Federation of Labour | • USW Toronto Area Council |
| • COPE Ontario | • OPSEU Region 5 | • Toronto Public Library Workers 4948 |
| • CUPE 1734 | • OPSEU Local 562 | • Toronto & York Region Labour Council |
| • CUPE 79 | • OPSEU CAAT-A | • UFCW 1006A |
| • Elementary Teachers of Toronto | • OSSTF Toronto Teachers | • UNITE HERE Local 75 |
| • IATSE Local 58 | • PSAC Ontario Region | |
| • IBEW 353 | • SEIU Local 2 | |

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