

councilmeeting

From: willowdale4palestine <willowdale4palestine@proton.me>
Sent: May 20, 2025 11:51 PM
Subject: [External Sender] Opposing Bylaw Amendment 2025.CC30.5 – Upholding the Right to Protest

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Good evening,

We are *Willowdale for Palestine*, a collective of concerned Willowdale residents who have come together to uphold the human rights of Palestinians in Gaza, the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and within Israel. We are equally committed to defending our own Charter rights to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression here in Toronto.

We are writing to express our strong opposition to the proposed Bylaw Amendment to Provide Access to Social Infrastructure (2025.CC30.5).

This bylaw would have a chilling effect on democratic participation and the cultural fabric of our city. Protest has long been a crucial tool for advancing justice and accountability, and this amendment would place those exercising their rights at increased risk of criminalization simply for speaking out.

We have already seen the harm caused by the discriminatory and disproportionate policing of protests in Toronto. The \$20 million spent by the Toronto Police Service in response to protests since October 2023 is an irresponsible use of public funds—especially as vital city services remain underfunded. Even TPS has reportedly not requested this bylaw, raising further concerns about its necessity.

Protesters—including those of us speaking out against Canada's complicity in the unfolding genocide in Gaza—should not face the threat of \$100,000 fines or criminal charges for exercising their constitutionally protected rights.

We are deeply alarmed by the authoritarian turn we're witnessing in other countries, such as the United States, where people are being punished for expressing dissenting views. Toronto must not follow this dangerous path. Instead, our city should safeguard civil liberties and protect democratic engagement.

We call on you to reject this proposed bylaw. Instead of attempting to silence dissent, we urge you to recognize the legitimate reasons people are protesting. We ask that you:

- Take meaningful steps to uphold human rights
- And affirm your commitment to protecting freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

A protest bylaw will not enhance public safety. It will only shield those in power from accountability and deepen public mistrust. We urge you to do the right thing: respect our rights, listen to our voices, and stand for justice.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to having a respectful and productive dialogue with your office. You can reach us using this email address.

Sincerely,
Willowdale for Palestine

Sent with [Proton Mail](#) secure email.