

NOTICE OF MOTION

Supporting the *Elect Respect* Campaign and Pledge

Moved by: Councillor Rachel Chernos Lin

Seconded by: Councillor Amber Morley

SUMMARY:

The *Elect Respect* campaign was started by Halton Elected Representatives (HER) to advocate for civility and combat the harassment and abuse undermining our democracy. The campaign promotes a culture where everyone – candidates, elected officials, and the public – can participate in democracy free from fear or intimidation. The Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)’s Healthy Democracy Project has identified concerning trends with fewer people voting in local elections and running for municipal office.

The Elect Respect Pledge is available for elected officials and members of the public to sign online at www.electrespect.ca and commits to:

- Treating others with respect in all spaces—public, private, and online;
- Reject, and call out, harassment, abuse, and personal attacks;
- Focus debate on ideas and policies, and not on personal attacks;
- Help build a supportive culture where people of all backgrounds feel safe to run for and hold office;
- Call on relevant authorities to ensure the protection of elected officials who face abuse or threats; and
- Model integrity and respect by holding one another to the highest standards of conduct.

Democracy works when everyone can participate safely and contribute to the well-being of their community. We are witnessing the dissolution of democratic discourse and respectful debate across all levels of government and in neighbouring jurisdictions. Ontario’s municipally-elected officials are dealing with increasingly hostile, unsafe work environments, facing threats and harassment. Social media platforms have exacerbated disrespectful dialogue and negativity which disincentivizes individuals, especially women and candidates from diverse backgrounds, from running for office. Better decisions are made when democracy is respectful and all voices are represented.

In June, 2025, parliamentarians from both the Canadian Senate and House of Commons launched a non-partisan “Parliamentary Civility Pledge” encouraging all parliamentarians to commit to end workplace harassment and increase civility on Parliament Hill, modelled after the pledge developed by representatives of HER.

A growing number of municipalities and organizations in Ontario have passed motions in support of the *Elect Respect* campaign, including Halton Region, the Town of Grimsby, the City of St. Catharines, the Township of West Lincoln, Clarington, the Town of Fort Frances, the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus, the Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus, and Ontario's Big City Mayors. AMO has showcased the campaign and is developing its own Civility & Anti-Harassment Strategy based on research. As Canada's biggest city, Toronto's endorsement of the *Elect Respect* pledge will amplify the reach of this important initiative.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. City Council endorse the *Elect Respect* pledge and express its support for the campaign.
2. City Council forward this item to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, Ontario's Big City Mayors, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and FCM Big City Mayors' Caucus, the Premier of Ontario and Opposition party leaders in the Ontario Legislature, the Prime Minister of Canada and Opposition party leaders in the House of Commons, all MPs and MPPs representing seats in the City of Toronto, and the Toronto Police Service and Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

October 8-10, 2025