



Motion Memorandum

To: Council

From: Mayor Marianne Meed Ward

Seconded by (for Council only): Councillor Angelo Bentivegna

Date to Committee: N/A

Date to Council: July 15, 2025

CIP date: N/A

Motion for Council to Consider:

Whereas democracy is healthy when everyone is able to participate fully and safely and contribute to the well-being of their community; and

Whereas we are witnessing the disintegration of democratic discourse and respectful debate across all levels of government; and

Whereas Ontario's municipally elected officials are dealing with increasingly hostile, unsafe work environments facing threats and harassment; and

Whereas social media platforms have exacerbated disrespectful dialogue, negative commentary, and toxic engagement which disincentivizes individuals, especially women and candidates from diverse backgrounds, from running for office; and

Whereas in 2024, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) endorsed the resolution, "Harassment of Elected Officials" at the FCM conference highlighting the rising harassment and abuse faced by elected officials, impacting their ability to serve their communities; and

Whereas better decisions are made when democracy is respectful and constructive and the voices of diverse genders, identities, ethnicities, races, sexual orientation, ages and abilities are heard and represented around municipal council tables; and

Whereas the Association of Municipalities of Ontario's (AMO) Healthy Democracy Project has identified concerning trends with fewer people voting in local elections and running for municipal office; and

Whereas in 2024, female elected representatives from across Halton formed a group called HER (Halton Elected Representatives) which pledged to speak out against

harassment and negativity in politics and called on elected officials to uphold the highest standards of conduct; and

Whereas the HER group has launched a campaign called Elect Respect to promote the importance of healthy democracy and safe, inclusive, respectful work environments for all elected officials that encourages all individuals to participate in the political process; and

Whereas on June 5, 2025, the Canadian Association of Feminist Parliamentarians launched a non-partisan Parliamentary Civility Pledge to encourage all parliamentarians to commit to end workplace harassment and increase civility on Parliament Hill, modelled after the pledge developed in Halton by representatives of HER; and

Whereas Halton Regional Council passed this resolution unanimously on Wednesday, June 18, 2025.

Now Therefore it be Hereby Resolved:

1. That Burlington Council support the pledge and Elect Respect campaign developed by HER officials in Halton and commits to:
 - Treat 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, not personal attacks;
 - Help build a supportive culture where people of all backgrounds feel safe to run for and hold office;
 - Call on relevant authorities for the protection of elected officials who face abuse or threats; and
 2. That Burlington Council call on elected officials and community members to support the Elect Respect campaign and sign the online pledge at www.electrespect.ca; and
 3. That Burlington Council call on FCM and AMO to support the online pledge and the Elect Respect campaign; and
 4. That the City Clerk send a copy of this resolution to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, Ontario's Big City Mayors, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Halton's MPs and MPPs, Halton's Local Municipalities, Halton Regional Police, the Ontario Provincial Police and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.
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Strategic Alignment

- ☐ Designing and delivering complete communities
- ☒ Providing the best services and experiences
- ☐ Protecting and improving the natural environment and taking action on climate change
- ☐ Driving organizational performance

Approved as per form by the City Clerk