

**From:** [Assunta Ferrante](#)  
**To:** [Adelina Bellisario](#)  
**Subject:** FW: [External] Opposition to Item 23 - Proposed By-Law to Restrict Protest  
**Date:** June-18-24 2:25:05 PM  
**Attachments:** [IJV Call to Oppose Vaughan's Protest Ban.pdf](#)

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**From:** Clerks@vaughan.ca <Clerks@vaughan.ca>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 18, 2024 10:10 AM  
**To:** Assunta Ferrante <Assunta.Ferrante@vaughan.ca>  
**Subject:** FW: [External] Opposition to Item 23 - Proposed By-Law to Restrict Protest

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**From:** Louise Smith [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 18, 2024 10:08 AM  
**To:** [Clerks@vaughan.ca](mailto:Clerks@vaughan.ca)  
**Subject:** [External] Opposition to Item 23 - Proposed By-Law to Restrict Protest

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June 17, 2024

To Mayor Del Duca and Vaughan City Councillors,

Independent Jewish Voices' York Region chapter represents progressive Jewish community members in Vaughan and across York Region.

We believe we all must fight all forms of hate and racism together. We believe that the role of government is to facilitate dialogue and collaboration – not to encourage suspicion, suppression and division.

We have serious concerns with the proposed “By-law to prohibit Nuisance Demonstrations” within one hundred meters of “Vulnerable Social Infrastructure”.

This protest ban effectively pits community members against each other by allowing arbitrary decisions to be made about who should have the right to protest, when and where.

There has not been an opportunity for public consultation on this proposal. However, with only a few days' notice that this by-law would be on the June 21 agenda, nearly 100 people sent the Independent Jewish Voices email to Vaughan Councillors and the Mayor to express their concerns.

This draconian by-law would allow vague, subjective decisions about whether a legal, peaceful protest could make a person feel intimidated. If it's decided that it could, protestors can be fined up to \$100,000. This is a very dangerous response to the rights of all Canadians to exercise their legal rights to peacefully protest.

The Canadian Civil Liberties Association notes: "If we allow too many restrictions on the fundamental right to protest, we silence the voices of many in our society, particularly those who may have limited other means for making their views known. It's worth remembering that protests are intended to cause disruption and this is protected activity in a democracy. Strong protections for the right to protest are essential to meaningful and informed political debate and discussion."

The Vaughan staff report on the proposed by-law provides examples of alleged hate crimes (not all investigations have been completed). NOT ONE of the examples cited would have in any way been prevented by the proposed bylaw (arson, bomb threats, vandalism, shooting at buildings).

The by-law proposal came after protests in Thornhill last March outside synagogues. The location of the protests was not because the building was a synagogue but because of the event being hosted inside. Protestors were calling attention to land that was being sold at real estate events hosted inside synagogue buildings. The land being sold is disputed territory/land that is internationally recognized as being illegally occupied. For many of the protesters, this was their familial land that was being sold and understandably this led to their protest.

Other buildings in Vaughan chose not to host the land sale precisely because it was a divisive event.

The proposed by-law is a performative political response to demands of Israel lobby groups and their supporters who want Vaughan City Council to prioritize the interests of pro-Israel constituents by curbing the rights to freedom of expression by those in solidarity with Palestine.

People have claimed that cultural and political symbols of Palestine make them feel unsafe. But when people are peacefully protesting that their Palestinian families are being starved by Israel and bombed by weapons that in many cases Canada exports, or that the land their families were evicted from are being sold at real estate shows, should they be restricted from protest because their keffiyehs, the scarves they wear, or the Palestinian flags they hold, make supporters of Israel feel unsafe?

While the by-law was proposed in response to Israel-Palestine issues, once it is in place, it can be used to suppress any protest that any community, business, politician, or interest group claims makes them feel unsafe. The by-law specifically states that the benchmark does not have to be at the level of inciting hatred, violence, intolerance or discrimination. This leaves a lot of room for misuse. Surely, if an essential Charter right is going to be restricted, there should be a higher bar.

If you value the democratic and Charter protected right to protest, you must vote against this by-law.

Thank you,  
Independent Jewish Voices