

Unity & Inclusion[®] TORONTO

March 15, 2017

Dear Friends and Allies,

Since 1981, and indeed well before, instrumental members of the LGBTQ2S* community have been pushing for equality, including founding member of what has now evolved into Toronto Pride, Ron Forster. For that hard work, bravery and effort, our community should be commended.

Unfortunately, as you may be aware, Los Angeles recently cancelled their Pride Parade, replacing it with a Protest March. In Canada, we have seen a similar pattern in 2016 when the Toronto Pride Parade was halted when the organization “Black Lives Matter” held a sit-in, providing a list of demands that included banning police from future parades and involvement in the festival before letting the parade continue.

All Canadians share fundamental freedoms under section 2 of the Charter of Rights: the freedom of conscience and religion, the freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including the freedom of the press and other media, the freedom of peaceful assembly, and the freedom of association. The Guarantee of Rights and Freedoms offers significant guidance to balance these, subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.

Pride Toronto indicates their mission, vision, and values are those of inclusion and that are meant to be welcoming and uniting of everyone. Banning the Police is contrary to these values, and it remains our belief that Pride Toronto’s decision to accept the demands of Black Lives Matter is not acceptable. We support an approach of forgiveness as a first step in healing, rather than divisive exclusionary tactics.

Recently, Ron joined in an interview with CP24 to share his support on this. [CLICK HERE TO WATCH.](#)



It is also our belief that the Toronto Police are not blameless, and accordingly we intend to call on Toronto Police Chief, Mark Saunders to undertake a formal review, similar to the Truth & Reconciliation Commission that was undertaken by the Government of Canada, in order to assist with the healing that is necessary for many in our community. But healing doesn’t start with exclusion, so it is vital that we never allow votes to approve exclusion in order to move forward the agenda of any group.



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Supporting Pride Toronto following their decision on this matter at their January 17, 2017 AGM shows the community that exclusion is an acceptable practice and has created a strong erosion of the trust between the organization and community members, activists and allies who have worked hard to build over the years. As such, Unity & Inclusion Toronto is in the process of organizing a parade that is inclusive of all individuals and law-abiding, supportive organizations. We are working hard to organize the necessary infrastructure for a parade inclusive of everyone, including law enforcement. **SO HOW CAN YOU HELP?**

FIRST, five Applicants have filed Complaints with the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario for discrimination against the Toronto Police by Pride Toronto, which we are sure you understand raises complex questions which require specific legal opinions. As well, although we are not organizing an entire festival, organizing a parade also has financial costs including permits, applications and other printing and general expenses.

As such, we have opened an account with RBC, which requires two signatures for all expenses and for which there will no financial gain for any individual. Once the police and law enforcement are welcomed by Pride Toronto, any remaining funds will be donated to them. Until then, donations can be made by email money transfer to unityandinclusion@outlook.com or at any RBC branch using the account details below. Note, as we exist only to resolve the police matter, we are not a charity and can't issue tax receipts.

SECOND, we are asking for your assistance by adding your name to the over 8,000 signatures which have been collected on a petition presented to the Mayor of Toronto, the Premier of Ontario and the Prime and which will ultimately be presented to Pride Toronto.

[You can add your signature to the petition by CLICKING HERE.](#)

Thank you for your time and assistance on this important issue. We are grateful for your support and thank you for sharing this letter to those who you know who support us on our goal. Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at any time at unityandinclusion@outlook.com.

Kind Regards,



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Co-Founder



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