

3 March, 2024

Re: Item 6.2 – Regulation of the Display of Graphic Images on the Council
Agenda | March 5, 2024

To London City Council:

I am writing as a citizen of London, Ontario in support of the proposed regulation of graphic images of allegedly aborted fetuses in anti-choice demonstrations. Given that our city, province, and country continue to uphold the legality of abortions and are pro-choice in policy and practice¹ for anyone who becomes pregnant, I consider the use of graphic images in anti-choice demonstrations and mailings to be deeply troubling at best and traumatizing at worst.

The harm that these images hold do not extend only to those who are pregnant and considering abortion – they impact our community at large². They will also cause harm to, for example, people who have experienced pregnancy loss and people who have been sexually assaulted, among others. In addition, most citizens are pro-choice³, and those of us who are should not have to encounter these horrific and, frankly, unethically-sourced⁴, misleading⁵, emotionally-manipulative and manipulated⁶ photos as we move about our city. Non-consensual sharing of such graphic imagery is deeply problematic.

It is my understanding that there are provisions for this regulation through the Municipality Act, and this regulation would also be aligned with your previous action to restrict mailbox delivery of fliers with similar images. I would like to see this extended to the public display of A-frame posters, handheld signs, and temporarily erected signs and posters.

Ultimately, I believe that freedom of expression must also come with careful consideration of our responsibilities and accountabilities to each other. I recognize the right of anti-choice demonstrators to advocate their position in public, as unethical and horrific as I find it to be. However, just as they do not have the right to harass and trespass on facilities that provide abortions or people seeking abortions⁷, they should equally not have the right to share such distressing and graphic images in public. I believe this regulation meets the threshold of legitimate objective by ensuring that these distressing images are not shared non-consensually in our community. I urge you to enact this regulation.

Kind regards,
Mandy Penney
London, ON

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<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/news/2023/05/government-of-canada-strengthens-access-to-abortion-services.html>

² <https://www.arcc-cdac.ca/media/2020/06/take-action-against-aborted-fetus-images.pdf>

³ <https://www.ipsos.com/en-ca/news-polls/majority-continue-support-abortion-canada>

⁴ <https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2010/10/where-do-anti-abortion-protesters-get-those-grisly-photos.html>

⁵ <https://publicseminar.org/essays/the-dishonest-images-of-the-anti-abortion-movement/>

⁶ <https://forarpeople.org/recognize-propaganda-about-those-anti-choice-posters/>

⁷ <https://www.arcc-cdac.ca/media/2020/06/Bubble-Zones-Court-Injunctions-in-Canada.pdf>