

Paul Seale (he/him/his)

London, ON N5W 3J9

March 4, 2024

London City Council
300 Dufferin Avenue
London, ON N6B 1Z2

Content warning: graphic images; fetuses; forced childbirth; abortion; lost pregnancies

Re: Item 8.4, 4 (4.1) Regulation of the Display of Graphic Images on the Council Agenda, 6th Meeting of City Council, March 5, 2024.

Dear Mayor Morgan and Ward Councillors,

Allow me to begin by saying I appreciate that this subject matter is especially difficult for some, and I regret that you find yourself engaging this matter with its adjacency to traumatic and personal histories.

I am writing to urge you vote to endorse the recommendation of the Community and Protective Services Committee,

"[t]hat the staff report, dated February 20, 2024, BE REFERRED back to the Civic Administration and the Civic Administration BE DIRECTED to bring forward a draft by-law with respect to the Regulation of the Display of Graphic Images to a future meeting of the Community and Protective Services Committee for consideration by the end of Q2 2024;"

You've received correspondence encouraging you to take no action so Londoners might continue to be forced to view graphic medical imagery without their consent.

I wish to remind you that while we greatly value freedom, we value it for *everyone*, and we regularly temper our love of freedom with the need for public and individual safety. The *Municipal Act 2001* makes it clear that this is your jurisdiction; that municipalities may pass by-laws respecting "[h]ealth, safety and well-being of persons." [PART II, GENERAL MUNICIPAL POWERS, Spheres of Jurisdiction – Broad authority, single-tier municipalities 10 10 (2) 6]

To be clear, this isn't about reproductive rights or forced childbirth; it's about whether one has a protected right to force imagery designed to shock and traumatize on unsuspecting Londoners and visitors without their consent. And whether a legislative body has the right and, indeed, the responsibility, to protect citizens and visitors to London from these potentially harmful, traumatizing, and non-consensual encounters.

James Schadenberg of 4LifeLondon Association seeks to remind you that the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms "protects freedom of thought, belief, opinion, and expression through all media of communication" and "the right to freedom of peaceful assembly," but

concludes incorrectly, "It would be absurd to claim that holding a protest sign near a sidewalk is an act that is somehow not defended by the Charter."

On the contrary, there are plenty of things one can't display near a sidewalk and wave at unsuspecting passersby, irrespective of the Charter. For example, one can't brandish a gun, even if it's legally owned, and even if you're a prepper or survivalist. One can't openly display certain parts of one's own anatomy, either, even if you're a nudist or naturist. In neither of these cases can you seek exception by claiming your actions are educational -- shows of belief conducted in peaceful assembly.

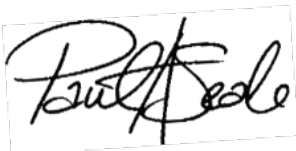
Legislators have anticipated or reacted to harmful behaviours and outlawed certain actions deemed contrary to public and individual safety. Alas, legislators did not anticipate bad actors foisting pictures of fetuses on random passersby in London, so some have come to believe it is their right to do so. But should any legislative body -- including London City Council -- outlaw such actions, it would surely be upheld by the courts as a reasonable, responsible, and *necessary* measure to protect its citizens from those who would do them harm.

But what if advocates for forced childbirth feel their own activity is a *necessary* tactic and that a banning of graphic pictures of fetuses effectively leaves them without *any* way to exercise their Charter rights, express their views, or educate people. Lucky for them, it's not.

Flashcards and other visual aids are often-used tools in education, but there are other ways to achieve learning goals, including written signs, leafletting, and spoken words. I've encountered protestors advocating for forced childbirth, and they weren't at a loss for words. They can also ask people's consent to show them more graphic materials privately if they wish to see them. None of these activities would be constrained by a by-law outlawing the open display of graphic images of fetuses. Again, this is not a proposed ban on *possessing* images of fetuses. It's not a proposed ban on *using* images of fetuses in educational materials. It's a proposed control on the *forcing* of graphic imagery on Londoners *without their consent*. The flashing of medical imagery is only a necessary part of these protests if the goal is to shock and traumatize bystanders.

It is in the best interests of Londoners for you to refer the staff report from the CPSC meeting of Feb. 20, 2024 back to Civic Administration and the Civic Administration BE DIRECTED to bring forward a draft by-law with respect to the Regulation of the Display of Graphic Images to a future meeting of the Community and Protective Services Committee for consideration by the end of Q2 2024;"

Yours very sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Seale", enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Paul Seale
Ward 4, London