

To the Community and Protective Services Committee:

I am Anna Marchand, President of London Area Right to Life, or LARLA, which is a charitable organization representing the pro-life community in London since 1974. LARLA seeks to provide education on the value of human life, and support for vulnerable lives in the community.

Thank you for the opportunity for me to speak to the proposal for the bylaw amendment. I strongly oppose the proposal, because I feel that the petition behind this amendment is an affront, not just to the Canadian Centre for Bioethical Reform (CCBR), but also to the entire pro-life community in London. I am concerned that this is not a mere soliciting or graphic display complaint but is a threat to my right and duty to exercise freedom of expression.

LARLA has supported peaceful annual events such as Life Chain this past October, and the 40 Days for Life Campaign, both very peaceful demonstrations where we held signs with texts such as "Adoption is an Option" and "Pray to End Abortion". Despite these far from graphic displays, this past year we reported numerous vandalism incidents, harassment, verbal abuse, and even threats aimed at people attending these pro-life events. A couple of months ago, a pro-life billboard in a nearby community was destroyed in an act of arson, costing thousands of dollars to replace. The sign was also non-graphic, which worries the community because they continue to be targeted regardless of how their message is portrayed. To that affect any bylaw indirectly or directly targeting a community could encourage additional attacks.

I highly respect everyone's opinions about the legality of abortion and I don't intend to counter protest our counter protestors because they have the right to display their say. I am now asking our councillors to equally respect the rights of Londoners to be informed on this matter, which includes CCBR's mission. I propose that our councillors recognize their local pro-life community as well as every community, which have the same rights to be heard.

Please vote against implementing any changes to the bylaws that would restrict freedom of expression.

Thank you all for your kind attention to this important subject,

Anna Marchand

President

London Area Right to Life Association