

To: Chair Jesse Helmer, Members of the Community and Protective Services Committee and City Clerk

From: Deanna Ronson

Re: 15th Meeting, November 2, 2021, Item 3.1 Flyer Deliveries to Residential Properties.

We are here today to discuss the home distribution of flyers containing graphic images of alleged aborted fetuses.

In preparing for this evening's meeting, I spent some time reviewing submissions to the 12th Meeting of the CPSC, November 3, 2020, Item 4 -- where it all began.

Last year at this time, I submitted a proposed amendment to the sign by-law. My proposal included an accompanying petition with approx. 4,500 signatures (that number quickly grew to 5,227).

The proposal and petition were in response to flyers/signs with graphic images of alleged/aborted fetuses being circulated/displayed around London.

In response to my petition, the opposing side (CCBR & LAA) launched a petition that gathered 7,700 signatures.

In looking at these numbers, it would suggest that a majority were in favour of these images. However, when you break down the numbers, you'll see the truth.

In her Nov. 3, 2020 letter to the CPSC, Maria McCann of the LAA states that their petition gathered 7,700 signatures from 89 countries with 1,963 **from Ontario**. She does not state how many of those supporters were from London.

The petition that I circulated, gathered 5,227 signatures, 4,856 of those were from Canada, approximately 4,000 were from Ontario, 3,000 were from Southwest Ontario and **2,725 were from London**.

As this is a municipal issue that is before us, I think that it's important to note that there are a majority of individuals in London and surrounding areas who wish to see an end to the images. On the other hand, a minority of vocal individuals want to protest a potential end to their ability to cause harm to our community.

The other interesting item that I noted in reviewing the submissions from the November 3, 2020, CPSC meeting, is that the opposing side frames these graphic images as "victim photography" and draws a comparison to graphic images of Alan Kurdi and George Floyd that have been displayed in the news.

That's an interesting label and comparison.

I would suggest a counterargument. The images that the CCBR distributes, **depict the graphic, end-result of a healthcare procedure** that many individuals across Canada have access to. **The real victim** of this “victim photography” **is the viewer.**

Aside from causing trauma to unsuspecting children, the images that the CCBR & LAA circulate, also resemble the expelled tissue/blood/fetus that occurs during a miscarriage, thereby triggering trauma in pregnant people and persons who have experienced miscarriages.

In addition, these images are misleading as the CCBR refers to them as murdered "**children.**" Canadian statistics estimate that 87% of abortions are done before 12 weeks of pregnancy (<https://www.arcc-cdac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/statistics-abortion-in-canada.pdf>), and yet the CCBR uses images that illustrate what a full-term, or near full-fetus might look like. These images look nothing like what an embryo (conception to 10 weeks of pregnancy) or a fetus at looks like (at 12 weeks of pregnancy).

In regards to the comparison of graphic images of alleged aborted fetuses with “victim photography,” there is no comparison. The anti-choice side is forcing their propaganda into the homes of unsuspecting residents. The flyers were hand-delivered to thousands of homes across London. Residents **had no choice** in whether or not they saw these images.

The images of “victim photography” like Alan Kurdi and George Floyd were seen on the news and social media where individuals **had a choice** as to whether or not they wanted to see the images. Many folks choose not to watch the news or read the newspaper.

Not surprisingly, groups like the CCBR and LAA acknowledge the harm that the graphic images of alleged aborted fetuses cause individuals and communities at large, but view the harm as merely a means to an end.

I'm not asking City Hall to muzzle or ban the CCBR or the LAA in London. What I am asking, is that City Hall acknowledges that the freedom of expression is not absolute. I don't want the City to deny these groups' freedom of expression, but rather to limit it by passing a specific by-law (with penalties) that would prohibit the distribution of flyers with graphic images of alleged aborted fetuses. Such a by-law can be justified under Section 1 of the Charter.

We know that Calgary, Winnipeg, Halifax and Ottawa already have these flyer by-laws in place. Research conducted by the ARCC indicates that **none of these four cities** — Winnipeg, Ottawa, Calgary and Halifax — **have had ANY lawsuits come forward in response to their by-laws.** I think this is significant information, especially regarding

Winnipeg, Calgary and Halifax, which **have by-laws with penalties**. Further, three of these by-laws have been in place for many years — Ottawa since 2003, Winnipeg since 2008 and Calgary since 2016 (Halifax since 2019).

Finally, if all attempts to pass a specific by-law banning graphic images of alleged aborted fetuses fail, then I propose that the City enact a by-law the same or similar to the former Bill 529 2021 that was recently in front of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. That bill reads:

Conditions for mailing

1 No one shall send a graphic image of an aborted or otherwise non-viable fetus by mail or otherwise distribute such an image unless the following conditions are satisfied:

1. The image is contained in an opaque envelope.
2. The exterior of the envelope includes a description of the contents.
3. The exterior of the envelope clearly identifies the sender.

Thank you all for your time.

Submitted on Oct. 31, 2021
by Deanna Ronson
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