

London City Council
Attn: All Councillors

Re: Appointment of R. Gauss to the London Police Services Board.

Dear London Ontario City Council,

At Wednesday, March 28th's Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee, you recommended the approval of Ryan Gauss to the London Police Services Board, replacing Susan Toth following her resignation.

I've known Ryan in some capacity for a number of years. He is capable, competent, and compassionate, and I've no doubt that he would bring with him both intimate experience of the justice system as well as a genuine motivation to improve the lives of Londoners.

I want to make clear that this letter comes not to devalue Mr. Gauss and his achievements, but to recognize that Council has made another (whether intentional or not) decision to reduce diversity on an important City Committee.

When Ms. Toth resigned, she made clear that she believed it imperative to fill her slot with a member of the BIPOC community so as to ensure diversity, fairness, and varying views and opinions. I think few on Council would disagree that racialized individuals have vastly different experiences (as a whole) with law enforcement than do white folks.

If this was a case of there being one, lone qualified applicant for the job, I would fully understand and support council's decision with this appointment. In my opinion after looking through the applications, this wasn't the case. While Mr. Gauss was undoubtedly qualified, so too would Joseph Wabegijig who has served with a First Nations Tribal Police force and has worked alongside law enforcement agencies across the province; Zeba Hashmi is a South Asian Muslim woman who, in her application, expressed her intention to address gaps in services and is active in the community already.

I recognize one potential concern here: like with previous committee appointments and selection processes, no demographic data was innately collected through the application process, which brings other inherent problems into the mix, including how you ensure hiring a diversified perspective without first collecting those demographic markers. Unlike in previous committee appointments, however, multiple applicants directly expressed in their applications their BIPOC and diverse backgrounds; Ms. Toth's calls for a diversified committee should be heeded.

I would urge council to consider that **Diversity Matters** and there is arguably no board more desperately in need of Marginalized Voices than the London Police Services Board.

Best Regards,
Ryan O'Hagan