

## 2SLGBTQIA+ Questionnaire for Waterloo Region Municipal Candidates

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**Do you identify as a member of a 2SLGBTQIA+ community?**

No

**What role are you running for?**

City Councillor, Waterloo (Ward 5)

**What do you believe are the most critical issues for the local 2SLGBTQIA+ community? If elected, how would you work with the local community to address these issues?**

2SLGBTQIA+ experiences, histories, joys, and challenges are facing erasure in literature. I am also hearing more and more 2SLGBTQIA+ people fearing for theirs and their families' physical safety. We simply cannot sit idly by and watch decades of progress get thwarted. In my role I do my best to stand in solidarity with diverse communities by amplifying messages from communities themselves, celebrating arts and culture created by members of these communities, and standing up against erasure and harm. I would be keen to sit down with individuals and groups from 2SLGBTQIA+ communities to better understand the local priorities.

**Have you ever participated in 2SLGBTQIA+ Cultural Competency Training?**

No, but I'd love to! I do actively and intentionally engage in learning about 2SLGBTQIA+ communities through what I choose to read in media, fiction, and non-fiction, including what I read with my children. Most recently, I've started listening to the Hear our Stories podcast, which has come about through a partnership with the Faculty of Information at the University of Toronto and the City of Waterloo Museum.

**Systemic homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia are still prevalent in our community, resulting in significant socioeconomic disparities within 2SLGBTQIA+ communities. If elected, how will you combat homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia?**

By speaking up in my one-on-one conversations and on social media, advocating to different levels of government when possible, and continuing to support data collection at the city (i.e., CCDI) and in community that illuminates challenges to be addressed. The more we speak about and understand the prevalence of homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia, the better able we are to see and find solutions to these injustices and consequently maintain hope and momentum.

**If elected, how would you address the ongoing issues of homelessness and mental health, especially as they disproportionately affect members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community?**

One of the organizations the city funds is the Waterloo Public Library. A new branch was constructed and opened during this last council term. I think one of the key things we can do to support youth mental health and homelessness among 2SLGBTQIA+ communities is to ensure that libraries feel confident they will continue to have the support of city council if they shelf books with characters of diverse genders and sexualities, and educate families about how to best support their children if/when they tell their families they are a member of this community. When the City of Waterloo's Affordable Housing Strategy comes to council, I will also advocate for acknowledging and attending to the unique needs of these communities.

**Do you agree with the statement that "trans rights are human rights, and must be protected as such?"**

Yes.

**What is one motion would you bring to council that you think will improve the lives of specifically queer people, racialized individuals and/or marginalized residents and why?**

One of the things we know is that public input into the city's processes needs to include a wider range of folks, especially those from marginalized communities. I will advocate for broadening collaboration strategies in ways that are meaningful and meet people where they are, including but not only on social media, as well as compensate for their time.

I hope mentioning a second issue is okay. Prior to my parental leave last year I was also discussing the topic of conversion therapy. I'm interested in picking back up on that conversation to explore what actions lower-tier municipalities can take to prevent this practice from happening in our community.

**When thinking about our schools, do you agree that 2SLGBTQIA+ representation in books and lessons is critical at all grade levels? How would you support 2SLGBTQIA+ students in schools?**

Yes. As a parent myself, we read books with characters from 2SLGBTQIA+ communities. Some of the ways I support 2SLGBTQIA+ students is by bringing attention to relevant social media and traditional media content, conversations with youth outside of council through my research outside and also throughout my term and now in the election, and advocating to my school board when issues arise, as I have regarding this specific matter of including 2SLGBTQIA+ representation at all grade levels.