

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?

Regional council

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?

Hate. Prejudice. Continue to support policies and activities at the Region of Waterloo , and within the Region of Waterloo, that work to provide equitable spaces for all. To ensure that our services enhance the ability of members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community to conduct their lives free from hate, prejudice and abuse. We need to ensure that we immediately deal with any and all acts of hate and prejudice that occur within our own administration. At the same time, financially support community groups that are promoting and advocating on behalf of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. We need to ensure that Waterloo Region is a welcoming, safe place for members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community to live, work and play.

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

I have not. I have not been aware of such training. I am open to attending such training to better educate myself.

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?

I don't have a specific answer to that question. I refer to the answer above regarding my commitment to making Waterloo Region and more welcoming and safe place for members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. I would certainly reach out to social agencies that are actively working in our community to find out how we can do things better in Waterloo Region. That would include coming up with a plan that could be implemented by the Region over the next four years and beyond.

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

I don't have a specific policy plan in place. I am encouraged by the steps taken by the Region of Waterloo recently with respect to finding spaces for encampments. I am not pleased about the application to evict the campers at Victoria and Weber. I provided the WRCLS with a student to help them gather affidavits and research law during the month August as they work to oppose the application. I have hope that Peter Sweeney will bring a more compassionate approach to the Region of Waterloo in his capacity as commissioner.

Again, I would reach out to social agencies, such as yourself, to better understand the impact on the 2SLGBTQIA+ community and see if there is something that can be implemented at the Region to specifically address the issue. As a personal injury lawyer, I am always advocating for those that are hurt and disabled, either through injury or illness, and that requires me to try and find a path forward so people can move forward in their lives. I will bring the same skill set to my role as councilor. My prior experience on council, and in particular my advocacy on discretionary benefits, demonstrates an ability to advance policy and funding throughout the Region to assist those who are the most vulnerable in our community.

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?

As noted above, I do not have a specific motion at this time. My approach would be to meet with members of the community to assess the needs and determine what can be done and how to make it happen.

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?

I agree with representation at all grade levels. I am confident that the information can be provided in an age appropriate manner. As this is a school board matter, I am not aware of any actions that I could take at Regional Council that would impact the school board. There are distinct jurisdictional boundaries here. If there was some way to support 2SLGBTQIA+ students through my role as a Regional Councilor, I would consider such action.