

**The Corporation of the Town of Ajax
September 15, 2025**

Motion

Supporting Healthy Democracy Through the Elect Respect Campaign

Moved by: Regional Councillor Crawford
Seconded by: Councillor Henry

Whereas Democracy is healthy when everyone can participate fully and safely and contribute to the well-being of their community; and

Whereas we are witnessing the dissolution of democratic discourse and respectful debate across all levels of government and in neighbouring jurisdictions; and

Whereas Ontario's municipally elected officials are dealing with increasingly hostile, unsafe work environments, facing threats and harassment; and

Whereas social media platforms have exacerbated disrespectful dialogue, negative commentary, and toxic engagement, which disincentivizes individuals, especially women and candidates from diverse backgrounds, from running for office; and

Whereas better decisions are made when democracy is respectful and constructive, and the voices of diverse genders, identities, ethnicities, races, sexual orientations, ages, and abilities are heard and represented around municipal council tables; and

Whereas the Association of Municipalities of Ontario's Healthy Democracy Project has identified concerning trends with fewer people voting in local elections and running for municipal office; and

Whereas in 2024, female elected representatives from Halton formed H.E.R. (Halton Elected Representatives) to speak out against harassment in politics and uphold high standards of conduct, launching the Elect Respect campaign to promote healthy democracy and safe, inclusive work environments by encouraging respectful discourse, condemning abuse, and empowering diverse participation in public office; and

Whereas on June 5, 2025, the Canadian Association of Feminist Parliamentarians launched a non-partisan "Parliamentary Civility Pledge" to encourage all parliamentarians to commit to end workplace harassment and increase civility on Parliament Hill, modelled after the pledge developed in Halton by representatives of H.E.R.

Therefore be it resolved:

1. That Ajax Council supports the *Elect Respect* pledge and commits to:
 - Treat others with respect in all spaces—public, private, and online,
 - Reject and call out harassment, abuse, and personal attacks,
 - Focus debate on ideas and policies, not personal attacks,
 - Help build a supportive culture where people of all backgrounds feel safe to run for and hold office,
 - Call on relevant authorities to ensure the protection of elected officials who face abuse or threats, and
 - Model integrity and respect by holding one another to the highest standards of conduct; and
2. That Ajax Council encourages elected officials, organizations, and community members to support the *Elect Respect* campaign and sign the online pledge at www.electrespect.ca; and
3. That a copy of this motion be sent to the Honourable Rob Flack, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Rob Cerjanec, MPP for Ajax, Lorne Coe, MPP for Whitby, John Henry, Chair of the Regional Municipality of Durham, the Regional Municipality of Durham, all Durham Region lower-tier municipalities, and the Ontario Big City Mayors.