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**Subject:** Municipal 3rd Party Flag Ban

Hello,

I am wanting to comment on the discussion of banning 3rd party flags on municipality locations.

As a nation, we are a people of many ethnicities, cultures, races, religions and beliefs. It is important that the government, on all its levels, is neutral and makes decisions for the benefit of all its people. Without making decisions for personal reasons or decisions that favours one group over another.

In that neutrality, it does make sense that municipal locations only fly National, Provincial and Municipal flags. However, we are not socially there yet. The flying of 3rd party flags are not about shoving it down other's throats. It has a purpose/benefit. Flying 3rd party flags can draw attention to/ show support for events and charities that the local community holds dear. Ranging from local food banks, outreach programs, local fairs/festivals etc.

It also shows support for vulnerable minorities in the community that need visual representation. As disappointing that it is that minority groups still need support in this day and age, they do. It's not a matter of just different personal beliefs, but the right to exist as equals and with dignity.

For example,

The visual representation of the Gay Pride flag shows support to those at risk people as an Ally. It also publicly announces that where the flag flies is also a "safe space" where concerned people from that community can go to without the fear of being discriminated against.

As a member of the gay community, I've had my fair share of experiences with discrimination and hate. Growing up, it was socially acceptable to "gay bash". Name call, harass and beat up people just for being gay.

I've even almost lost my life due to someone stabbing me 5 times in the back just for being seen holding my partner's hand in public. 1 missed a lung by 1 inch. 2 next to my spine (one of those was 1/2 inch from my spine), and 2 more on my lower buttock/back upper thigh near arteries.

The gay community has fought hard for their rights. The people from the gay community have been beaten and killed just for wanting to be treated like everyone else. Yet, the hate still exists. And now with everything going on in the United States, fear is in the gay community again as we watch/fear our rights being stripped away across our southern border as the so called "Christian Ideals" are being forced. Even up here, bigots are getting bolder. We tend to mirror the US to a lesser extent.

By banning the option to fly the Pride Flag at municipal locations, the hate wins. It shows the municipality turning a blind eye to the hate. Which further emboldens the haters.

In terms of the Christian Heritage group, religion has no place in government as the ideals of one religion may not benefit the lives of everyone, but the few only. The ONLY way that the Christian Heritage group can complain about flying flags not being fair would be if other religion flags were flown and not theirs. Muslim flags haven't been flown. Nor Hindu, Buddhism etc.

First they want a whole month designated to them. Then want a Christian flag flown and think its ok to strip representation from others if they don't get what they want.

By bowing down to the pressures of a religious group of a religion that is historically against gay rights, and strip the option of having representation by the municipality, the municipality would have taken the first step towards the current beliefs of the US.

Unfortunately, no matter which decision you make, people will be upset.

I propose not a full ban, but restrictions. For example,

Municipal buildings with 2 flag poles – Canadian and provincial flags only.

Municipal buildings with 3 flag poles- 3rd flag pole is community flag pole. 3rd party flags may be flown for 1 week durations. When a 3rd party flag is not flown, the township flag will be flown.

Public flag pole locations that are not municipal buildings, such as parks/parkettes, are community flag poles and follow the 3rd party flag pole rules.

3rd party flags that cannot be flown: religious flags, political flags (liberal party, conservative party; flags that are "anti" in nature such as anti government, against a particular social group, etc)

3rd party/community poles that are not accompanied by a Canadian Flag pole, must not fly the flag of any other nation.

Thank you,

Justin Chant  
(Portland, ON)