



## **Queer Ontario Denounces City of Toronto's Threat to Pride Toronto's Funding**

Toronto: Queer Ontario, a provincial queer liberation group, denounces recent actions taken by City of Toronto bureaucrats issuing a warning to Pride Toronto regarding the participation of Queers Against Israeli Apartheid (QuAIA) in this year's pride parade.

We are particularly concerned about how the word 'apartheid' is being interpreted as 'hate' and the implications of such on free speech. We are disturbed that such a warning was issued based upon mere reports from unidentified city councilors and unspecified 'members of the public', without proper research being conducted first. The LGBT communities are highly sensitized to issues of discrimination given our history and the ongoing oppression of our communities in Canada and many parts of the world. We also consist of vastly diverse communities with viewpoints, world views and political perspectives that are far from monolithic. As such, we have exercised our Charter-guaranteed freedom to express our diversity oftentimes to the discomfort of others (i.e. early Gay Day celebrations, participation of drag queens, leather folk, nudists and those that challenge conventional political thought). We are concerned that issuing such a threat against Pride Toronto will reverberate across the province creating a chill in smaller communities organizing their respective pride festivities, who now might find their municipal officials withdrawing support over unqualified and vague concerns about discomfort. This is not about Pride Toronto violating the City of Toronto's anti-discrimination policy, but about the City of Toronto issuing an unfounded threat, in the form of censorship, to cut funding to a community organization that hosts one of the city's largest annual parades.

Queer Ontario is a provincially based network of individuals who are members of the gender and sexually diverse populations and their allies committed to liberationist and sex positive principles that focus on questioning, challenging and seeking reform to social norms and laws that regulate queer people. Queer Ontario engages in public education, political action, promoting access and diversity and coalition building.

### **Interviews:**

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