

Ombudsman of Ontario
Bell Trinity Square, South Tower
483 Bay Street, 10th Floor,
Toronto, ON M5G 2C9



August 14, 2024

Dear Mr. Paul Dube,

We are writing to bring to your attention and raise questions regarding the potential overreach into municipal governance in the Niagara region by a sitting Member of Provincial Parliament, Mr. Sam Oosterhoff.

This week, the City of St. Catharines repealed a graphic image bylaw under pressure by a legal challenge that is being spearheaded by the Association for Reformed Political Action (ARPA). We would like to see an investigation regarding a potential conflict of interest, and whether the legal action against the City of St. Catharines is being acted upon using public resources from an incumbent Niagara MPP.

There is ample cause to examine this matter further. Over a dozen peer municipalities have similar by-laws, yet have not been targeted by ARPA. This fact, combined with the following connections between MPP Oosterhoff and ARPA, raises questions about the organization's peculiar focus in Niagara.

MPP Oosterhoff has a documented history of involvement with [ARPA events](#), and the Niagara chapter of ARPA operates out of the local church he attends, the Spring Creek Canadian Reformed Church. Furthermore, one of the primary applicants in this lawsuit, [Mr. David Broere](#), is a significant donor to MPP Oosterhoff, his lead legislative staff person, [Mr. Michael Zweip](#) has been actively involved in organizing and fundraising for ARPA, and his brother, [Mr. Aaron Oosterhoff](#), was appointed vice-chair of ARPA's national organization just 28 days before this litigation was initiated against the City of St. Catharines, challenging a by-law banning flyers with images of fetuses from being delivered to homes without a warning label.

We respectfully request that your office consider investigating whether there has been an inappropriate use of political influence and resources in this matter. The autonomy of our municipalities is a cornerstone of our democratic system. Actions that compromise that integrity, especially those in pursuit of partisan political goals, are deeply concerning.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We trust that your office will take the necessary steps to ensure that the integrity of our provincial and municipal governance systems is upheld.

Sincerely,

Niagara Reproductive Justice
niagarareproductivejustice@gmail.com

cc: Honourable J. David Wake, Integrity Commissioner of Ontario