

To: Richmond City Councillors, Members of the Legislative Assembly, and Members of Parliament

Subject: Petition for City Bylaw and Measures to Protect Religious Harmony and Safety

We, representatives of religious organizations along Richmond's No. 5 Road, respectfully request your support in enacting a city bylaw that would prohibit protests—whether religious or non-religious—in the vicinity of places of worship. This measure aims to protect our community from disruptions that could compromise safety and religious harmony.

Recent attacks on temples, gurudwara, churches and synagogues and other places of worship across Canada due to racial, political and regional tensions, have raised serious concerns. To keep Richmond a welcoming and secure space for people of all faiths, we propose the following:

1. Enactment of a Protective Bylaw: Implement a bylaw that restricts protests near places of worship, specifically targeting those with the intent to intimidate or provoke. Peaceful gatherings would continue to be permitted in other areas, preserving freedom of expression while maintaining public safety.
2. Emergency Response Liaison: Designate a dedicated city contact to act as a liaison for religious organizations, enabling prompt action to address potential threats or disruptions at places of worship.
3. Mandatory Cultural and Community Relations Training: Ensure that police officers receive cultural sensitivity training, anti-bias education, and de-escalation tactics, especially when handling incidents involving diverse religious groups.
4. Zero-Tolerance Policy for Hate or Bias: Institute a strict zero-tolerance policy for any police officers who engage in or overlook actions that promote disharmony or hate. This includes clear consequences for officers found to be involved in misconduct.

We draw attention to similar measures being considered or implemented in cities like Vaughan, Ontario, where a bylaw prohibits protests within 100 meters of places of worship, schools, and hospitals, in response to incidents of hate and threats. This approach demonstrates how targeted, localized regulations can protect community harmony and public safety while allowing for responsible expression elsewhere .

We believe these steps reflect Richmond's values of respect, inclusion, and secularism, providing equal protection for people of all faiths. We ask for your leadership in upholding our shared commitment to harmony, safety, and an inclusive community.

Sincerely,


Sarwan Kumar- secretary- 604-418-4662

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