

To: Mayor John Taylor, Newmarket Town Councillors & Staff

My name is Natasha Tso, and I am writing to express my support for the ratification of the amendment of By-law 2020-31.

Thank you for the work you have done thus far to protect the wellbeing and safety of our community by acknowledging the detrimental impact that Body Rub Parlours has on both society and individual lives. Human trafficking is one of the fastest growing crimes in the world, and Newmarket is certainly not immune to this injustice. Survivors of trafficking, researchers, law enforcement and anti-trafficking service providers all cite Body Rub Parlours as well-known places where trafficking occurs.

I am asking that you hold firm to your decision and vote YES to ratify By-law 2020-31 being amended to adopt the proposed Personal Wellness Establishment with stricter language and accreditation requirements. This amendment will help prevent the exploitation of people in our community as it will address a known location where traffickers use threat, coercion, debt bondage and blackmail in order to traffic individuals for the purposes of sexual exploitation.

Additionally, this By-law will demonstrate that the Town of Newmarket does not condone a system predicated in racism, colonial violence, and misogyny, which form the very fabric of the sex industry. Ratifying By-Law 2020-31 will help to combat racism in the community through recognizing that the sex industry perpetuates racist ideologies and beliefs.

According to the Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence, of the 3,636 survivors of human trafficking whose race

or ethnicity was known, the second largest group was Asian (27%). This staggering reality is, in part, made possible due to the fact that many migrant workers are low-income and non-English-speaking, rendering them in an unequal negotiating position when deliberating with employers and clients about what services are to be provided in Body Rub Parlours. These factors, among others, compound intersectionality in such a way to increase the vulnerability of racialized minorities to sexual exploitation in the provision of services in these Parlours. As a result, minority groups are overrepresented in the sex industry. That is why, as a person of Asian descent, the suggestion by certain groups that this amendment to the By-law is anti-Asian or racist, is completely offensive.

By ratifying this amendment to the By-law the Town of Newmarket will be at the forefront of combatting the trafficking of persons in the community through addressing a known area where sex trafficking flourishes and a system where racist ideas are perpetuated. Insofar as racialized communities are already overrepresented as survivors of commercial sexual exploitation, legislation such as By-law 2020-31 affords such communities additional protections to prevent them from being inadvertently trapped in a vocational cycle which capitalizes on their vulnerability and disregards the equal dignity owed to all persons irrespective of race, gender, sex, immigration status, language capacity, and economic stability, I am asking that you vote YES to ratify By-law 2020-31 being amended to adopt the proposed Personal Wellness Establishment with stricter language and accreditation requirements.

Ratifying this By-law is a vital step to combating the trafficking of persons in our community and beyond. Together we can end sexual exploitation.

Sincerely,
W. Natasha Tso
Vaughan, Ontario