

MAYOR PATRICK BROWN

Minutes from October 23, 2024 Committee of Council meeting

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CW377-2024

Whereas:

Local issues and action taken

- Brampton is home to thousands of financially vulnerable international students who study locally in Brampton or in other municipalities across the province/country
- Many international students have become victims of “false hope” through student visa and college enrollment scams
- International students soon discover after arriving in Canada, that the local cost of living may exceed their financial means and many education institutions (private and public) do not assist students adequately to integrate, particularly as it relates to housing, leaving international students vulnerable to exploitation as discussed at Committee of Council on September 4, 2023
- Exploitation and human trafficking of international student girls have resulted in unwanted pregnancies, abortions, mental health and addictions issues and suicide
- The City of Brampton and the Region of Peel have been working within municipal jurisdiction to address the exploitation through the development of an International Students Charter, Residential Rental Licensing Pilot (RRL), established an International Student Collaborative, and an anti-human sex trafficking strategy
- Peel Regional Police’s Human Trafficking team was one of the first established in the province, with a total of 20 members with a variety of service providers and crown attorneys to identify, pursue, and charge human traffickers, and increase awareness, education and specialized human trafficking intervention training for targeted groups like international students

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- Post-Secondary Institution’s orientation sessions only scratch the surface with regards to what students should know/expect when they arrive in Canada and lack vital information related to protecting oneself from exploitation and what their rights are as an international student in Canada
- Survivors of human trafficking require specialized, trauma-informed, community-based supports to help them heal and rebuild their lives, and to reduce the risk of re-exploitation
- Peel Region currently provides some supports to international students, however, many Regional programs are not accessible due to federal and provincial eligibility criteria excluding people without Canadian citizenship or permanent residency or who are refugee claimants
- Many international students who are being exploited choose not to access support at their educational institutions because of fear of deportation, expulsion from school, and a lack of culturally sensitive support programs

Other orders of government

- Despite local efforts, the City of Brampton and Peel Region are reacting to this inherited problem with limited to no jurisdiction to address its root causes and significantly limited financial resources to respond to the consequences
- Legislative jurisdiction over international student visas and accountability of public and private post-secondary institutions, reside with the federal and provincial governments for example (but not limited to):
 - Provincial Ministry of Colleges and Universities could do more to mandate support and programs for international students and regulate private colleges
 - The federal government recently capped legal off-campus work for international students to 24 hours, which may be putting financially vulnerable students at further risk of exploitation and
 - Federal legislation is weaponized and used against international students by traffickers due to specific conditions to deport like “sex work”

Therefore Be It Resolved That:

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1. With feedback from post-secondary partners located in Brampton or elsewhere, staff report back on additional incentives that may support the development of safe affordable student housing, including improvements to the RRL; and
2. The City of Brampton and the International Students Collaborative encourage other post secondary institutions outside of Brampton, with students who live in Brampton, to endorse the guiding principles of Brampton’s International Students Charter
3. The City of Brampton support the Region of Peel’s continued work with the International Students Collaborative to better understand the impact of recent policy changes on students by developing a comprehensive Advocacy Strategy in Peel
4. That the City of Brampton advocate to the federal and provincial government through official correspondence and follow-up with a meeting with appropriate Ministers (Federal: IRCC and Housing, Provincial: Colleges and Universities, and Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development, etc.)
 - i) to endorse the guiding principles of Brampton’s International Students Charter
 - ii) to establish clear responsibility for public and private post-secondary institutions in providing formal orientation for international students looking to study in Canada, including increasing awareness of legal, employment, access to health care, interpersonal violence and housing rights, before arriving in the country
 - iii) to have student visa requirements require place of residence in addition to place of study and provide policy or financial incentives for the development of safe and affordable student housing
 - iv) continue advocacy requesting that the province double the heads and beds levy and base the levy on the student’s place of residence, to ensure additional funding is available to municipalities who provide municipal services for international students residing in their municipality
 - v) to strengthen regulations for private colleges as it relates to recruitment and education standards of international students
 - vi) for legislative changes related to student visas, such as removing “sex work” as a condition to deport
 - vii) to increase working hours to 40 hours/week so students can access legal work from employers
 - viii) to expand funding eligibility to allow international students to access existing Regional and community programs and supports in Peel Region

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ix) to provide dedicated funding for a three-year pilot to develop a wrap-around support hub, which is community-focused with anti-human trafficking services and supports designed for (and by the community) and culturally-responsive to provide settlement, housing, employment, and mental health supports along with human trafficking assessment and referral for international students attending post-secondary institutions

x) to increase accountability of post-secondary institutions to develop formal pathways to dedicated anti-human sex trafficking services such as nCourage, Peel safe house and transitional house to support access to safe, reliable, trauma-informed services, and provide the necessary legislative and financial support for increased access to such services

xi) to strengthen regulations and continue investigations of immigration consultants providing fraudulent acceptance letters and engaging in other fraudulent activity related to international students

xii) to clearly identify and raise awareness of existing pathways international students can legally obtain permanent residency in Canada

5. The City of Brampton support efforts from Peel Regional Police to:

- Participate in intelligence-led joint forces investigations team from police agencies across Ontario
- Enhancing the use of Major Case Management tools for missing persons and human trafficking investigations by investing in software development to enable national access to databases across the country. This will assist in meeting specific needs of human trafficking investigators and analysts
- Continue to participate in intelligence-led joint forces investigations team from police agencies across Ontario

6. That this motion and any related or follow-up correspondence be forwarded to:

- Federal Ministers of Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship and Housing (and other relevant Ministries)
- Provincial Minister(s) of Colleges and Universities, and Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (and other relevant Ministries)

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- Local MPs and MPPs
- FCM and AMO
- Region of Peel Council

7. That the City of Brampton host a public screening of I Am No Queen, at no cost to attendees.

A recorded vote was requested and the motion carried, as follows:

Yea (10) Regional Councillor Santos , Regional Councillor Vicente , Regional Councillor Medeiros,
Regional Councillor Fortini , Deputy Mayor Singh, Mayor Patrick Brown, Regional
Councillor Toor, Regional Councillor Keenan, City Councillor Power, and Regional
Councillor Brar

Absent (1) Regional Councillor Palleschi

Carried (10 to 0)