



Feature

ARTICLE

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DEAN HICKEY

## POLITICAL DISCOURSE AND THE MANIFESTO BEHIND D.E.I.

NO GREAT DISTINCTION must be made between events here at home and those from far-away places that have the capacity to touch our lives. Some issues are so large as to create contradictory opinions on matters of morality, separating us into different factions within our communities, our families, and among those we trust the most. We live in an age where one must decide – willingly or not – where one stands in a society increasingly divided in all things. While it is reasonable to entertain different opinions upon subjects that affect entire countries alike, such as, for instance, the recent assassination of a social and political activist south of the border, it isn't long before a feeling of moral oppression takes hold. There are unsupportable evils that become the foundation for cross debate, where individuals can exercise a degree of callousness that is all too often hard to reconcile.

Locally, we can expect elected members of local councils to ultimately share their thoughts on the killing of Charlie Kirk, the activist to whom I refer, and what that means for the future of public debate within City Hall or on social media. Not unrelated to this is the recent drive towards the "Elect Respect" campaign, which sees our democracy as being under great pressure due to rising public distrust with seemingly unrelenting personal attacks in political spaces. Clarington Council voted recently in favour of a motion to hold their members to the tenets of the Elect Respect mandate, which includes rejecting and calling out harassment, abuse, and personal attacks while focusing their debates on policies rather than personalities. At issue is the need to build a supportive culture where people of all backgrounds feel safe to run for and hold elected office. Expect all municipalities to eventually jump on board in a similar fashion.

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Another potentially divisive issue has taken root within the corridors of power over at Regional Council, as seen in their recently released report entitled "Diversity Equity and Inclusion Strategy 2025 – 2029". Before any of my readers come to an immediate conclusion on this topic, consider the following aspects of the report.

The introductory statement tells us the Region's DEI strategy offers "...a stronger, more unified path forward: one that not only connects the important work now underway, but also sets goals, a shared vision and a long-term commitment to meaningful change." It goes on to say, "This document is more than a plan; it is a framework for transformative action..."

There's a great deal one could unpack from that text, however; my focus for now is directed towards the report's "Glossary of Key Terms".

**ALLYSHIP**, which is basically the active support for the rights of a minority or marginalized group without being a member of it. Sounds reasonable – but a look at the description reveals the following: "An active and consistent practice in which a person in a position of privilege... seeks to operate in solidarity with a marginalized group".

**EQUITY**, a principle based on advocating 'fairness' for all individuals. The Glossary offers this interpretation: "Achieving equality does not necessarily mean treating individuals or groups in the same way, but may require the use of specific measures..."

**EQUITY DESERVING GROUPS**, being those who are seen as having faced barriers to receiving equal opportunities. The Glossary offers a very aggressive interpretation of the term, "Communities that...actively seek social justice and reparations."

**HATE ACTIVITY**, which includes an assessment of the comments and actions by one individual towards another. Among the interpretations offered on this aspect, the report states, "Examples are: hate crime, hate propaganda, advocating genocide..."

There are far too many aspects of the DEI report to analyze within this column, however, it is clear the Region's views on the equitable treatment of individuals within the community go much further than employment policies and the delivery of social services. The report is nothing less than a political manifesto designed to cast aspersions on Canada and a particular demographic that has lived here for generations – as though they themselves had just disembarked from a sailing ship onto North American soil.

This columnist has never been in a position of privilege, and my country is not a so-called colony, but rather a proud nation – Canada. The assertion by the report's authors that it is somehow wrong to treat all citizens of this country in an equal manner is quite frankly, monstrous, and it demonstrates a repugnance towards what should be seen as true equity – based on universal freedoms, opportunities and merit. In addition, the word "genocide" has become a modern-day political weapon based on one of those unsupportable evils that are now used as the foundation for debate among the more radical in our society.

Finally, it is not and never has been the mandate of staff or councillors at the Region of Durham to include references to social justice and most of all, reparations among groups or individuals. The massive bureaucracy that is Regional government bears the responsibility to provide efficient and equitable services to its residents, and only that.

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To close out this week's column, I'd like to comment on the issue of automated speed cameras, which have been in the news lately. During an event in Toronto, Ontario Premier Doug Ford was asked about speed cameras in Toronto that have been repeatedly vandalized or cut down, and he responded by saying there are other ways to slow drivers down. "If you want to slow down traffic at a school, you put the big signs, big flashing lights at a crossing area, and people will slow down," he said. "I've driven by speed traps that aren't even close to school areas. It's nothing but a tax grab."

The Premier is absolutely correct in his assertion, which comes at a time when many municipalities have become reliant on the cash windfall that has resulted in what many see as automated ATM installations on roads designed for a certain traffic flow. I wrote a previous column on the issue of speed cameras and the fact there is no data whatsoever to support their proliferation – and yet, there are those among us who still line up like sheep to advocate for more and increasingly invasive monitoring by Big Government.

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Among this week's topics, that last aspect is probably the saddest.

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Lisa Robinson

PICKERING CITY COUNCILLOR

When Leaders Incite Hate,  
Blood Follows — And  
Pickering's Mayor Just  
Crossed The Line

By Councillor Lisa Robinson

For the last five years, Canadians have been fed a steady diet of division and hate — not from the fringes, but from the very institutions we should be able to

trust: our politicians and our media.

It began during COVID, when the Prime Minister went on national television and asked: "Do we tolerate these people?" With those words, millions of Canadians were branded not as neighbours, not as citizens, but as problems. The government-funded media repeated the message daily, branding dissenters as "racists," "fascists," "Nazis," "alt-right extremists," even "white supremacists."

This wasn't debate. It was dehumanization. And when you dehumanize people long enough, history shows us what always follows: violence.

We are now living that reality.

Look at the world stage. Charlie Kirk has been murdered — and the atmosphere that allowed that to happen was built brick by brick through years of politicians and media normalizing hate. When commentators and leaders casually suggest that people are "Nazis" or "dangers to society," they are not merely insulting them. They are inciting others to see them as targets. And this culture of dehumanization has spread right here to Pickering.

Our own Mayor and Council have repeatedly smeared me and residents — labeling them "racists", "homophobic", "transphobic", "Nazis", "alt-right" and "nutcases." They have even posted a propaganda video of their own constituents putting targets on the backs of the very people they are elected to represent.

And now, when I posted on social media of alleged threats to kill a man, kill his wife, and have her sexually assaulted if the man runs in the next municipal election, how did Mayor Kevin Ashe respond? On my own Facebook post, he wrote: "Councillor Lisa Robinson the arsonist says her house is on fire."

The Mayor of this city never condemned the threats of murder. He never condemned the threats of rape. He never condemned the intimidation or violence. Instead, he mocked it — and turned it against me.

By those words, the Mayor implied that if anything happens to me — if I am harassed, threatened, or attacked — it is somehow my fault. That is victim-blaming. That is prejudice against a sitting Councillor. And worse, those words incite violence. They embolden aggressors by signaling that if they harm me, The Mayor of Pickering will stand with them, because it will be my fault.

This isn't leadership. It is reckless. It is a betrayal of public trust. And it is dangerous — not just to me, but to every resident who dares to speak out.

Because once you normalize hate, you cannot contain it. Once you excuse threats against one person, you invite them against many more.

The truth is politicians and media who have spent years dehumanizing citizens have blood on their hands. They may not pull the trigger or make the threat, but they create the culture where others will. They soak the ground in gasoline and then pretend to be shocked when it ignites. This has to end.

Pickering deserves leaders who condemn violence, not mock it. Canada deserves media that inform, not incite. And we, as citizens, must demand a culture where disagreement is not punished with dehumanization, but debated with respect.

Because if we don't, more lives will be destroyed. And it won't be an accident. It will be the predictable outcome of words that kill — and leaders who incite them.



Are You Ready For  
Retirement?

By Bruno M. Scanga

Deposit Broker, Insurance & Investment Advisor

Retirement is a milestone many eagerly anticipate – a time to relax and enjoy the fruits of years of labor. However, for some, this dream can turn into a financial nightmare due to poor money management. While every retiree's situation is unique, several common mistakes can derail even the most carefully laid plans. Avoiding these pitfalls is crucial for a secure and comfortable retirement.

**1. One of the biggest errors is underestimating longevity.**  
People are living longer than ever, and a retirement that initially seems well-funded can be stretched thin over 30 or more years. Outliving retirement savings, force difficult choices and the potential of relying on limited government benefits. A sound retirement plan should project expenses over a potentially long lifespan, factoring in inflation and unexpected healthcare costs.

**2. Another frequent misstep is overspending in the early years.**  
The first excitement of retirement can lead to a surge in spending. Travel, hobbies, and home renovations are tempting ways to enjoy newfound freedom. However, this "go-go" phase can deplete savings quickly, leaving insufficient funds for later years when health issues or other unexpected expenses arise. A balanced approach is key, allowing for enjoyment while maintaining a sustainable budget throughout retirement.

**3. Ignoring inflation is another critical oversight.**  
The cost of living steadily increases over time, meaning that the purchasing power of your savings decreases. What seems like a comfortable nest egg today might not cover essential expenses a decade or two down the line. Retirement plans should incorporate realistic inflation projections and adjust spending accordingly to maintain a desired standard of living.

**4. Not diversifying investments is a risky strategy.**  
Putting all your eggs in one basket, whether it's a single stock or a concentrated real estate holding, can expose you to significant losses. A diversified portfolio across different asset classes, such as stocks, bonds, and real estate, helps mitigate risk and provides a more stable return over the long term. Regularly reviewing and rebalancing your portfolio is essential to ensure it aligns with your risk tolerance and retirement goals.

**5. Not planning for healthcare costs is a major oversight.**  
Healthcare expenses tend to increase significantly in retirement, particularly as people age. Unexpected medical bills, long-term care needs, and rising insurance premiums can put a significant strain on retirement finances. It's crucial to research health insurance options, estimate potential healthcare costs, and explore long-term care insurance possibilities to protect your savings.

**6. Finally, procrastination is a common enemy of sound retirement planning.**  
Putting off saving and investing until later in life makes it significantly harder to accumulate sufficient funds. The power of compounding, where investment earnings generate further earnings over time, is most effective when started early. The sooner you begin planning and saving for retirement, the more time your money has to grow.

Retirement should be a time of relaxation and enjoyment, not financial stress. By avoiding these common mistakes, retirees can significantly improve their financial security and enjoy a comfortable and fulfilling retirement. Seeking professional financial advice can also be invaluable in creating a personalized retirement plan that addresses individual needs and goals.