



February 24, 2021

Pride Hamilton Stands in Solidarity with Pride Defenders

Pride Demands that All Charges be Immediately Withdrawn

Pride Hamilton continues to stand in solidarity with Pride Defenders and supports the [statement that they released last week](#) speaking out about the criminal charges and upcoming trial faced by Barry Conway, a member of CUPE Local 5167, and a strong community ally.

Pride Defenders, including Barry, stood up to white supremacists and took great personal risks to keep attendees at Pride 2019 safe. We thank them for this act of community care and find it deeply shameful that the authorities continue to pursue them through the legal system.

In the pages of a damning [Independent Review of the events surrounding Pride 2019](#) commissioned by the Hamilton Police Services Board, its author Scott Bergman stated that "Pride Defenders were not responsible for escalating the situation and did not in any way cause the violence" (92).

Despite the report's conclusions, and the heroic actions of Pride Defenders, the Hamilton Police Service (HPS) continues to dig in its heels. Senior officers told Bergman directly that they refuse to recommend that charges be withdrawn against Pride Defenders (70).

We find this particularly troubling in light of the HPS' [public delegation request](#) to the LGBTQ Advisory Committee last week, where they openly admitted that the "Service's relationship with the Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ communities is damaged" and that HPS has "a long way to go in rebuilding trust."

We agree. In our opinion, that trust cannot be rebuilt while Pride Defenders continue to face charges. A commitment by HPS to undo this damage must start with their recommendation to Crown counsel, immediately and publicly, that all charges against Pride Defenders be withdrawn. We call on HPS to take action and demonstrate their commitment to repairing the damage that they have caused.

Please visit <https://www.facebook.com/pridedefenderdefense> for more information about how you can help Barry and keep up to date.