

# POLICY WOULD HURT FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGNS: STUDENT TRUSTEE

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abortion services and embryonic stem cell research.

Known as the "Sanctity of Life" motion, this was the second time in four months Karabela attempted to implement the policy.

Four delegations that included parents, a current student, a physician and a reverend presented in opposition to the motion. There were no delegations in support of Karabela's motion.

Trustee Tim O'Brien ultimately voted in favour of the motion but did not speak in favour of it during debate.

Student Kirsten Kelly argued that restricting charity work to only groups that people agree with is contrary to Catholic teachings.

"I think that this directly contradicts Catholic values that we were taught from a young age, that we should help everyone regardless. You can't just say, 'Oh, I'm going to help this person because they follow the same values as me.' That's redundant and contradictory," said Kelly.

The motion stated that no school fundraising efforts could be directed to an organization or its subsidiaries, affiliates or associates that in any way supports or is involved with abortion or embryonic stem cell research. Charities that could be included

**"Catholics have a moral duty to defend and protect the sanctity of life."**

- trustee Helena Karabela

under that label include Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children, as well as the Canadian Cancer Society and Halton Women's Place.

Karabela argued that they have a duty to ensure not a single dollar of the board's fundraising go toward organizations that don't uphold the sacredness of life.

"Catholics have a moral duty to defend and protect the sanctity of life. As society's morals erode further away from our Judeo-Christian foundations, it is ever more important to be vigilant in making sure that donations from HCDSB go to organizations that uphold the sanctity of life. This motion does not restrict charity. It prioritizes charity for the unborn, who are defenceless. True charity doesn't kill," said Karabela.

The "Sanctity of Life" policy originally passed in February, 2018. It led to student protests, a court case against the board, months of debate and even condem-



Graham Paine/Metroland

Trustee Patrick Murphy was among those who voted against the Sanctity of Life fundraising policy.

nation from a former education minister before it was ultimately quashed by trustees later that year.

Student trustee Katie Bowie argued that such a policy could put an end to well-liked and ongoing students campaigns in support of organizations like the Canadian Cancer Society.

"Our students care about these causes. It's in-

credibly important to them and the work that they do. It's an opportunity for them to use what they learn in our Catholic schools to do good in their community. So, I can say with certainty that students are unequivocally opposed to this motion and that it is not in the best interest of their school experiences," said Bowie.

Karabela referred to the

HCDSB's graduate expectations document in her argument.

"One of our graduate expectations is to form a student who, quote: 'that gives witness to Catholic social teaching by promoting peace, justice and the sacredness of human life'. The sanctity of life recognized from conception to natural death is a tenet of our Catholic faith and is

non-negotiable," Karabela said.

Trustee Patrick Murphy questioned the motivation behind bringing such a motion to the board table once again. He said students raise money for numerous vetted charities and there is no evidence the board is raising funds intentionally to support abortion.

Karabela said she decided to bring this motion forward now because, "I can, and I represent stakeholders."

The motion was defeated by a five-to-two vote with trustees Peter DeRosa, Janet O'Hearn-Czarnota, Nancy Guzzo, Brenda Agnew, and Murphy successfully voting against the motion.

Karabela and O'Brien voted in favour.

The three student trustees also voted against the motion.

*STORY BEHIND THE STORY: With a proposed return to the "Sanctity of Life" policy coming before the Halton Catholic District School Board, we wanted to share how students and trustees feel about the issue that's been a source of emotionally charged debate for years.*



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