

NO X To proposed “Fireworks By-law”

“Town of Oakville”

Diwali Festival

- A sacred celebration and reflecting the rich cultural heritage and diversity of Hinduism, Jainism, and Sikhism.
- Is marked by fireworks as a spiritual and cultural expression.
- Fireworks during Diwali are NOT entertainment, they are sacred symbols of Light over Darkness and Good over Evil.
- It's also known as Festival of Lights and Fireworks.

Cultural Discrimination Against Hindu and South Asian Traditions

- Banning their use sends a message that our traditions are unwelcome.
- Blanket bans ignore this and effectively silence our way of celebrating.
- Banning the sale and use of fireworks penalizes entire communities for the actions of a few reckless users. This is collective punishment.

Huge Negative Impact on Local Businesses and Economic Equity

- Many South Asian and immigrant-run small businesses rely on seasonal fireworks sales. These bans would devastate their livelihoods.
- The ban gives black market sellers an edge, pushing community-based retailers out and encouraging underground, unregulated sales of products that could impact community safety across Oakville.
- Locally, Diwali fireworks sales represent a multi million-dollar seasonal market. Banning this will push business to neighbouring cities or illegal channels.

Why the Ban **Won't** Work

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- Police and bylaw staff cannot patrol every backyard or street. I can't imagine a policy that banned Christmas trees and told everyone to come to a community festival to light a Christmas tree.
 - A ban will simply drive sales and use underground, making fireworks more dangerous, not less because they won't be stored, sold, or used safely.
 - Education, regulation, and designated-use policies are more effective than bans, like what's done for alcohol, tobacco, or cannabis..

Policing Vs. Social Approach

- **Policing** is traditionally rooted in enforcing laws, maintaining order, and responding to crime. It is reactive by design, responding to incidents after they occur.
- **Social Work**, on the other hand, is proactive. Its purpose is to support individuals and communities by addressing the underlying causes of distress.
- "Social work is about prevention. Policing is about reaction."

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Policing Vs. Social Approach - Outcome and Goals

- The goal of policing: Compliance and law enforcement. Success is measured by arrests, convictions, or reductions in reported crime.
- The goal of social work: Stability, empowerment, and improved quality of life. Success is measured by wellness, stability, and positive life changes.
- Social workers work WITH people to SOLVE problems; police work ON people to CONTROL problems. – By Dr. Dorothy Roberts, scholar of law and social policy

What We Should Do Instead

- “When the only tool you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail.” -
By Abraham Maslow (often cited in critiques of police-centric response models)
- Both policing and social work play roles in community safety, but they come from fundamentally different paradigms. Increasingly, communities are calling for investments in care, not control, a shift from punitive to preventative, from enforcement to empowerment.
- Work with cultural communities to create safe, designated times and educated use of Fireworks during Diwali and Lunar New Year fireworks celebrations .