



**Public Statement:
Update regarding Volpe v. Wong-Tam**

June 20, 2022

On May 26, 2022, Justice Glustein made the important and necessary decision to dismiss the charges against the defendants in the case of [Volpe v. Wong-Tam](#).

You can read more about the situation in our statements from [Jan 11th, 2021](#), [Jan 14th, 2021](#), and [April 6th, 2021](#).

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the community members who have stood beside us and helped to defend us from these false and vitriolic allegations: Toronto City Councilors Kristyn Wong-Tam and Paul Ainslie, TCDSB trustees Maria Rizzo, Norm Di Pasquale, Markus De Domenico, and Ida Li Preti, as well as Yahoo Media Group, and everyone else who spoke out against these unfounded claims.

2SLGBTQ+ youth across Ontario rely on the services YouthLine provides to get access to life-saving information and resources, as well as peer support, during a time when access to services and psychological safety are at an all-time low. Without the support of the folks named above, we would have had to redirect resources to combatting the claims made by Volpe and we would not have been able to put all our energy into supporting the youth we serve. The support of these trustees and the rest of our community during this period has enabled us to continue supporting 2SLGBTQ+ youth, in a time when they need it most.

During the pandemic, we have seen a rise in instances of hate speech and discrimination of marginalized people across all communities. The fear and divisiveness that the pandemic created, permeated into this space and empowered zealots to spew their opinions without any concern for the consequences of their behaviour. When they are challenged, they respond with anger and denial, and this situation is no different. Volpe made heinous accusations and claims that were factually untrue and served the sole purpose of slandering a youth-led 2SLGBTQ+ service provider doing important and necessary work to support the most vulnerable members of our community. When community members, city councilors, and TCDSB trustees came to our defense, Volpe was only concerned about his own reputation, as well as funding to the publication he works with, with no regard for or intent to

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repair the damage that he had caused to 2SLGBTQ+ youth, or the false information he had spread about LGBT YouthLine.

This is not the first time that we have been scrutinized and defamed by people with homophobic and transphobic beliefs and it almost certainly won't be the last. We are lucky to have a community that stands behind us, and situations like these only serve to empower us to continue doing the work that we do and standing up for marginalized folks in our community. We will not be silenced and we will not be shamed.

Pride month may come around once a year, but at YouthLine, [we stand proud every day](#). We will continue to fight against false narratives and promote inclusivity and acceptance, in the hopes that our future is brighter than our past. In time, people like Volpe will understand that we cannot be silenced. We are here, we are queer, and we are not going anywhere.

If you hear homophobic or transphobic comments, speak up and educate. We need our allies now more than ever.

About LGBT YouthLine:

LGBT YouthLine is a 2SLGBTQ+ youth-led organization that affirms and supports the experiences of youth (29 and under) across Ontario. We do this by:

- Providing anonymous peer support and referrals;
- Training youth to provide support to other youth; and
- Providing resources so youth can make informed decisions.

YouthLine has been operating since 1994. Our HelpLine provides info, resources, and support through trained peer supporters ages 16-29 with a diversity of 2SLGBTQ+ identities and lived experiences. We are open Sunday-Friday, 4:00 pm – 9:30 pm EST.

For more information, please contact:

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