



The Queer Arabs of Halifax

July 15, 2016

Dear Halifax Pride Board members,

We, the Queer Arabs of Halifax, believe that we have delivered to you all the information to bring to light the marginalization we suffer through the current make-up of Halifax Pride. With the support and collaboration of fellow queer groups of color and advocacy organization, we have done all we can to shed the light on an issue which is your responsibility to have dealt with in the first place.

In our previous letters, as well as our meetings, we have explained, outlined, and re-explained over and over again the ethical duty of Halifax Pride, the severity of pinkwashing and whitewashing, the continuous marginalization of several queer groups of color, and the trauma of giving space to violence in a Pride event.

With all our ability and energy, and through all systems of feedback, we have approached the board and stressed the importance of action. Yet, this issue keeps getting brushed off as being "our issue", specific to the Queer Arabs of Halifax.

When you take on the responsibility of sitting on the board of Halifax Pride, the safety and the humanity of your event becomes *your* responsibility.

It is not our job as an underrepresented group to beg the board to pass a motion.

It is the board's duty to study a concern and pass a motion on its own accord, because it is moral and ethical.

Dismissing our concerns as being 'time-sensitive' is both incorrect and irrelevant. Halifax Pride would not be *forced* to keep a South African apartheid booth at their community event because it is time-sensitive and might disturb the community. Halifax Pride would *not* be forced to keep a violent government's tourism booth because it is time-sensitive. These excuses are unacceptable.

If Halifax Pride chooses to refuse to address our concerns, it is not because of lack of time, nor for any other bureaucratic excuse - it is merely because the board of Halifax Pride is intentionally and knowingly putting concerns of pinkwashing and violence on the back-burner.

We cannot meet with you a second time, suddenly today at your will, not because we refuse to converse with you, but because we have addressed you with respect and put forward all the information your board needs in order to proceed on an ethical, moral, and safe path. We fear that our concerns will be muddied and thinned, brushed over by a series of unnecessary meetings that do not serve to address them nor progress Halifax Pride's events to be a safer space that doesn't put the queerness of marginalized communities at a lesser value.

You have all the information. You have our concerns. These are your issues now. You are the board, and it is your duty to address them. You do not require us at this point because we have said all that we possibly could, and done all that we possible could have.

Before your members go out and claim to have made progress with the inclusion of voices of color and marginalized communities, you must actually address these issues especially when *they* have been brought to *you*. This has become an internal matter now for your board to deal with.

Sincerely,

The Queer Arabs of Halifax