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Queer Ontario Statement on Pride Toronto Allowing Police to March in Uniform in 2019 Parade.

Pride Toronto has released a statement and held a press conference announcing a shift in relations between the police and Pride Toronto via an on-going community conversation. This has perplexed many of us at Queer Ontario and leaves us with many questions:

1. From our perspective, this decision goes against the wishes of Pride Toronto's membership who voted on this issue in 2016 and 2017 and were not consulted regarding recent dialogues. Why was this decision made without the input of Pride Toronto's membership and what authority did Pride Toronto have to make this decision without membership input and vote?
2. Pride Toronto claims there have been changes in the Toronto Police without divulging any details. We note that Trans folks continue to be arrested and face the choice of being put in a mis-gendered jail or being put in solitary confinement (a cruel practice that endanger the mental wellbeing and lives of Trans folks); Police have not apologized for recent actions, such as park arrests of men (e.g., Project Marie), which continues today; No apology has been made for raids of bathhouses (just a mere regret), strip bars and sex clubs; Black, Indigenous and trans people of Color still face police harassment in their daily lives (e.g., carding); many LGBT folks have died due to the negligence of police such as the Bruce McArthur, and Alloura Wells cases and the recently started review was initiated by the community, not the police. What changes have Toronto Police made?
3. Pride Toronto describes ongoing discussions with the police but offers no details. Neither Black Lives Matter, Toronto (BLMTO), who brought this conversation to the attention of LGBTQ communities and mainstream society, nor Queer Ontario were consulted or part of the discussions. Removing community-based groups whom contribute free labour to our communities and movements from these conversations erases the very voices that brought these issues to the fore (BLMTO) from the process and contributes to the anti-black racism that has been apparent in our communities. Whom are the 'trusted community organizations' that are part of these talks?
4. Given the above and beyond discussions, we ask what does Pride Toronto think changed and what accountability measures are in place when Pride Toronto picks and chooses who it converses with, while ignoring the concerns of others, such as its own membership and community organizations?

Queer Ontario is a provincial network of gender and sexually diverse individuals — and their allies — who are committed to questioning, challenging, and reforming the laws, institutional practices, and social norms that regulate queer people.