We in the Jewish community in Toronto have heard support from many politicians in recent weeks and months stating that there is no place in our great city, province and country for antisemitism. Believe me when I say this support is greatly appreciated. Unfortunately, the problem appears to be increasing rather than dissipating. We believe the time has come for action rather than just words.

At the local level, we have seen examples in other municipalities, where by-laws have been passed restricting the locations where protests and rallies can take place. While such by-laws do not stop the thoughts and words of the perpetrators, at least they serve to decrease the confrontational aspect of some of the vitriol. Passing such a by-law need not be specific to antisemitism, but can address a multitude of antisocial behaviours. Of course the success of any by-law is dependent on enforcement.

The police have been doing an excellent job of maintaining control when groups of individuals with conflicting viewpoints assemble in the same area, but true enforcement requires more positive steps to be taken. Police take no action because they truly do not know what constitutes a hate crime or hate harassment. Recently, we have heard from Toronto Police Service representatives that there is a need for education of frontline officers but funding is lacking. Surely, when so many politicians recognized the problem and pledged their support, money can be found. Do we, no, do you, want to see our neighbourhoods torn apart with graffiti, broken glass, injuries and potentially, deaths? This is the direction in which we are headed.

As mayor of our metropolis, we depend on you to be a leader, not just with words, but with strong actions to address the issues. Now is the time for you to step up and show us all that you can be such a leader.

I anxiously await your reply outlining actions that you propose to take to reverse the growing trend of antisemitic activities being displayed in our city.

With appreciation,

Fran Levine

[Personal Information Redacted – Board Office]