**To: Toronto Police Services Board**

**Re: Request for Submissions re Public Order Policy**

July 15, 2024.

To the Toronto Police Services Board:

As a longtime resident of this city, a parent of racialized children, and a Registered Psychotherapist, I have a strong concern about police presence and escalation at protests and demonstrations. Given the peaceful nature of the vast majority of demonstrations, I am confident that our communities can find respectful, people-centred, creative and safe ways to maintain the well-being of all.

Police presence creates tension and polarization at these events, and historically has led to voices being silenced and democracy being severely curtailed.

This is why I support alternatives to policing during public protests. Such alternatives, which are being employed in many cities worldwide, can include

* deploying community mediators to address minor disputes (should there be any)
* mobile crisis response units that include social workers
* support event organizers in deploying additional, well-trained marshalls

I appreciate the invitation to submit this input, and I will be paying close attention to new developments in this area.

Regards,

Sheila Banerjee