

April 8, 2009

Re: Atheist Advertising Ad Campaign

Dear Constitute: (sic)

I wish to acknowledge receipt of your correspondence regarding the Atheist Advertising ad campaign and thank you for patiently awaiting my reply.

I had the chance to review your comments and wish to speak on this file in relation to how it played out at Council. Some of my colleagues approached this file from their respective religious viewpoints, while others voted according to a belief that lines up with the very Rights and Freedoms promised in the Constitution.

With respect to my vote on this issue, I did not support allowing the ads to be put on the sides of our city buses. While I do believe everyone reserves the right to speak their mind, and do so publicly, I do however have some reservations to wording of this campaign and find them offensive to some. Ad campaigns on City property should be reflective of our values and ultimately they should respect the views of all persons who may come across the ad.

For many, God plays an important role in their day-to-day lives. For others God does not play much of a role at all, and for some God does not exist. Either way, people are allowed to promote their belief, but I am hopeful that it can be done in a more open-minded, less offensive manner.

Thank you for taking the time to express your concerns on this issue. I look forward to future correspondence with you.

Sincerely,

*Larry O'Brien
Mayor
City of Ottawa*