

Hello OPSB,

I'm writing to you today to highlight why I, and many other people living in the downtown core and Overbrook areas are dreading this upcoming 'canada day' weekend. As we're all aware, the 'freedom convoy', led by alt-right fascists, are planning to make their way to Ottawa to 'protest' for their.... 'freedom'.

We are dreading this weekend not only because white nationalists are coming to occupy the city again, purportedly for the whole summer, but because the Ottawa police are complicit in the movement these occupiers are pushing and cops will NEVER keep us safe from it.

The connections between the police, white supremacy, and conservatism are deeply entrenched. Police and alt-right social networks (including what we're seeing in this 'freedom movement') overlap. This is where the 'thin blue line' symbols and ideologies in response to the increased scrutiny police are now under stem from. It is not true that police are apolitical and neutral, including the OPS.

The organizers of the convoy coming next weekend are 'Veterans4Freedom' with partners such as 'Police on Guard for Thee', and 'Police for Freedom Canada'. These are far-right, white nationalist groups who claim to be standing up for constitutional rights in response to the remaining vaccine mandates, yet one of [their own spokespersons](#) said just last week " Their issue is not so much with mandates anymore, it's their satisfaction with the federal government." Policing culture is deeply in line with conservatism and in direct opposition to social change that would challenge the status quo of the white, settler, consumer class.

The very groups organizing the convoy coming next week claim to be 'upholding constitutional rights' as well as 'law and order', but this Board needs to ask itself, for who? Because in February the OPS seemed to have no interest in upholding anything except for the convoy's 'right to protest'. Which is again the same narrative we are hearing for this weekend's upcoming convoy. The police, and these alt-right nationalist groups are one in the same. We saw many videos of OPS high-fiving, guiding, and giving shout-outs to the occupiers in February. Members of police services all over the country donated to the February convoy. OPS simply did not enforce the law or protect Ottawa residents from the occupiers harassment and violence. Spare us with the OPS's 'lessons learned' from the winter occupation.

This Board has been presented, many times, with the criticism of the OPS's violent and completely disproportionate response to the peaceful 'We Are Related' demonstration at Nicolas and Laurier led by Black and Indigenous organizers November 2020. The contrast between the OPS response there and their response (and in fact, *facilitation*) of the February's freedom convoy highlights that the police are not apolitical and neutral. They are part of this white nationalist movement, and always have been. And they will use these convoy occupations to demand a larger budget.

Fascism is rising right before our eyes in this country and decision-makers like yourselves are willfully ignorant to the complicity of the police in this rise. We do not trust the cops, and we do not trust this Board.

Sincerely,  
Meghan