

Catherine Fortin Lefaiivre, the best candidate for students in Ottawa

Please note that the opinions expressed in this open letter of support for Catherine Fortin Lefaiivre are my own and do not represent the opinion of any organization that I am affiliated with.

The ongoing Ottawa municipal elections are very important for students in the city. Our city controls the affordability and quality of transit services, the distribution of childcare subsidies, housing issues, the funding of public libraries and much more. I like to support candidates who present real solutions to the challenges we face in our community and who are ready to get to work.

I've decided to support Catherine Fortin Lefaiivre in Rideau-Vanier because she took the time to listen to students' issues and presented tangible solutions to some of the barriers we are facing. Her approach is to stay connected with the residents of Ward 12, promote transparency and engage the community in her work as city councilor.

Over the past four years, the cost of the u-pass has increased by 30% making it the most expensive of its kind. Less than 5 years after removing the age cap on student bus passes, city council reintroduced it last year, preventing students over the age of 19 from getting a discount on transit outside the u-pass program. Catherine Fortin-Lefaiivre proposes solutions for students; she supports the extension of the u-pass program into the summer semester and the removal of the age cap on student bus passes.

Student space on campus is certainly a big issue. At the uOttawa, our small library is at capacity most of the semester, spaces for student led initiatives are limited and we don't have enough residences to meet the demand on campus. Recognizing that students represent an important proportion of the Rideau-Vanier demographic, her platform is inclusive and keeps students in mind. She understands that it is impossible to house 46,000 students on campus and that it is important to create an environment in the ward where students can feel at home and part of the community. For this reason, she will push city council to adopt a city-wide housing strategy that will ensure everyone, including students, can find high quality, safe and affordable homes.

Catherine Fortin Lefaiivre proposes that we look into building our new main public library in the Byward market. Having a main library in the market could contribute to revitalizing the Byward market economy, creating student jobs along with responding to a very specific student need. Indeed, this project could provide a new reason for Ottawa residents across to city to bring their business to the market area, a great opportunity for local businesses in the market to increase their revenue margins and give back to the community through job creation and opening up new employment opportunities for students. But most importantly, this project would

also contribute to alleviating some of the needs in terms of space on the uOttawa campus.

The positive integration of students in the neighborhood has proven to be challenging at times. The uOttawa campus is located next to Sandy Hill, a family residential area, with zoning limitations, diplomatic homes and heritage buildings. This is one of the many reasons Catherine Fortin Lefaiivre believes Ottawa needs to develop a citywide housing strategy in consultation with residents. Because Rideau-Vanier's demographic has a wide range of diverse needs, it is especially important for Ward 12 to come up with a well thought-out long-term housing development plan.

To ensure all residents in the neighborhood feel at home, Catherine Fortin Lefaiivre will stay connected with residents through consultations and monthly door knocking. The construction of the Sommerset pedestrian bridge over the Rideau River will allow for positive housing developments east of the river in Vanier-Overbrook. These developments could also become the key to the successful revitalization of Vanier, Montreal road and its businesses. To ensure all current and future student housing developments are welcome in the ward, it is necessary that the city uphold its housing and zoning bylaws, consult with the community and promote landlord accountability.

Finally, I support Catherine Fortin Lefaiivre because throughout this election she hasn't been afraid to adopt bold positions on important issues in our community. As a mother, she understands and has championed the need for new childcare spaces in the city and believes that childcare subsidies should be distributed to those who face financial barriers, including students. She also supports the introduction of safe injection sites, a proven successful and effective approach to reducing drug usage and limiting risks for drug users and their community. She is not afraid of transparency; she is an honest candidate ready to work with residents of her ward to ensure their voices are heard at city hall. Catherine Fortin Lefaiivre also values the bilingual nature of the city of Ottawa and is in favour of enshrining its official bilingualism by law to protect our bilingual services. We need to elect councilors who are ready to work with their ward, take action at city hall and get the job done. Catherine Fortin Lefaiivre has the experience, the knowledge and the skills to bring positive change to Ottawa.

On October 27th, I encourage Ward 12 residents to elect Catherine Fortin Lefaiivre to city council.

Anne-Marie Roy
uOttawa student & resident of Rideau-Vanier