

Submitted by Annie LaCourt, TMM P13

Dear Fellow Town Meeting Members,

As most of you know, I hate resolutions in Town Meeting. Our job is to pass bylaws, change zoning, and appropriate money. Resolutions often ask us to exhort people we don't control to do things we can't make them do or to weigh in on issues with a much broader scope than our actual writ. I am not happy to see this resolution before us even though I supported the idea of the Human Rights Commission making a statement on a ceasefire. I asked the proponents about whether or not other steps would be more effective and they have said those steps - calling congress people, gathering signatures on a petition - are happening. So why take this step and ask for this resolution? The answer that comes back to me and that resonates with me is this: we have members of our community who are in pain and who don't feel seen or heard. That is equally true for those who don't support this resolution and want it voted down. The problem, as I see it, is that pass, fail or no action no one is going to feel better - at least not for very long. For those who see two sides here, a loss is going to increase their pain and a win is going to be a temporary balm. And I believe no action will also be seen as a win or a loss. So I would like to turn your attention to the last paragraph of the resolution because it is the only one that contains an action we can actually control:

and furthermore, that we extend our support to members of our Arlington community who are affected by this crisis

I am ashamed to have missed the broader need for this until now. I have been wrapped up in my own faith community's pain. I intend to vote my conscience on the merits tonight even though I know it won't resolve anything. But voting is easy. The hard thing that we need to commit to is the work of extending our support to members of our community deeply affected by this war. We need to find ways to come together, to listen to each other, to hold each other's fears and sorrows, and to better understand one another. This is not political work but I hope that we will all engage in it nevertheless. As my faith tradition says, ours is not to complete the work but neither may we desist from it.

Yours,
Annie LaCourt pct 13