

Submitted by Colin Bunnell, TMM Precinct 5 on behalf of a constituent:

I write to you as a resident of Arlington to implore you to vote yes on the Resolution for a Ceasefire Proclamation.

My reasons are simple: I was raised by my Jewish elders to never let another genocide happen on my watch.

It is true that the town of Arlington has little say in the matter. But little say is not no say. Katherine Clark is one of the most powerful members of the U.S. House, and she is depending on Arlington voters for her re-election. If she understands that we as a community urgently support a ceasefire and the return of the Israeli hostages, she may become more motivated to push for those goals amongst her colleagues in the House and Senate, and with the Biden Administration.

A longshot? Perhaps. But we have to try. One of the most sacred Jewish teachings is that if we participate in the destruction of just one life, it is as if we have destroyed the world. But if we help to save even just one life, it is as though we have saved the entire world.

I have heard some people calling a yes vote on the resolution "divisive." I'll admit I find this position confusing. Why is voting "no" any less divisive than voting "yes"? Whether you vote "yes" or "no" on the resolution, violence has already divided us: the violence of Hamas on October 7, and the violence of the Netanyahu government that once propped up Hamas because they needed an enemy in order to retain power, and which now is trying to create an endless war, annihilating an entire people in the process, for the same reason.

Your votes may reveal these existing divisions, but "no" will be just as revealing as "yes." I'll be honest, I was surprisingly moved by this resolution, especially the part that acknowledges the trauma and pain the ongoing violence has caused to Jews like myself as well as Palestinian, Israeli, Muslim and Arab residents of Arlington, and how the longer it goes on the less safe we are in our own town. I didn't know how much I needed to have my pain and fear acknowledged by my own community until I read this proclamation. It made me feel a little safer to be so seen and valued.

And so I have been equally brokenhearted and demoralized to hear that many of the town's leaders are tempted to vote "no" on such a necessary and real acknowledgement, in pursuit of a mythical ideal of unity that is not currently available to us no matter which way any of you vote.

Here's the good news: because a "no" vote isn't any more unifying than a "yes" one, you are free to vote your conscience. I profoundly hope your conscience is calling out for an end to the violence on all sides and the return of the hostages, as mine is. If so, voting "yes" is one tiny but potentially world-saving way to do just that.

Respectfully,

Jaclyn Friedman

Precinct 5