

**From:** [Matthew Garland](#)  
**To:** [Peg Crowe](#); [Paul Condon](#); [Amanda Linehan](#); [Ryan O'Malley](#); [Ari Taylor](#); [Stephen Winslow](#); [Chris Simonelli](#); [Jadeane Sica](#); [Craig Spadafora](#); [Karen Colón Hayes](#); [Carey McDonald](#)  
**Cc:** [Mayor Christenson](#); [Carol Ann Desiderio](#)  
**Subject:** Cincinnati Example for this issue  
**Date:** Monday, June 10, 2024 4:03:12 PM

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Dear Councilors,

I am a pragmatist. What are our underlying needs, where do they converge, where do they diverge, and what can we do to arrive at a solution with the most overlap?

The Muslim community voiced two reasons to support this resolution,

- (a) they feel unsafe and discriminated against in the city, and
- (b) they need a ceasefire language that blames Israel as part of their political strategy to leverage against Katherine Clark.

The Jewish community voiced two reasons to oppose this resolution,

- (a) showing a lack of support for Israel's defense against terrorists puts local Jews in physical danger from antisemites, and
- (b) international conflicts have no place in a municipal government.

The Muslim community's reason (a) is a local issue that the City Council is capable of addressing and impacting. Their reason (b) is not.

The Jewish community's reason (a) is also a local issue that the City Council is capable of addressing and impacting. Reason (b) is not even directly related to the community; it is a matter of procedure.

**The Muslim community's reason (b) and the Jewish community's reason (a) are mutually incompatible.** It is impossible to come to a language that addresses both of those needs, because one needs the language to condemn Israel, the other needs language that supports Israel.

Given this incompatibility of language, I point to this following statement that was just shared with me, made by members of the Cincinnati City Council when addressing a local ceasefire issue.

[Video accessible [here](#), statement at 58:27-1:01:27]

After several weeks of conversations with different stakeholders in the Cincinnati area, we the undersigned, do not believe that we as a Cincinnati City Council can put forward a balanced and unifying resolution on the war in Gaza. Instead, we are asking representatives from both communities impacted by this conflict to discuss a path forward where both communities can have their voices heard. We hope such a dialogue can start to repair relationships in our city impacted by this horrible conflict. As a City Council and city, we believe fostering that conversation is critical to our community here in Cincinnati.

This conflict rightfully continues to cause a great deal of pain within our city among the Palestinian American, Jewish American, and global communities, among the devastating loss of innocent lives. We condemn that loss of innocent lives regardless of ethnicity or religious affinity.

We have heard from numerous individuals about our stance on the war in Gaza. Cincinnatians look to City Council for representation on local, state, national, and international issues, and we have weighed in on occasion on international issues in which the situation promotes a sense of unity among disparate groups. Calling for a resolution that speaks to the experience of all impacted will inevitably be divisive. Expecting Cincinnati City Council to take a position advocating for one specific solution to an incredibly complicated and long-lasting dispute when there are heads of state, ambassadors, and the Biden Administration working to resolve it is misplaced. Our role needs to be to advocate for our entire community and focus our energy especially on solving problems at the local level in our city; that includes unequivocally condemning the rise of Islamophobia and antisemitism in our city.

The way forward for our city is not to divide our communities even more with a resolution, but rather to encourage both communities to come together to dialogue a path forward. Our city's motto is *Juncta Juvant*; that translates to "strength in unity" or "united we aid each other" or "together we strive." It's in the most challenging times when the motto is tested, and this is one of those times. But we need to pull together as a united Cincinnati where we listen to the pain that this conflict has caused our neighbors here and plot a path forward to thrive as one Cincinnati.

Thank you for your consideration. Have a great weekend.

Matthew Garland  
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CC: Mayor Gary Christenson, Carol Ann Desiderio

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