

**From:** [First Lutheran Church](#)  
**To:** [Carol Ann Desiderio](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment 6/4 Resolution 271-24  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 4, 2024 2:46:59 PM

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Good afternoon,

I'd like to submit a public comment regarding Resolution 271-24.

My name is Emily Hamilton and I am the called and ordained pastor of First Lutheran Church in Malden, a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, or ELCA, speaking in support of resolution 271-24.

I'd like to share a letter written by the leaders of my denomination on March 3, 2024.

“The Conference of Bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is adding its voice to the growing group of faith leaders urgently calling for a permanent bilateral cease-fire in Gaza. We urge President Joe Biden, our legislators, and all who lead and make decisions on behalf of the United States to do everything in their power to bring an end to the current suffering and lay the foundation for lasting peace with justice.

As members of the ELCA Conference of Bishops, we are elected to lead one of the largest Christian denominations in the United States, with nearly 3 million members in more than 8,700 worshiping communities across the 50 states and in the Caribbean region. We are compelled to advocate, pray and act by the social teachings of our denomination and by our belief—rooted in Scripture—that all people are made in the image of God.

We mourn the loss of 1,200 precious lives in Israel on Oct. 7 by the actions of Hamas and the trauma for those 250 others who were taken hostage. We mourn the loss of over 30,000 precious lives in Gaza—including tens of thousands of women and children—who have died in Israel's military action since then and the trauma that ripples outward from this loss. We grieve the deaths of more than 400 Palestinians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and in Israel since Oct. 7 as the circle of violence expands and makes casualties of yet more civilians.

Too many have suffered. Too many lives have been lost. Strong U.S. leadership is needed to help bring a comprehensive permanent cease-fire and lasting peace. Our country's leadership is needed to support human rights and the Geneva Conventions, to resume funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), and to provide greater access for humanitarian relief in Gaza, as well as to advocate for the immediate and safe return of the hostages and release of political prisoners, for affirmation of both Israel and Palestine's right to exist, and for a path forward that

disrupts cycles of violence. Mindful of the rise in hate targeted at people across complex intersections of race, ethnicity and religion—worldwide and nationally—we exhort our legislators, leaders and neighbors to oppose hate in all its forms, and we recommit ourselves to partnership in that same work.

Jesus taught: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (Matthew 5:9). We affirm that all our neighbors, near and far, are children of God and made in God's image, and we are praying for President Biden, our legislators and all decision-makers. May God give us and our leaders everything necessary to meet the needs of this critical moment, particularly peacemaking."

Our bishops note that we are called to advocate, pray, and act, which we have been doing. We have called our congresspeople, we have marched, we have chanted, we have written emails, and we have seen progress- some, but not enough. Passing this resolution will tell our representatives, senators, and other leaders that it is not only a few people who want an end to this war: it is the city of Malden, together. This may be just one act among the many it will take to end the violence, but it is the action that this council is able to take and therefore the act it must take. I urge and implore you to vote for a ceasefire, now.

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(she/her/hers)  
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*I'm adjusting to our congregation's new collaborative schedule and its impact on my office hours. My days off are Saturday and Monday; emails sent between 5pm on Fridays and 9am on Tuesdays are likely not to be answered until Tuesday morning. **If this is an urgent and timely matter, please contact me on my cell phone.***

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