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January 31, 2024

Minneapolis City Council
250 S. 4th Street
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Council President Payne, Council Vice President Chughtai, and Council Members:

I support a ceasefire. I support a return of hostages. I support a two-state solution. And I support a vision for a sovereign Palestine and a sovereign Israel in a resolution that brings people together.

The Council has had every opportunity to unite around these common themes. I have discussed these thoughts privately and publicly with Council Members prior to your advancing this resolution.

Any statement coming from City Hall should be built on peace, not on choosing a side. Any City action taken should be about bringing people together, not causing more division in an already fraught situation.

International relations are complex – multi-layered and multi-faceted. The history underpinning the conflict the world is witnessing demands a rigorous and honest examination of the history of Jewish and Palestinian people. The resolution you approved does not.

That these basic tenets need to be stated at all, let alone in a formal letter, is deeply disappointing.

The resolution you approved uplifts the history of Palestinians, and all but erases that of Israeli Jews. Including some people's history as valid, truthful and righteous as it may be, while ignoring others, is neither progressive nor inclusive. That's not in keeping with the Minneapolis I know and love.

Setting aside the question of whether local elected officials' limited time and energy is best spent weighing in on international affairs in the Middle East, you have submitted a formal act of the City Council. Such an action requires a formal Mayoral response.

Accordingly, I have vetoed Resolution No. 2024R-014 in Legislative File No. 2024-00011.

I met with a few Council Members to discuss this resolution multiple times before the Committee of the Whole meeting on January 23. I expressed support for a ceasefire resolution and relayed deep concerns about addressing a constantly evolving situation through one-sided language. My feedback was not included in the resolution brought to Committee nor in the resolution that passed the full Council. As the only elected Jew for the City, that is disheartening.

At a time when antisemitic incidents and Islamophobic complaints have risen nearly [400%](#) and [216%](#) respectively nationwide, we have an obligation to, at the very least, not make things worse. Regardless of your intentions, the impact is that many Jews feel less safe and more fearful, and I can see why.

Council Members have given public statements in front of signs reading "U.S.A. is occupied by Zionists more than Palestine"– which is based on a centuries-old trope. Jews simply advocating for peace and a two-state solution have been accused of having blood on their hands. I too have personally felt the rise of antisemitism in the city I love. I'm not alone in my concern, and it's important that Jews throughout Minneapolis and the metro don't feel alone.

So, let's call the question. If the underlying purpose of this resolution is to lend our voice to advocate for an end to this horrible war and a ceasefire, count me in. My heart breaks for the thousands of innocent Palestinians who have been killed in Gaza and the Israelis killed in the October 7 attacks. I have come to the conclusion that expressions of peace have an important role in achieving it. But too much of the debate locally has been spent choosing sides, rushing to include details favoring one side while excluding those that favor another. We are better than that.

Minneapolis occupies a unique place in our state's history. As a city, we have been the vanguard of progressive policy and humanitarian rights, a leading voice for inclusivity and peace. Minneapolis also stands on a history steeped in antisemitism. With this resolution, let us build on only one of those legacies.

I remain open to signing a truly unifying ceasefire resolution and hope we can do this important work together.

Yours truly,
Jacob

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JF', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mayor Jacob Frey
City of Minneapolis