

Perez, Lori

From: caraseiderman@me.com
Sent: Sunday, November 19, 2023 12:41 PM
To: City Council; City Clerk
Subject: Letter for November 20 Council Meeting - Reject POR 2023 #210
Attachments: CouncilPolicyOrder109_5.24.21.pdf

To the City Council:

It is unconscionable that some members of the Council are proposing yet another resolution that is, at its core, bigoted and antisemitic. I asked the Council to undertake actions to address antisemitism in Cambridge over two years ago when a similar resolution was introduced (see below), and nothing has been done as a follow up; antisemitism is rising to levels above and beyond any other minority group in the US.

- FBI Director Christopher Wray said Tuesday [that antisemitism is reaching “historic levels”](#) in the United States.

“This is a threat that is reaching, in some way, sort of historic levels,” Wray said during a Senate hearing Tuesday. The FBI director said that was in part because “the Jewish community is targeted by terrorists really across the spectrum” including homegrown violent extremists, foreign terrorist organizations, and domestic violent extremists.

“In fact, our statistics would indicate that for a group that represents only about 2.4% of the American public, they account for something like 60% of all religious-based hate crimes,” Wray said of the Jewish American population.

https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/14/opinion/antisemitism-israel-lipstadt.html?unlocked_article_code=1._kw.eVnG.70zMwLay1DEi&smid=url-share

<https://www.adl.org/resources/blog/global-antisemitic-incidents-wake-amas-war-israel>

I know that most of the Council is not supportive of this kind of action and hope that the voices of reason prevail. A resolution like this — that fails to outrightly condemn Hamas terrorists and unequivocally support the right of Israel to exist — is disgraceful. The Cambridge City Council passing this resolution will do absolutely nothing to resolve the international crisis and will only serve to support terrorists and bigots. **Please reject it.**

Cara Seiderman
East Cambridge

Begin forwarded message:

From: Cara Seiderman <caraseiderman@me.com>
Subject: Please read - Letter for tonight's Council Meeting re: POR #109
Date: May 24, 2021 at 8:09:59 AM EDT
To: council@cambridgema.gov
Cc: cityclerk@cambridgema.gov

Letter attached and below

Cambridge City Council, by email: council@cambridgema.gov

Re: Policy Order #109 (0-6 in Council May 17, 2021)

May 23, 2021

To the City Council:

Haven't we had enough divisiveness in the world these days? What possible purpose does this policy order serve? This Council Order will solve nothing on an international level but will instead incite strife and potential violence within our own community. The City has many policies and goals of inclusion and equity, but this is taking a clearly antisemitic and discriminatory action, one that feels aimed towards me personally. I am afraid, for myself, and for my family.

Using the recent tragic events in Israel as an excuse for passing this ordinance is disingenuous and untruthful. This order was first proposed **three years ago** and unscrupulous organizations and outside individuals tried to sneak this in under the radar before people in the community even knew what was going on. Most people in Cambridge are still unaware that this is being discussed. The Cambridge City Council should not abdicate its responsibilities to an interest group whose purpose is to demonize Israel.

Make no mistake: continuing to blame Israel for simply wanting to exist **is** antisemitism. It's beyond fathomable to write the kind of language in this council order, with no recognition of the fact that Palestinian leaders have refused to accept a two-state solution and to advocate for the destruction of Israel – this is the very foundation of Hamas, who started this latest skirmish by firing rockets at Israeli targets. Jews have suffered throughout history, around the world, being used as scapegoats and targets of white supremacy. This kind of unnecessary grandstanding plays right into those tropes.

Jews have been at the forefront of fighting for civil rights in the United States. And yet we continue to suffer as the targets of hatred and exclusion; acts of antisemitism around the world have escalated in recent times, with many violent acts against individuals, Jewish businesses, and Jewish houses of worship.

The BDS movement is detrimental to achieving peace. The establishment of a Palestinian state is a goal we share but will not be realized by extreme and deceptive claims that belie the hard reality on the ground. There are many people of goodwill who are working to establish peace for both Israelis and Palestinians. Boycotts, like the one under consideration, undermine these peacemakers, fuel polarization, and strengthen the hands of those who reject co-existence.

Instead of taking this step, the Council might look towards what it can do to redress antisemitism within the community itself. For example, there have been multiple incidents at the high school with swastikas and other antisemitic language written on the walls and students who sport swastika tattoos. Clearly, we as a City are not doing enough to educate and denounce this form of bigotry. I suggest that the Council work with the School Committee to create a curriculum based on "Facing History and Ourselves," which would be offered in the public schools, as well as in public forums such as adult education programs.

Among the most important tenets of fighting prejudice and bigotry is for people of conscience to speak up. That is what I am doing today. I implore you not to even consider a boycott of Israel. It would be a travesty.

Cara Seiderman
East Cambridge, MA

"Peace for Israel means security, and we must stand with all our might to protect her right to exist..."
-- Dr. Martin Luther King