



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

Legislation Text

File #: 24-0089, Version: 1

Agenda Summary

In support of an enduring ceasefire in Gaza.

Official Text

WHEREAS, The Somerville City Council recognizes that all human life is precious, regardless of race, religion, or nationality; and

WHEREAS, Since the horrific Hamas attacks of October 7, 2023, in which over 1,200 Israelis were killed and more than 240 taken hostage, over 24,000 Palestinians have been killed and over 60,000 wounded, including enormous numbers of children; and

WHEREAS, The ongoing military campaign and blockade of Gaza has caused a catastrophic humanitarian crisis, including the displacement of approximately 1.9 million people (85% of Gaza's population), the near total destruction of the healthcare system and civilian infrastructure, with the World Health Organization reporting that all Gazan hospitals have been destroyed or seriously damaged, and nearly 2.2 million people at "imminent risk of famine," according to the United Nations; and

WHEREAS, Our Federal delegation has been outspoken on this issue, including MA-7 Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley who has been a leading advocate for a ceasefire, who recently wrote "[L]et us recommit ourselves to the belief that life is precious through demanding a ceasefire, which is the best way to save lives, return all hostages, and deliver the humanitarian aid desperately needed in Gaza,"; and

WHEREAS, Massachusetts Senator Ed Markey recently wrote "We must also resume the ceasefire that allowed for desperately needed humanitarian aid to get into Gaza and that facilitated the release of 105 hostages so that all hostages taken by Hamas on October 7 are freed"; and

WHEREAS, Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren wrote, in response to the temporary ceasefire of November 2023, that the continuing military campaign "has resulted in a humanitarian catastrophe, the deaths of thousands of civilians in Gaza, and endangered the region's long-term stability...I've repeatedly urged the Israeli government to stop the bombing in Gaza, and I've pressed for massive humanitarian aid for civilians. Hamas must release the remaining hostages and stop its attacks. The Israeli government should not resume bombing in Gaza, which would be a grave strategic and moral mistake"; and

WHEREAS, On October 26, 2023, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted a resolution calling for an "immediate, durable and sustained humanitarian truce" between Israeli forces and Hamas militants in Gaza, and numerous international humanitarian organizations have similarly called for a sustained ceasefire; and

WHEREAS, Members of the Somerville community, including Palestinians, Israelis, Muslims, Jews, and

others, are experiencing trauma, grief, shock and fear, compounded by increased incidents of Islamophobia, antisemitism, and anti-Palestinian racism, both nationally and locally; **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT**

RESOLVED, That the Somerville City Council supports an enduring ceasefire, the provision of life-saving humanitarian aid in Gaza, and the release of all hostages, detainees and political prisoners on all sides; **AND BE IT FURTHER**

RESOLVED, That the Somerville City Council condemns antisemitic, anti-Palestinian, anti-Arab, Islamophobic, and all xenophobic rhetoric and attacks; **AND BE IT FURTHER**

RESOLVED, That the Somerville City Council urges the Biden Administration, Senate and Congress to work towards an enduring ceasefire, humanitarian aid, and the release of all hostages, detainees and political prisoners; **AND BE IT FURTHER**

RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be sent to each member of our federal delegation and to President Biden, urging them to use their position to enact a sustained

CONDITION/AMENDMENT

AMENDMENT:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, That the Somerville City Council affirms the right of all Palestinian civilians and Israeli civilians to live in peace; and be it

RESOLVED, That the Somerville City Council supports an enduring ceasefire **and/or any means to support long-lasting peace**, the provision of life-saving humanitarian aid in Gaza, and the release of all hostages, ~~detainees and political prisoners on all sides~~; and be it

RESOLVED, That the Somerville City Council recognizes Israel's right to defend itself within the bounds of international law, and condemns the terrorist attacks by Hamas on October 7th;

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Somerville City Council condemns antisemitic, anti-Palestinian, **anti-Israeli**, anti-Arab, Islamophobic, and all xenophobic rhetoric and attacks; and be it,

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Somerville City Council urges the Biden Administration, Senate and Congress to work towards an enduring ceasefire, humanitarian aid, and the release of all hostages, ~~detainees and political prisoners~~; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be sent to each member of our federal delegation and to President Biden, urging them to use their position to enact a sustained ceasefire.