



February 26, 2024

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**President & CEO**  
Erik Ludwig, PhD

Dear Honorable Members of the Santa Ana City Council,

On behalf of the Jewish community, we are writing to express our profound concerns regarding the resolution on the Israel-Hamas conflict scheduled for consideration during your meeting on Tuesday, March 5. This resolution, as currently proposed, is deeply flawed and dangerous, and will exacerbate divisions within our community at a time when unity is desperately needed.

**Requesting Removal of Proposed Israel-Hamas Resolution**

First, the conflict in Gaza is not a municipal issue. It falls beyond the subject matter jurisdiction of the Santa Ana city council. The conflict falls within the realms of the federal government, international organizations, and diplomatic efforts, and addressing them here is not within the purview of the council's municipal duties. Engaging in this matter distracts from the council's primary responsibilities and risks diverting attention and resources from local issues that directly impact the citizens of Santa Ana.

Second, such rhetoric has no place in the discourse of a city council that represents the diverse and vibrant community of Santa Ana. It is essential to recognize the complexity of the Israel-Hamas conflict without resorting to oversimplifications that only serve to inflame tensions and spread hate. For example, equating of Palestinian prisoners with Israeli hostages in the language of the resolution is egregious. This false equivalency is not only factually incorrect – as evidenced by Hamas' unwillingness to even identify remaining hostages – but also serves to propagate vile antisemitic tropes.

**Requesting that City Council meetings are not used to promote hate speech**

It is deeply troubling to us that because some councilmembers have decided to use City Council meetings as a platform for engaging their own beliefs on international politics, the council chambers have become a venue for antisemitic hate speech, particularly since October 7. Such rhetoric from councilmembers, whether inadvertent or purposeful, is aligned with the agenda of Hamas, who could bring about an immediate peace by returning the hostages and bodies of dead Israelis, and surrendering. The fact that some council members appear to support or even encourage this divisive and harmful behavior is unacceptable.

This hostility, often brought into our city by individuals from as far away as the Bay Area, threatens the very fabric of our local community. Jewish spaces, including our schools and synagogues, require armed security. Public schools have seen increases in bullying and antisemitic behavior against Jewish students, and teachers have begun to engage in curricular choices that have the potential to systemically drive Jew-hatred and bigotry into Santa Ana's schools.

While we appreciate that many local leaders, including Mayor Amezcua and Congressman Correa, have been working diligently to address rising hate in Santa Ana, other members of this body continue to engage in symbolic gestures that play into a dangerous narrative that does nothing to advance peace or understanding. Their actions only risk further alienating and endangering members of our community.



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The local Jewish community seeks nothing more than peace for all peoples, both locally and globally. Our Federation, through initiatives like the Rose Project, has long been committed to fostering understanding and cooperation among diverse groups. We are eager to support the Santa Ana City Council in its efforts to strengthen our community during these challenging times. However, the adoption of this resolution would represent a significant step in the wrong direction, undermining the values of inclusivity and respect that we hold dear.

We urge to reject divisiveness head-on. We ask that you work collaboratively with the Jewish Federation of Orange County to heal the divisions that have emerged. Let us focus on fostering a community environment where all individuals, regardless of their background or beliefs, can feel safe and valued.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Amir Kahana in black ink.

Amir Kahana, Board Chair

Handwritten signature of Jeff Margolis in black ink.

Jeff Margolis, Rose Council Chair

Handwritten signature of Erik Ludwig in black ink.

Erik Ludwig, President & CEO

**Board Member Emeritus**

Blossom Siegel

c.c. City Manager

**President & CEO**

Erik Ludwig, PhD