



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL

DAI THAO
Councilmember

City Council Meeting
Council Chambers – 3rd Floor
December 16, 2015

Resolution 15-2233 Condemning Anti-Muslim, Anti-Refugee, and Anti-Immigrant Speech from Presidential Candidate Donald Trump and Others

REMARKS AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY:

Before I read the amended resolution, let me clarify something; it is true that from the beginning the resolution was a working document. In listening to those who support and oppose, my cosponsor and I decided to omit the words that Trump himself was not welcome in the City of Saint Paul.

[Read the amended resolution, [RES 15-2233](#)]

I want to take this opportunity to share why passing this resolution, today, is important. Like many of you, I was raised believing in the sheep and goats parable calling us to feed the hungry, provide drink to those who thirst, invite stranger, clothes those who have none, and look after those who are sick and impoverished. Now, compound that with the childhood experience of growing up in Minneapolis, and being called “chink,” “gook,” and to be told “go back to your country,” a country I no longer have because of U.S. Secret War in Laos.

Free speech is an incredible tool and right Americans can use to shape our destiny, but hate speech that incite harm, fear, structural racism, and division disguised as free speech are hurtful and cut into the core fabric of our nation built by natives, slaves, immigrants, and refugees.

I’ve gotten so many threats and racist letters telling me to go back to my country and “eat rice,” and how “un-American” I am for standing up against racism, xenophobia, and Islamophobia. But, when people like Donald Trump who preach hate on the national scale in almost every news cycle, is very American, but if I stand up to his tyranny then, I am somehow un-American.

Maybe our founding fathers were un-American when they stood up against the British Crown. Maybe I am un-American because I do not fit the stereotypical light skinned, blue eyes, blonde hair – Aryan race that A-dolf Hitler spoke about. Maybe I’m un-American because I don’t believe in profiting off African slaves, re-educating Native Americans, placing Japanese-Americans in internment camps, and incarcerating Black African American men by the millions just so that corporations can make billions.

Maybe I am un-American because I don’t believe in dismantling unions, sending jobs overseas, and I don’t believe in punishing the middle class and poor working families for keeping this nation afloat. Maybe I am un-American because I believe that the quality of life for our children depends on the quality of life for you and yours. Maybe I am naive and un-American for wanting the diverse people of St. Paul to live in harmony and at peace with each other.

Now, I don’t mind being attacked for the sake of those who are marginalized and least among us. But, I will continue to stand up against the Donald Trumps of the world who continue to perpetuate and reinforce systemic and structural racism. I am calling out Mr. Trump on his racist and intolerable “policies” and politiks because they corrode our nation’s future.



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Just based off on the amount of hate letters and calls I got last week, and based on Minnesota facing the largest racial disparities in the nation, it is likely there are more Trumps in our government, schools, businesses, churches, neighborhood, and so on, making decisions that impact and shape our society.

If we don't stand up to say that his statements are not reflective of our values, we will continue to be "tolerant" of hate speech that will continue to hurt and divide our communities. As we stand passively and tolerate, other Trumps will decide which of our kids get to go to college, which of our kids will graduate with a mountain amount of debt, which of our kids get to live in which neighborhood, and so on.

We will continue to be the most livable city for only people of a certain race, from a certain neighborhood, or from a certain income. That is not the St. Paul we want to live in, and that is not the St. Paul my diverse constituents who have elected me, by a landslide, want to live in.

I am calling for the rest of my colleagues to stand with me and condemn the hateful and dividing message of Donald Trump and other candidates that continue to perpetuate systemic and structural racism. And, that hate of any form will not make us great.