



Billy Walsh <bwalsh@natickma.org>

Meaningless Virtue Signaling?

1 message

Donna McKenzie <dr.donnamckenzie@gmail.com>
To: Selectmen <selectboard@natickma.org>

Fri, Nov 29, 2024 at 1:56 PM

Dear Select Board,

Amid the toxic banter on social media is now the accusation that your acceptance of a welcoming policy would be mere virtue signaling. This pejorative term is often bantered about by those who object to “woke” attitudes and practices. Ah, the rhetoricians! Stepping back from this for a moment, there is a sense in which almost everything we do is virtue signaling. We adopt bylaws and practices that embody the values we embrace as a community and those rules and regulations also educate. For that matter, isn’t the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance virtue signaling? “To Virtue Knowledge” is the motto of my alma mater, meaning simply that the values behind what we follow teach us. This “welcoming policy” by formalizing what already is in practice in Natick is necessary to ensure continuation of and consistency in our practices and to remind us what belonging in Natick entails. It is not superfluous. I think we want all our residents to feel safe and unafraid to speak up to our town officials when necessary. We also want our residents to feel like they belong. We don’t want every person with an accent or black skin color having their immigration status questioned. The schools can’t question a child’s immigration status and we need to formally state that town employees can’t question the immigration status of our residents. I respectfully request that you affirm this policy that has been several years in the making and has undergone many revisions. So be it if some try to dismiss the Select Board as “virtue signaling.” Of course, the Select Board is virtue signaling. This is what we elected you to do and what you do all the time. Thank you for your consideration.

All Good Wishes,

Donna

Donna M, McKenzie, MDiv, PhD

Town Meeting Member

Precinct 8

PS I previously wrote to you sharing my family’s own immigration experience and one fb pundit says we are all immigrants so we need to give that a rest. No one should ever give their story a rest. I will not give my story a rest. But some went further and questioned Erica Ball’s right to speak at your last meeting saying she is not a Natick resident. I am counting on you to speak in a united and strong voice and to do so asap. Again, thank you.

Sent from my iPhone



Billy Walsh <bwalsh@natickma.org>

Adopt a Welcoming Immigration Policy

1 message

Donna McKenzie <dr.donnamckenzie@gmail.com>
To: Selectmen <selectboard@natickma.org>

Fri, Nov 15, 2024 at 1:12 AM

Dear SelectBoard:

For me this request is personal. I write to you as the granddaughter of a large family of immigrants who led hardscrabble lives including my grandmother who worked three jobs to support her seven daughters after her husband was killed by a Boston Policeman. My mother never talked about living in the projects and her older sisters having to share shoes, the merciless way they were all teased for their Irish accents. Honestly, I never knew how many people I was related to, because there were no limits to the Irish immigrants my grandmother opened her home to. Were they all legal? For my family, that was not the question. They were human beings who needed shelter and food. The Ireland they had come from was terrible enough that my 16 year old great uncle built a boat hoping to escape and drowned on the River Shannon. My grandmother's only other male sibling joined the British Royal Navy in WWI like thousands of other Irish hoping to be accepted at last by the British and died on Valentine's Day when the boat engine he was working on exploded in his face

Many of our immigrants today come from difficult and harrowing circumstances. I spent time in Haiti where classes were taught outside and sticks were used to write in the ground which was used as a blackboard. I held babies at nine months that were fragile, malnourished, and barely the size of newborns here. I thought then that if I had to live there, especially with children, I would do anything in my power to escape. Haitians are one of the groups of immigrants we have in our community. I am my grandmother's child and asking an immigrant if they are legal seems obscene to me. And it is not our job. I don't want to live in a community that focuses on immigration enforcement rather than the real needs of the human beings in our midst. We have federal agencies tasked with enforcing immigration law. Using our limited resources and overstepping our bounds, especially when we are discussing an 8 million dollar override, is foolish. It is not the job of the Town of Natick to be conscripted to serve in immigration enforcement.

With the impending threat of mass deportations, this policy is more critical now than ever before. I urge you in the strongest possible terms to adopt this welcome policy. In this place at this time, you have the opportunity to proclaim our community as a place where all belong, where humanity and the needs of our neighbors come first. Let us stand with our neighbors in Concord, Brookline, Arlington, Boston, Newton, Maynard, Somerville, Amherst, Northampton, and Lawrence and adopt this policy while building an inclusive and safe community for all who live here.

Thank you for your consideration. Respectfully Submitted,
Donna M. McKenzie, MDiv, PhD
7 Bolser Ave.
Precinct 8

Sent from my iPhone