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On A Welcoming Immigrant Policy this Thanksgiving

1 message

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To: selectboard@natickma.org

Fri, Nov 29, 2024 at 4:38 PM

Dear Select Board Members,

On this weekend of Thanksgiving, when the first immigrants broke bread and gave thanks to the First Peoples of this Land, I am still hearing about factually false, fear-mongering rhetoric, devaluing the purpose of a Select Board policy on the concise and straightforward statement that Immigrants Belong.

Immigrants of all kinds already form an essential part of our community—they have work or student visas, are married to US citizens, or are waiting to regularize their status. Regardless of their status, they are far less likely to commit any crime and far more likely to pay their taxes, build businesses, and roll up their sleeves to do the work that US citizens have the choice to turn down.

The typical stereotypes that immigrants are "invading our town," will change our language, and will commit crimes have been raised every time a new influx of immigrants arrive- or our politicians of all stripes choose to make them the target of focus for our ills. Consequently, since they are not able to vote and live in fear of being deported, none of them feel safe to stand up to this ugly rhetoric. But we can.

Knowing what has come before in our nation's history, it was the Germans. They were no good, then the Irish, then the Italians, then the Chinese, Japanese, etc., and so on since time began in this country.

Our Statue of Liberty calls out, "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses, yearning to breathe free." We were once much closer to our immigrant roots and felt more keenly the suffering of our ancestors.

Today, we must extend our arms around the next generation who also want to belong. As members of the Natick community, this is who we are: the very best of what Doctor King called "Our Beloved Community." Dr. King fought not only for people of color but also for laborers and immigrants. He understood the connections between these vulnerable communities and the oppressive systems they were living under.

All the ugly rhetoric you receive further cements the need for a Welcoming Policy! We are not blind to the persistent stereotypes criminalizing each new generation—they are out there, and they are real—but they are based on untruths, xenophobic information whipped up by people who want to win or keep power. I believe that to be strong, we must protect those who are the most vulnerable because, in doing so, we show the best of who we are.

Let the message go out to the immigrant community that your business, your children, and the taxes you pay are welcome here. We will all be stronger together, as we have always proven to be.

One day, people will look back at this moment and say we were on the right side of history and of what has always made America a great country. Let Natick show we remember our history and ourselves and herald a bright future for all.

Respectfully,
Susan Simone Kang, Esq.