

Dear Metro Councilmen,

I am writing you to urge that the abortion buffer-zone resolution be defeated. This resolution if passed will severely restrict the right of citizens to protest their local government. Its passage would be unnecessary and unconstitutional.

Unnecessary because there have not been any incidents of violence directed toward the clients or personnel at the abortion clinic by any protesters. The only incident of violence was perpetrated against a protester by an escort. This resolution then is a bad solution to a non-existent problem. The protesters pray and offer women help in order to seek an alternative to killing an unborn child. Anyone who justifies violence towards these women is not truly pro-life.

The resolution cites the covid pandemic as a reason for its passage. Putting aside the fact that most of the protesters wear a masks since covid, isn't it interesting how no council member has suggested that other protests observe a similar buffer zone for public safety. It seems that one group's right to protest is deemed safe and another group's protest must have a buffer zone .

Now, I'm not a lawyer but even I know that is contrary to the 1st Amendment. The Black Lives Matter movement has every right to peacefully protest whether the government likes it or not, as long as it is peaceful. The same rights should be guaranteed to abortion protesters. The fact that the resolution is treating them differently makes it unconstitutional.

Lastly it is sometimes said that abortion protesters make people feel uncomfortable. While that may be true, the point of every protest is to make the public aware of an injustice. That's what occurred during the Freedom Rides and it is what all nonviolent protesters seek to accomplish.

The real decision the Council has to make when it considers this resolution is it is acceptable for city government to try to drown-out protests that may or may not be popular politically. The choice is yours.

I urge you to vote no on the resolution because it is wrong for government to try to stifle the rights of peaceful protesters. In fact it's not only wrong, but it's unhealthy for democracy.

Sincerely,
Michael Utter