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Senate

State of Minnesota

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Dear Members of the Jewish Community Relations Council,

Recently, I was a guest on Native Roots Radio. Part of our discussion focused on both the horrific terrorist attack by Hamas on October 7, 2023, as well as the devastating humanitarian crisis in Gaza and significant loss of life that has occurred there as part of Israel's response to the attack. I recognize that a statement I made during that interview minimized the way that sexual violence was used as a weapon by Hamas against innocent Israelis last October.

I have since learned from reliable and expert sources the awful reality about what happened on that day, and that this brutality has in fact been well documented. In no way should I have dismissed it, and I regret doing so. As a wise person recently said, we can't exchange or negate one group's pain for another. We are all hurting, far and near.

The fallout of the war in Gaza and the impact of that conflict has hit us all in different ways in Minnesota, across the country, and across the world. And we are all learning about the violence and atrocities, dealing with it as best we can.

So many have died and been injured on both sides of the conflict – most of them women and children. And, as the anniversary of October 7 fast approaches, I recognize that innocent people paid a horrible price that day, and every day since.

. Ending the violence and the trauma of this war, freeing the hostages, and seeking a permanent solution to the hostilities is critical and I am confident that it is a top priority for the next Administration.

Wolakota, Shalom,

Senator Mary Kunesh