

## Roxanne Maher

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**From:** Anita Merando <armerando@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, February 28, 2025 1:01 PM  
**To:** Town Council Group; Roxanne Maher  
**Subject:** Displaying Flags

To the members of the Ledyard Town Council,

I've listened to many people discuss the reasons to display or not display the Pride Flag and other flags that honor the diversity of our town's population. So many point to division, or the naming of differences. I'd like to advocate for a different interpretation.

Historic fact: We are a country of laws and social norms that have been defined by white men-- currently, 60 to 65% of lawmakers nationally are white men.

In my lifetime, the rights of LGBTQ+ individuals have not been recognized fully. Those of us who identify as "Straight" display our identity freely and in unencumbered ways in all aspects of our society. Our engagements, weddings, births, and deaths are all publicly acknowledged and honored.

Those of us who identify differently have been pushed to the margins. I've heard the argument that the US flag represents all of us, and I believe that it should. But the civil and legal rights of so many of us are still uncertain. There are movements afoot to roll back the hard fought civil and legal rights of specific groups. Let me ask my hererosexual married friends, when was the last time you had to worry about your marital rights being revoked?

Displaying the flag of those whose identities are not in the majority and represented fully by our primarily white society will not rectify social and civil inequities. However, it will highlight the fact that we are a diverse community and that there are contributions and perspectives beyond the majority viewpoint that are meant to be represented by our national, state, and military flags.

National celebrations of marginalized groups evolved because the civil rights and historic contributions of these people have been minimized. As a white cisgender woman, I feel no need to have a month set aside to acknowledge my identity, because it is represented clearly all around me. However, I do see the reason to acknowledge the hardfought rights of women. My own mother was born into a world where she couldn't enjoy the freedom to have her own checking account, to own property. or to receive medical care without the permission of a man. When we don't acknowledge the hardfought rights and contributions of underrepresented groups, we pretend that they didn't have to work hard to establish those rights. We pretend that they are accepted in ways that defy their lived experiences. We need to elevate everyone, and those of us who fit into a majority status can well afford to reflect on the fact that we are not all represented equally.

I not only advocate for the display of a Pride Flag, but wish that as a town we would follow monthly acknowledgments of underrepresented people, not as a divisive measure, but as a way to ask folk to remember that we are all here, in this small town, pursuing a more perfect union.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Anita Merando  
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