

Dearest Muslim Friends,

In the current political climate, messages of love have never been more important. I am writing to you and places and organizations like yours because you deserve to know how loved and valued you are. The world would be poorer without you. You are welcome here, no matter what anyone else says. You are what makes America great.

Muslim friends, you are important. You are our doctors. You are our teachers. You are our leaders. And those among you who are average citizens are just as important. You're important because you're human – you have hopes and dreams, likes and dislikes, passions, quirks, and little traits that make you so gloriously *you*. You are irreplaceable, and we don't want to replace you.

Muslim friends, you are good. You are not terrorists, and the actions of those who misrepresent your religion do not reflect what is in your hearts. You are not responsible for them. It is wrong that the world expects you to publicly decry their actions. They are not Muslims. Islam is the religion of peace, and I hope you let that peace comfort you in trying times.

Muslim friends, you are valid. Your religion is a thing of beauty. Islam preaches kindness and unity, and I have seen those teachings put into action more times than I can count. We as a nation are enriched and blessed thanks to your beliefs and practices. I pray that your faith and devotion brings you nothing but good in this life and the next.

Muslim friends, you are not alone. There are people who will listen to you, cry with you, celebrate with you, march with you, walk with you, and fight with you. There are people who will willingly take on any restriction put upon you. There are people who will die for you if need be. No matter what happens, you will never be alone in your trials. We support you. We love you. I love you. And we will overcome.

With Solidarity and Love,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lauren York" followed by a small heart symbol.

Lauren York