

## Conscientious Objector Stance

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I do not believe in the use of war and violence by the United States, for and in any circumstance. I believe in the use of peace, support, anti-violence work. I believe that war and violence rarely lead to any positive impact, and are rarely inspired and/or led by someone who has a positive impact in mind. Having studied United States history, I feel informed enough about the history of war in America to feel confident in saying that I do not support war under any circumstances, especially in how America wages war. The people in government who decide to use war and violence as a representation of American position have rarely represented my own beliefs, perspectives, and experiences. Additionally, as a young woman of color, I feel strongly opposed to supporting a war effort instituted by a government which has profited off of the institutional use of racism and sexism for its entire existence. Rather than create more upheaval, horror, and pain, I feel the government should first focus on the healing needed from its past wars and acts of violence.

I have grown up in the Presbyterian Church of the USA (PCUSA) for my entire life. My father is a Presbyterian minister and served as the Moderator of the 218th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. My mother has also been religious her entire life, although she decided to become a member of the PCUSA in 1986. For the longest time, the Presbyterian Church has been a home for me, both as a community and as an actual space. Part of the cultivation of that perspective has been an overarching message of kindness and community. Through the invitation of everyone to the communion table, no matter their beliefs or experiences, I have seen the power of openness. Through the church's food bank, I have seen the importance of support. I have learned the importance of community, love, and kindness through my father's benediction, where he says simply "go forth into the world with compassion and justice in your heart...care for one another and love one another. It's all that easy and it's all that hard." Having now grown up and seen larger pieces of the world and other perspectives, I still believe in the messages which the PCUSA taught me. Although I may not agree with every single stance that the PCUSA takes, my experience with the church has been one full of lessons of peace. I have learned how to reach out to people and create solutions through the use of peace and understanding, and I believe that this will always be the best way to approach any issue, on any scale.

My belief in kindness, peace, and social justice are the backbone of the way I make decisions in my life. In high school, I focused on activities that I believed furthered social justice, equality, and equity both in my community and in the United States as a country. These activities included clubs that focused on conversation and peaceful resistance as solutions to the massive issues of social injustice. I have participated in many marches against violence and for justice because I believe in using non-violent tactics. I am planning on dual majoring in politics and Asian American studies, both fields which I plan to use in a career focused on non-violent social justice work, the only true kind of social justice work I believe there is. I have never believed in war or violence, and I feel that is clear through the decisions I have made and plan to make in my life.