



SJ0002 –Use of Nuclear Weapons
Hearing in Education, Energy and the Environment March 8, 2024
Position: SUPPORT (FAV)

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility strongly supports SJ0002. This resolution urges our federal government to make 5 common sense changes to reduce the risk of nuclear war and expresses support for the U.N. Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).

I am President of Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility (CPSR), an organization founded over 40 years ago, to educate the public about the medical consequences of nuclear war. CPSR is part of national Physicians for Social Responsibility, the American affiliate of the Nobel Peace Prize winning International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW). Our mission is to address the greatest public health threats of all: nuclear war and the climate crisis.

Seven state legislative bodies have passed similar “Back from the Brink” (BFTB) resolutions as have over 70 local governments across the country. Locally, Baltimore City, the city of Frederick, Montgomery County and Prince George's County, representing where **43% of Marylanders** live, have passed BFTB resolutions. A Congressional resolution, H.Res.77, similar to SJ0002 has 42 cosponsors including 2 Maryland Congressmen. Marylanders want to add their voices to this growing and long overdue change in Federal policy.

In addition to support for the U.N. Nuclear Ban treaty, this resolution calls for:

- 1) Actively pursuing a verifiable agreement among nuclear-armed states to eliminate their nuclear arsenals**
- 2) Renouncing the option of using nuclear weapons first**
- 3) Ending the sole, unchecked authority of any U.S. President to launch a nuclear weapon**
- 4) Taking U.S. nuclear weapons off hair-trigger alert**
- 5) Cancelling the \$1.7 trillion plan to replace the entire U.S. nuclear arsenal with enhanced weapons.**

If even one nuclear bomb is launched in error, by impulse or intent, the deaths and injuries will be a total local catastrophe and outside help will be minimal or nonexistent. Hiroshima was the site of a small atomic bomb compared to today's arsenal and yet, in a city of 250,000 there were 66,000 immediate deaths and 140,000 deaths by the end of the year.

http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/mp10.asp Most of those who died succumbed to their burns. Most of the hospitals were destroyed or severely damaged, 90% of the doctors and 88% of the nurses were dead or injured. Those who survived the initial bombing were left to suffer in pain without the aid of health professionals, pain medicines, bandages or transfusions.

<https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/resources/documents/misc/hiroshima-junod-120905.htm>

Why preventing nuclear war is a local issue:

It is a local issue because living in the shadow of our capital, if one bomb falls in DC, many Marylanders will be among the casualties and the Federal government will be unable to help.

It is a local issue because, in a limited nuclear war, Maryland would likely be ground zero for at least a half dozen nuclear bombs.

https://static.independent.co.uk/2023/02/09/17/11082355_10152719036461198_739328988790148492_o.jpg?quality=75&width=1368&auto=webp

It is a local issue because, even if one bomb is launched in error, it could easily escalate to a global nuclear war, and everyone on the planet would be at risk. Worldwide, there could be an estimated 360 million direct deaths and another 5 billion people at risk of starvation over 2 years as soot from burning cities blocks the sunlight, dropping the earth to ice age temperatures, changing the growing season into a nuclear winter. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s43016-022-00573-0/tables/1>

It is a local issue because, if we are lucky and there is no war, we are still paying an incredible amount in our taxes for these weapons. The Federal tax budget for FY 23 for the nuclear weapons complex was \$90 billion, and Marylanders paid an estimated \$2 billion. <https://www.psr-la.org/nuclear-costs> . That money could go to education, healthcare, housing, transportation, climate mitigation and smart security.

It is a local issue because, when the Federal government is not doing all that needs to be done, the states step up and do what they can. Examples are: Maryland passing Climate Solutions Now and raising the minimum wage in Maryland to \$15.

It is a local issue because, if this passes in Maryland, we will join 70 municipalities, 6 counties and 7 state legislative bodies in the United States, to give political support a President who wants to make these policy changes.

There have been at least 22 false alarms. “If the president responds to a false alarm, then he will have accidentally started a nuclear war,” said William Perry, Secretary of Defense under former President Clinton. “There's nothing he can do about that. The missiles cannot be called back and they cannot be destroyed.” As expressed by the BBC journalist, the problem is “the deeply flawed brains of bipedal apes in a process involving weapons with the power to flatten entire cities.” <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20200807-the-nuclear-mistakes-that-could-have-ended-civilisation> In 2024, we have to worry about hackers, cyberattacks, and computer bots with policies that are 60 years old, before these dangers existed. These policies have to change.

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility supports SJ0002 and urges a favorable vote. As physicians we know that after the bombs fall, there is no treatment. Prevention is our only prescription.

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