

MGA 2025: SJ0004 – “USE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS” (Back From The Brink) Resolution

Greetings, Senate Education, Energy and Environment Committee. I write IN FAVOR OF SJ0004.

My name is Lou Curran. I grew up overseas in a Foreign Service family, came to Baltimore to attend JHU in 1970 and have lived here ever since. A member of the Maryland bar for 44 years, I'm retired but feel obliged while still alive to do what I can to end our other existential crisis, nuclear weapons. I trust you feel the same responsibility to humanity and our planet.

This is truly **a non-partisan issue**. If a nuclear weapon explodes, it will not check for voter ID, race, gender, religion/creed, immigration status, age or sexuality. Everything organic in a broad detonation radius will be incinerated by a massive fireball or destroyed by a gargantuan shock wave. Unlucky survivors will die of untreated injuries or radiation poisoning, and a massive cloud of radioactive soot from countless fires will plume outwards for dozens of miles.

Hiroshima was flattened 80 years ago by **one** 15-kiloton uranium bomb; an estimated 70-140,000 people died. **Nagasaki** was leveled 3 days later by **one** 20-kiloton plutonium bomb and 40-70,000 more died. Our bombs today are up to 80x more destructive, and **we have some 5,400 of them**, roughly half of the nuclear warheads on Earth. Enough detonations would catapult so much soot into upper layers of the atmosphere that models project their accumulation in orbit would obstruct sunlight, lower Earth's temperature and interrupt our food chain long enough to cause the mass starvation of most of humanity worldwide in a so-called “**nuclear winter**”.

Yet we continue to sit on our hands, hoping this won't happen. President **Reagan reversed the first** nuclear arms race in the 1980s, launching treaties that reduced the global arsenal from some 60,000 warheads to about 13,000. But progress has stopped. **A new nuclear arms race is underway**.

Harbor no illusions: **nuclear weapons are illegal** under the Geneva (1864, 1906, 1929 & 1949) and Hague Conventions (1899 & 1907). **Nukes don't discriminate between military combatants and civilian non-combatants**. We must stop making these weapons, get better control over the ones we have, and get negotiations underway with all 9 nuclear-armed nations in earnest, before it becomes even harder to do with 10 nuclear-armed nations, or 11, or 12...

Citizens have been urging our federal government to address this problem for decades, because we mere individuals can't negotiate treaties with foreign countries. Cities and towns have echoed our cry. Initially, hundreds of US communities declared themselves Nuclear Free Zones, including **Garrett Park** (1st in the US), **Mount Rainier, Sykesville, Takoma Park, Baltimore and Wilde Lake**. Since 1982, over 8,472 towns have joined the Mayors For Peace campaign calling for nuclear weapon abolition - including **Cambridge, Easton, Greenbelt, Salisbury, Baltimore and Takoma Park** - but Mayors can't negotiate treaties. Lately, dozens of major cities and counties – including the **City of Frederick, Baltimore City, Montgomery County and Prince George's County** - have passed “Back From The Brink” resolutions very much like this one. To date, eight (8) other statewide legislative bodies in **California, Maine, New Jersey, Oregon & Rhode Island** have passed resolutions like this one. But only our federal government can actually solve this manmade problem. To date, 122 nations have signed and 73 have ratified the **U. N. Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons**, but they can't force the 9 nuclear nations sit down and deal with this. **The Nuclear Nine must lead here**

We're making some progress in Congress. Last Session, 45 Representatives – including Reps. **Jamie Raskin and Glenn Ivey** - cosponsored House Resolution 77, calling for the same federal Executive action that we seek with this resolution. While 45 in the 118th Congress is more than the 11 who cosponsored its precursor in the 117th, or the 10 in the 116th, **it is still far from enough**.

Like every US president since Truman, President Trump has expressed awareness of this problem, talking about “de-nuclearization” at the World Economic Forum in Davos in January 2025, and declaring at his February 13, 2025 White House press conference that “There’s no reason for us to be building brand-new nuclear weapons. We already have so many, you could destroy the world 50 times over, 100 times over [...] If there’s ever a time when we need nuclear weapons [...] that’s going to be a very sad day, that’s going to be probably oblivion.” MIA for 80 years: genuine follow-through.

We must generate that political will in our Executive branch and our Congress to act affirmatively instead of passing the “nuclear football”, literally and figuratively, from one president to the next, and kicking this can down the halls of Congress session after session. **It’s the only missing ingredient.**

Your VOTE FOR SJ0004 will amplify the calls of the thousands of Marylanders who have called on our government to get this albatross off our backs forever, with individual letters, telephone calls, emails and meetings, through resolutions by our religious and faith leaders, and appeals by military and political leaders, Mayors, City and County Councils. **PLEASE REPRESENT US, EMPHASIZE OUR VOICES, SPEAK UP FOR ALL MARYLANDERS, AND HELP PROTECT ALL OF US FROM A NUCLEAR ARMAGEDDON NOBODY WANTS - - VOTE IN FAVOR OF SJ0004.**

Thank you

/s/

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1985 Public Spirit Award -- the late Rev. Del. Wendell Phillips' P.N.P. organization
2010 Leadership Award – National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers
2018 Fred Bennett Award for Advocacy – Md. Criminal Defense Attorneys Association

Member, Prevent Nuclear War Maryland (PNWMd) coalition
Member, Veterans For Peace, Philip Berrigan Memorial Chapter 105
Member, Grove of Remembrance Restoration Committee, Druid Hill Park, Baltimore
Member, Sierra Club – Maryland chapter
Member, AFSCME – Maryland, Retirees #1
Member, York Road Partnership, Public Spaces & Greening Committee
Member, Radnor-Winston Improvement Association
Member, “War Is Not The Answer”, Marian House annual 5K (2024 top fundraising team)

References / further reading –

Union of Concerned Scientists... www.ucs.org

International Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons... www.icanw.org

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament ... www.cnduk.org

Arms Control Association ... www.ArmsControl.org

Back From The Brink... www.PreventNuclearWar.org

Mayors For Peace... www.MayorsForPeace.org