

Written Testimony for **SJ 004/HJ 006**: Use of Nuclear Weapons - Please **VOTE NO** on this Joint Resolution.

Dear Education, Energy & the Environment Committee:

I think we can all agree that no one wants a nuclear war - EVER.

That said, this Resolution clearly states that “**WHEREAS**, 90% of nuclear weapons are controlled by the U.S. and Russia, with the rest being controlled by seven other countries: China, France, Israel, India, North Korea, Pakistan, and the United Kingdom...”

It is for this very reason that we need to be the **number one** country in defense. We need to be ready at a split second to respond to threats of mass destruction, due to the very fact that other countries that have had a history of conflict with the United States of America have nuclear weapons and the capability of using them, namely Russia, China and North Korea!! We cannot in any way pull back our ability to respond at the very second we may need to respond to threats from any country that would seek to destroy our country and our people.

Our country can still “...**rely on** the assurances of deterrence, that nuclear arsenals are never used...” without jeopardizing our ability to defend our country by any means possible when a threat of mass destruction would be identified.

The Resolution further states “...**WHEREAS**, The U.S. President has the authority to unilaterally initiate the use of nuclear weapons, and during times of crisis, individuals lower in the chain of command might mistakenly do so...” Please explain why the sponsors of this Resolution, and others, may have the expectation that “... individuals lower in the chain of command might mistakenly...” use or release our nuclear weapons on any other country unless we have no other options to defend our country!! The resolution also states “...**WHEREAS**, The U.S. maintains nuclear missiles on hair-trigger alert, making them capable of being launched within minutes and greatly increasing the risk of an unintended or unauthorized launch, especially in current times when tensions are mounting between nuclear powers and the U.S. maintains the right to initiate a nuclear launch...” Do the sponsors of this resolution and others have so little faith in our system of checks and balances in this country that they truly believe that some random individuals in our government would be

able to “go rogue” and launch a nuclear attack on another country? I certainly do not lack faith in our country and our federal government in this regard!! Otherwise, why even have a federal government if we do not trust that the individuals in it will protect our country and us, as citizens?

This Resolution also states “...**WHEREAS**, Living in the shadow of Washington, D.C., Marylanders are especially at risk if there is nuclear war, making it appropriate that the General Assembly of Maryland urge the federal government to do everything possible to reduce the risk of nuclear war starting by error or by intent...” Again, this is actually the very reason that the United States of America needs to be the **number one country** in the nuclear arms “race”. There are too many threats from other countries and terrorist groups like Hamas, ISIS and others that would wish to annihilate us. We need to be prepared for the very worst. My grandfather used to always say, “Be prepared for the worst and hope for the best.” Very wise advice!!

This resolution also states “...**WHEREAS**, Two major conflicts in 2024 involving nations that possess nuclear weapons make multilateral negotiations between nuclear nations more important now than ever...” Please state what those two major conflicts in 2024 were. Is there more that our government needs to let us know? Are our very lives in danger? Interestingly, these major conflicts were not identified in this Resolution.

This Resolution also advises that “...**WHEREAS**, In July 2017, the United Nations adopted the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons which makes it illegal for ratifying nations to develop, test, produce, manufacture or otherwise acquire, possess or stockpile, transfer, use, or threaten the use of nuclear weapons; and **WHEREAS**, As of September 24, 2024, 73 nations have ratified or acceded to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons; and **WHEREAS**, House Resolution 77 introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives in the 118th Congress embraced the goals and provisions of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, as well as the five policies of Back from the Brink to: (1) actively pursue a multilateral verifiable agreement among nuclear armed states to eliminate their nuclear arsenals; (2) renounce the option of using nuclear weapons first; (3) end the President’s sole authority to launch a nuclear attack; (4) take nuclear weapons off hair-trigger alert; and (5) cancel current plans to replace or modernize its nuclear arsenal...” The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is not a bad thing in and of itself. We, as a nation, have to be extremely careful of agreeing to something such as this Treaty and then receiving intelligence that one of our non-ally countries

has still been developing their nuclear arsenal, and then our country has “dropped the ball” in the defense of our nation and our citizens. Also, did “...House Resolution 77 introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives in the 118th Congress...” ever pass Congress? In reviewing “congress.gov”, it appears that the last action of House Resolution 77 from the 118th Congress on 1/31/2023 was that it was “Referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Armed Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.” It does **NOT** appear that this resolution ever passed. Therefore, **House Resolution 77 from the 118th Congress is not valid, nor** are the 5 “Back from the Brink” policies that are mentioned in SJ 004/HJ 006. While I agree that the first two policies of Back from the Brink listed in this resolution, “... (1) actively pursue a multilateral verifiable agreement among nuclear armed states to eliminate their nuclear arsenals; (2) renounce the option of using nuclear weapons first...” are not bad policies to strive to achieve, the other three policies, “...(3) end the President’s sole authority to launch a nuclear attack; (4) take nuclear weapons off hair-trigger alert; and (5) cancel current plans to replace or modernize its nuclear arsenal...” are essential to keep our country and its citizens safe.

Therefore, I am humbly requesting that you **VOTE NO** on this Resolution to show all Marylanders that you put our safety first!!

Please **VOTE NO** on being “...RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the General Assembly of Maryland joins the seven state legislative bodies in Rhode Island, Maine, Oregon, California, and over 75 municipalities and counties, including Baltimore County, Frederick County, Washington, D.C., Montgomery County, and Prince George’s County, in passing a Back from the Brink resolution...”; and being “...RESOLVED, That the General Assembly of Maryland urges members of the Maryland Congressional Delegation to cosponsor a new resolution in the 119th Congress that embraces the goals and provisions of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the Back from the Brink resolution...”; and being “...RESOLVED, That the General Assembly of Maryland urges the U.S. President and the U.S. Senate to endorse the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons...”.

Thank you for your attention and cooperation in this matter.

Respectfully,

Trudy Tibbals