



Committee: Rules and Executive Appointments
Resolution HJ0006: the Use of Nuclear Weapons
Position: FAVORABLE
Hearing: March 3, 2025

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility (CPSR) supports HJ0006. We are a statewide evidenced-based, organization of over 900 physicians, and other health professionals and supporters, that addresses the existential public health threats: nuclear weapons, the climate crisis and the issues of pollution and toxics' effect on health as seen through the intersectional lens of environmental, social and racial justice. As an organization founded by physicians, we understand that prevention is far superior to treatment in reducing costs; death, illness, injury, and suffering.

There is abundant evidence that the risk of nuclear war is growing. Medical experts warned us. In 2023, over 100 medical journals around the world issued an urgent call for the elimination of nuclear weapons, warning the "danger is great and growing."¹ The Nobel Prize committee warned us. In 2024 it awarded the Peace Prize to an organization of atomic bomb survivors, Nihon Hidankyo, "for its efforts to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons and for demonstrating through witness testimony that nuclear weapons must never be used again."² Atomic Scientists warned us when they created the metaphoric Doomsday clock in 1949, and it is now the closest to midnight in its history.³ The arts have warned us with the movie Robert Oppenheimer, and most recently the novel, Nuclear War by journalist Annie Jacobsen, telling a fictional story laced with information about policy that makes the scenario she describes so frightfully plausible.

Policy experts warn about the weaknesses in the theory of deterrence,⁴ the belief that more weapons make us safer. That nuclear war could start by accident is laced through all of these warnings, and it could lead to the starvation of 5 billion people⁵ in the years that follow from nuclear winter regardless of how or why it starts. Imagine the most awful event in the history of

¹ <https://www.bmj.com/content/382/bmj.p1786>

² <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2024/nihon-hidankyo/facts/>

³ <https://thebulletin.org/doomsday-clock/>

⁴ <https://www.bostonreview.net/articles/the-extortionists-doctrine/>

⁵ <https://www.rutgers.edu/news/nuclear-war-would-cause-global-famine-and-kill-billions-rutgers-led-study-finds>

civilization is not an asteroid crashing into earth but the result of a manmade doomsday machine that is launched unintentionally.

For many legislators in our assembly there is the question why should this issue be debated in Annapolis where legislators are being swamped with 3000 bills and a few resolutions about everyday strictly Maryland issues.

Here is my answer to you: we need our state legislators in Maryland to join legislators across the country because you can get the attention of Congresspeople and other federally elected officials in a way that citizens cannot. They hear from the industry lobbyists who directly benefit from contracts to build these weapons but not from the people around the country who would pay the price if the unthinkable happens, not from our children, grandchildren nor the generations to come. In the 90's we met with local officials to get Nuclear Free Zones passed and Mayors to join Mayors for peace. Since 2018, constituents have met with their local legislators who then went on to pass Back from the Brink resolutions like HJ0006 in Baltimore City, the city of Frederick, Montgomery County and Prince George's County.⁶ Now we need you to raise our voice to a higher level. Yes, it is only a resolution. It was only a resolution in California, Oregon, New Jersey, Maine and Rhode Island state assemblies. It is only a resolution being debated in Massachusetts. It was only a resolution that passed in over 80 cities, towns, and counties and states across the U.S that our nation should: initiate multilateral nuclear disarmament talks with the other 8 nuclear nations; renounce being the first to use nuclear weapons and take them off hair trigger alert, a recipe for accidental nuclear war; end the Truman era policy giving the President sole authority to initiate a nuclear launch; halt the \$1.7 trillion overhaul of the entire nuclear triad. Passing HJ0006 in Maryland could inspire legislators in additional states.⁷

President Kennedy, said at the UN in 1961,

"Every inhabitant of this planet must contemplate the day when this planet may no longer be habitable. Every man, woman and child lives under a nuclear sword of Damocles, hanging by the slenderest of threads, capable of being cut at any moment by accident or miscalculation or by madness. The weapons of war must be abolished before they abolish us."⁸

President Reagan and President Gorbachev famously said together in 1985, "nuclear war cannot be won and should never be fought."⁹ This is not a partisan issue.

Chesapeake Physicians urges you to pass HJ6. There is no cost to this resolution but the benefit is priceless.

Gwen L. DuBois MD, MPH

President

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility

⁶ <https://preventnuclearwar.org/municipalities-and-states/>

⁷ <https://preventnuclearwar.org/>

⁸ <https://www.jfklibrary.org/archives/other-resources/john-f-kennedy-speeches/united-nations-19610925>

⁹ <https://europeanleadershipnetwork.org/commentary/the-reagan-gorbachev-statement-background-to-reaffirmourfuture/>