

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 6

To: Delegate Anne Healey, chair of the Rules and Executive Nominations Committee
From: Jeannie Athey, 10 E. Lee St., Baltimore 21202
Date: March 3, 2025

I urge you to pass this resolution because it addresses one of the most—possibly *the* most—important issues possible, namely the prevention of nuclear war. While some people will say that nuclear policy is not an issue within the purview of a state legislative body, I disagree. I believe that taking positions on key national issues is a fundamental responsibility of local governments, and that resolutions serve a critical democratic function. From the earliest days of the republic, local governments have served as a key conduit for the people to express their views, and resolutions have been the mechanism of choice. Passing resolutions is, in fact, one of the most important ways you have to influence the national government.

A key concern for me, addressed in this resolution, is the fact that the president of the United States has the unilateral authority to start a nuclear war, one that could possibly end human life on this planet. No person should have that ability. Moreover, the U.S. maintains nuclear weapons on hair-trigger alert, increasing the risk of an unintended or unauthorized launch. Furthermore, the ongoing expenditure of \$1.7 trillion over 30 years to enhance the U.S. nuclear arsenal is fueling a global arms race, and we desperately need that money for other purposes. HJR 6 addresses all these issues.

Rhode Island, Maine, Oregon and California have already passed similar resolutions, as have Baltimore City, Frederick City, Montgomery County, and Prince George's County. Approximately 43% of the people of Maryland live in a jurisdiction that has passed a "Back from the Brink" resolution like HJ6.

Given the importance of this issue and the fact that the people of Maryland live so close to Washington, D.C., which would be ground zero in the event of a nuclear war, this resolution deserves to be supported. I urge the Rules and Executive Nominations Committee to pass it.