

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 3

E4, P1

4lr2711
CF SJ 2

By: **Delegates Williams, Acevero, Fair, Fennell, Ivey, Kaufman, Martinez, McCaskill, Palakovich Carr, Phillips, Ruff, Ruth, Smith, Taveras, Taylor, Turner, Vogel, Wilkins, and Young**

Introduced and read first time: January 31, 2024

Assigned to: Rules and Executive Nominations

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

1 A House Joint Resolution concerning

2 **Use of Nuclear Weapons**

3 FOR the purpose of stating that the General Assembly joins certain other state legislative
4 bodies, counties, and municipalities in passing a Back from the Brink resolution on
5 reducing the possibility of the use of nuclear weapons; urging members of the State's
6 Congressional Delegation who have not yet done so to cosponsor a certain federal
7 resolution related to the use of nuclear weapons; and urging the U.S. President and
8 the U.S. Senate to endorse the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

9 WHEREAS, Nuclear weapons are the most destructive weapons ever created by
10 mankind; and

11 WHEREAS, 90% of nuclear weapons are controlled by the U.S. and Russia, with the
12 rest being controlled by seven other countries: China, France, Israel, India, North Korea,
13 Pakistan, and the United Kingdom; and

14 WHEREAS, The use of even a small fraction of nuclear weapons, such as 100
15 Hiroshima-sized bombs, which are small bombs by modern standards, could put at least
16 5.5 million tons of soot into the atmosphere and cause climate disruption across the planet,
17 cutting food production and putting 250 million people at risk of starvation; and

18 WHEREAS, A large-scale nuclear war would kill hundreds of millions of people
19 directly, risk starvation for 5 billion people worldwide including in the U.S., and cause
20 unimaginable environmental damage and catastrophic climate disruption by dropping
21 temperatures across the planet to levels not seen since the Ice Age, causing the vast
22 majority of the human race to starve and possibly cause humans to become extinct as a
23 species; and



1 WHEREAS, The U.S. and Russia rely on the assurances of deterrence, that nuclear
2 arsenals are never used, and yet there have been many close calls due to human or
3 mechanical error; and

4 WHEREAS, The U.S. President has the authority to unilaterally initiate the use of
5 nuclear weapons, and during times of crisis, individuals lower in the chain of command
6 might mistakenly do so; and

7 WHEREAS, The U.S. maintains nuclear missiles on hair-trigger alert, making them
8 capable of being launched within minutes and greatly increasing the risk of unintended or
9 unauthorized launch especially in current times when tensions are mounting between
10 nuclear powers and the U.S. maintains the right to initiate a nuclear launch; and

11 WHEREAS, The on-going expenditure of \$1.7 trillion over 30 years to enhance the
12 U.S. nuclear arsenal is fueling a global arms race; and

13 WHEREAS, Despite the incredible expenditure on nuclear weapons, one in six
14 military families are food insecure; and

15 WHEREAS, Marylanders paid an estimated \$2 billion in taxes in fiscal year 2023 for
16 the nuclear weapons complex; and

17 WHEREAS, Living in the shadow of Washington, D.C., Marylanders are especially
18 at risk if there is nuclear war, making it appropriate that the General Assembly of
19 Maryland urge the federal government to do everything possible to reduce the risk of
20 nuclear war starting by error or by intent; and

21 WHEREAS, Two major conflicts in 2023 involving nations that possess nuclear
22 weapons make multilateral negotiations between nuclear nations more important now than
23 ever; and

24 WHEREAS, In July 2017, the United Nations adopted the Treaty on the Prohibition
25 of Nuclear Weapons which makes it illegal for ratifying nations to develop, test, produce,
26 manufacture or otherwise acquire, possess or stockpile, transfer, use, or threaten the use
27 of nuclear weapons; and

28 WHEREAS, As of August 6, 2023, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons
29 has been ratified by 69 nations; and

30 WHEREAS, House Resolution 77 introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives
31 embraces the goals and provisions of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, as
32 well as the five policies of Back from the Brink to: (1) actively pursue a multilateral
33 verifiable agreement among nuclear armed states to eliminate their nuclear arsenals; (2)
34 renounce the option of using nuclear weapons first; (3) end the President's sole authority
35 to launch a nuclear attack; (4) take nuclear weapons off hair-trigger alert; and (5) cancel
36 current plans to replace or modernize its nuclear arsenal; now, therefore, be it

1 RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the General
2 Assembly of Maryland joins the seven state legislative bodies, including the Senates of
3 Rhode Island, Maine, Oregon, California, and over 75 municipalities and counties,
4 including Baltimore County, Frederick County, Washington, D.C., Montgomery County,
5 and Prince George's County, in passing a Back from the Brink resolution; and be it further

6 RESOLVED, That the General Assembly of Maryland urges members of the
7 Maryland Congressional Delegation who have not yet done so to cosponsor House
8 Resolution 77, which embraces the goals and provisions of the Treaty on the Prohibition of
9 Nuclear Weapons and the Back from the Brink resolution; and be it further

10 RESOLVED, That the General Assembly of Maryland urges the U.S. President and
11 the U.S. Senate to endorse the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons; and be it
12 further

13 RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of
14 Legislative Services to the Honorable Wes Moore, Governor of Maryland; the Honorable
15 William C. Ferguson, IV, President of the Senate of Maryland; the Honorable Adrienne A.
16 Jones, Speaker of the House of Delegates; and the Maryland Congressional Delegation; and
17 be it further

18 RESOLVED, That certified copies of this Joint Resolution be sent by the Secretary
19 of State to: the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, President of the United States of America, 1600
20 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, D.C. 20500; the Honorable Kamala Harris, Vice
21 President of the United States, President of the United States Senate, Suite S-212, United
22 States Capitol Building, Washington, D.C. 20510; the Honorable Patricia Murray,
23 President Pro Tempore of the United States Senate, 154 Russell Senate Office Building,
24 Washington, D.C. 20510; the Honorable Chuck Schumer, United States Senate Majority
25 Leader, 322 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510; the Honorable Addison
26 Mitchell McConnell III, United States Senate Minority Leader, 317 Russell Senate Office
27 Building, Washington, D.C. 20510; the Honorable James Michael Johnson, Speaker of the
28 United States House of Representatives, Suite H-232, United States Capitol Building,
29 Washington, D.C. 20510; and the Honorable Hakeem Jeffries, United States House of
30 Representatives Minority Leader, 2433 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C.
31 20515.