



HJ0003 –Use of Nuclear Weapons
Hearing in Rules Committee MARCH 4, 2024: 1 pm
Position: SUPPORT (FAV)

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility urges this committee to pass HJ0003. This resolution urges our federal government to make common sense changes **to reduce the risk of nuclear war.**

Seven state legislative bodies have passed similar “Back from the Brink” (BFTB) resolutions as have over 70 local governments across the country. Locally, Baltimore City, the city of Frederick, Montgomery County and Prince George's County, representing where **43% of Marylanders** live, have passed BFTB resolutions. A Congressional resolution, H.Res.77, similar to HJ0003 has 42 cosponsors including 2 Maryland Congressmen. Marylanders want to add their voices to this growing for a long overdue change in Federal policy to reduce the risk of nuclear war and provide a pathway that our country might join with the other nuclear nations the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Wars.

This resolution would urge our government to reduce the risk of accidental nuclear war and create a pathway to joining the U.N. Nuclear Ban treaty with the other nuclear nations in the future by:

- 1) Actively pursuing a verifiable agreement among nuclear-armed states to eliminate their nuclear arsenals**
- 2) Renouncing the option of using nuclear weapons first nuclear attack**
- 3) Ending the sole, unchecked authority of any U.S. President to launch a**
- 4) Taking U.S. nuclear weapons off hair-trigger alert**
- 5) Cancelling the plan to replace the entire U.S. nuclear arsenal with enhanced weapons**

Why preventing nuclear war is a local issue.

This year is very busy is very busy legislature in Annapolis. Yet we are asking our legislators to support a joint resolution to reduce the risk of nuclear war. Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility believes it is necessary for our state legislators to address this issue.

If the unthinkable happens, even one nuclear bomb is launched by error, impulse or intent, the deaths and injuries will be a totally local catastrophe and no help from the outside will be enough. Hiroshima was the site of a small atomic bomb compared to today's arsenal (15 kttons)and yet, in a city of 250,000 there were 66,000 immediate deaths and 140,000 deaths by the end of the year. http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/mp10.asp Most of those who died succumbed to their burns. Most of the hospitals were destroyed or severely damaged, 90% of the

doctors and 88% of the nurses were dead or injured. So those who survived the initial bombing were left to suffer in pain without the aid of health professionals, pain medicines, bandages or transfusions. <https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/resources/documents/misc/hiroshima-junod-120905.htm> If one bomb falls in DC, Marylanders will be among the casualties and the Federal government will be unable to help us.

It is a local matter because if one bomb is launched in error, it could easily escalate to a global nuclear war, and everyone on the planet would be at risk; 300 million immediate deaths and then 5 billion more people dying of starvation if nuclear winter occurs from the soot produced by burning cities lofting into the stratosphere, above where it can be rained down, blocking sunlight, dropping temperatures 8 degrees centigrade, lower than ice age temperatures. <https://thebulletin.org/2022/10/nowhere-to-hide-how-a-nuclear-war-would-kill-you-and-almost-everyone-else/>

It is a local matter because if we are lucky and there is no war, we are still paying an incredible amount in our taxes for these weapons. The Federal tax budget for FY 23 for the nuclear weapons complex was \$90 billion, and Marylanders paid an estimated \$2 billion. <https://www.psr-la.org/nuclear-costs> . That money could go to education, healthcare, housing, transportation, climate mitigation.

It is a local matter because when the Federal government is not doing all that needs to be done, the states step up and do what they can. Examples are: the climate crisis and Maryland's leadership in passing important legislation in Annapolis, Climate Solutions Now. Also, raising minimum wage where Maryland has passed important legislation. There is nothing more important than preventing nuclear war. Current Federal policies are over 60 years old, created before there were cyber wars, computer bots, and other ways to hack into "secure technology." There have been at least 22 close call false alarms. "If the president responds to a false alarm, then he will have accidentally started a nuclear war," says William Perry, who served as the US Secretary of Defense under former President Bill Clinton and the Undersecretary of Defense for the Carter administration. "There's nothing he can do about that. The missiles cannot be called back and they cannot be destroyed." <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20200807-the-nuclear-mistakes-that-could-have-ended-civilisation> Errors have and could happen. As written in the BBC report above the problem is we are "involving the deeply flawed brains of bipedal apes in a process involving weapons with the power to flatten entire cities. In 2016, several US air-crew working at a missile base admitted to taking drugs including cocaine and LSD, and four were later convicted." Now we have to worry about hackers, cyperattacks, and computer bots. These policies were developed long before those dangers were even imagined.

It is a local matter because if this passes in Maryland, we will be joining the 70 other municipalities, 6 counties and 7 state legislative bodies across the country, to tell a President who wants to make simple, necessary policy changes to reduce the risk of accidental nuclear war, that Marylanders have your back.

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility supports HJ003 and urges delegates to vote favorably. As physicians we know that after the bombs fall, there is no treatment. "Prevention is our prescription." It is priceless.

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