

SJ0004—Nuclear Arms Control—March 12, 2026; 1:00 PM, Education, Energy and the Environment Committee Position: SUPPORT (FAV)

Testimony of James P. Wagner, Ph.D., L.E.H.S. on behalf of interdisciplinary organization, Plant the Light

Our favorable testimony focuses particularly on why this issue requires State Government input on an ostensibly, Federal government issue. I enumerate these points below. **The overarching argument is two fold: 1) on Federal issues where the Federal government is not acting, the States have a moral duty to ask it to act ; and 2) sufficient legal precedent allows States to have a voice in such situations.**

- A) Regarding point **1)** above, the Federal government is largely not acting on nuclear arms control. Most significantly, despite an offer by the Russians to extend the numerical limits on the cornerstone New START treaty (the last remaining bilateral nuclear arms control agreement between the U.S. and Russia) the Trump Administration let the Treaty expire on February 5th of this year, without plans to replace it.
- B) Since Federal policy makers are not acting, and given that Marylanders are under an increasing threat from nuclear weapons (see below “Doomsday Clock”), State and Local Governments should step in to fulfill their obligation to protect their citizens. This Resolution (SJ0004/HJ0007) is consistent with that notion.
- C) Moreover, and regarding point **2)** above, in a sphere of activity where Federal action is lacking or where the activity is ostensibly Federal purview, there is substantial precedent for States taking their own, independent actions. Examples in Maryland include the State minimum wage, our State's RPS renewable portfolio energy standard, and our State's wide-ranging environmental legislation, in which facilities (including Federal facilities) must be permitted by Maryland and must follow Maryland Regulations. While it's true that nuclear weapons treaties are Federal purview, the 10th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution reserves, in the absence of stated Constitutional prohibitions against them (which is the case here), “powers” to the States or to the people. The States clearly have a legal right to pass Resolutions encouraging Federal action on issues where the Federal government is not acting faithfully and competently.
- D) In that vein, across the U.S., there is widespread and growing consensus that state and local governments have this right and obligation— to be engaged in the conversation on nuclear weapons. The updated totals are 78 Municipalities and Counties and 8 state legislative bodies which have already adopted Resolutions similar to SJ0004/HJ0007, and the numbers continue to grow. Please see the national [Back from the Brink](#) home page for more.
- E) SJ0004 mirrors a Federal Resolution from the 119th Congress, H. Res. 317, and calls for support of this “new resolution.” It represents a collaboration between Maryland and the other jurisdictions across the country, as well as the 50+ enlightened members of Congress, **5 from Maryland**, endorsing H.Res 317, to reduce the nuclear threat. The Senate and House of Maryland have every right to make this statement and join in this collaboration. Indeed, with the [Doomsday Clock](#) now at 85 seconds to midnight, and with nuclear weapons cited as a major factor in its recent advancement

toward “midnight,” it is the moral duty of the Maryland Senate and House to join in this collaboration.

F) The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), cited in both State Resolutions, and a centerpiece of the Federal Resolution, was adopted in the UN in 2017, in overwhelming consensus by 122 countries of the world. There is global consensus that nuclear weapons must be eliminated.

Contact: James P. Wagner with any questions: 240-586-1215,
your.james.wagner@gmail.com