

## **Proposed VT Resolution to Move Us Back from the Brink of Nuclear War**

Whereas, nine nations collectively have 12,500 nuclear weapons in their arsenals, most of which are far more destructive than those that killed hundreds of thousands of people in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945,

Whereas, the detonation of even a small number of these weapons could have catastrophic human and environmental consequences that could threaten human civilization itself and affect everyone on the planet,

Whereas, the United States and Russia maintain a policy of hair-trigger alert for its nuclear missiles which are capable of being launched within minutes after a presidential order,

Whereas, the United States continues to reserve the right to use nuclear weapons first, which reduces the threshold for nuclear use and makes a nuclear war more likely,

Whereas, the U.S. president has the sole and unchecked authority to order the use of nuclear weapons,

Whereas, the U.N. Secretary General recently warned that amid rising tensions globally, “‘Humanity is just one misunderstanding, one miscalculation away from nuclear annihilation,”

Whereas, recently there has been an unnerving increase in governments threatening to use nuclear weapons, which causes stress on everyone and on our feeling of common security,

Whereas, the U.S. military has over 800 military bases around the world which create tensions with other nations and are another threat to common security and,

Whereas, U. S. taxpayers are indebted for roughly \$10.3 million every hour of every day to maintain the U.S. nuclear arsenal and its associated costs,

Whereas, the United States plans to spend an estimated \$756 billion between 2021 and 2030 and \$1.7 trillion by 2046 – to replace its entire nuclear arsenal and the bombers, missiles and submarines that deliver them with more capable, more usable versions,

Whereas, the United States, as well as Britain, China, France and Russia are obligated under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to take concrete steps toward eliminating their nuclear arsenals,

Whereas, the enormous costs of nuclear weapons and of other military expenditures greatly diminish funding which is crucial to meeting the basic needs and the common security of the people of our communities,

Whereas, in July 2017, 122 nations approved the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) which entered into force on January 22, 2021, making it illegal under international law to develop, test, produce, manufacture, or otherwise acquire, possess or stockpile nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices; as of September 30, 2023, 93 countries have signed the treaty and 69 countries have ratified it,

Whereas, a grassroots coalition called, “Back from the Brink: Bringing Communities Together to Abolish Nuclear Weapons” (See: <https://preventnuclearwar.org/>) has been endorsed by over 465 health, environmental, academic, peace, faith, and justice organizations and over 80 U.S. municipalities and

states have adopted resolutions supporting Back from the Brink's policy solutions, including Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, Salt Lake City, Tucson, the Maine Senate, California. and Oregon.

Whereas, all adults in every country have the responsibility for cherishing and providing a safe and secure world for all the world's children now and into the future,

Therefore be it resolved that the Vermont General Assembly expresses its strong support for the United States Congress and the Administration to step away from the brink of nuclear war by redefining "national security" to mean "common or collective security" in order to work for the security of all based on our common humanity, and

Be it further resolved, that in order to being a trustworthy partner with other nations, this would require a new way of thinking which would be to always use diplomacy and good faith negotiation in resolving misunderstandings rather than assuming we must use violence to settle conflicts with other nations, and

Be it further resolved that the Vermont General Assembly also advocates that our federal government join the national Back from the Brink campaign to work specifically on these issues:

- Renouncing the option of using nuclear weapons first,

- Ending the sole, unchecked authority of any U.S. President to launch a nuclear attack,

- Adding more protections to the current hair-trigger alert system for U.S. nuclear weapons to lower the risk of accidental or unauthorized launches.,

- Cancelling the plan to replace the U.S. nuclear arsenal with enhanced weapons,

- Actively pursuing a verifiable agreement among nuclear-armed states to eliminate nuclear weapons.

And be it further resolved that the state of Vermont calls on the United States to embrace the goals and provisions of the U.S. Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and adopt common sense policies to help prevent nuclear war.

And be it further resolved that the Vermont Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Governor, the President of the United States, the U.S. Secretary of State, the U.S. Secretary of Defense, and the Vermont Congressional delegation.