

State of Vermont

House of Representatives



Montpelier, Vermont

Joint House Resolution

J.R.H. 1

Joint resolution urging the President to issue an executive order and the Congress to enact a federal law prohibiting a U.S. nuclear first strike

Offered by: Representatives Sullivan of Burlington, Anthony of Barre City, Burke of Brattleboro, Campbell of St. Johnsbury, Coffey of Guilford, Colburn of Burlington, Cordes of Lincoln, Gonzalez of Winooski, Hill of Wolcott, Houghton of Essex, Howard of Rutland City, Jessup of Middlesex, Killacky of South Burlington, Kitzmiller of Montpelier, Macaig of Williston, Masland of Thetford, McCormack of Burlington, McCullough of Williston, O'Sullivan of Burlington, Squirrel of Underhill, Walz of Barre City, and Wood of Waterbury

Whereas, the use of even a small number of nuclear weapons could have catastrophic human, environmental, health, and economic consequences on a global scale, and

Whereas, according to the Arms Control Association (the Association), roughly 15,000 nuclear warheads still exist in the world and pose an intolerable risk to humanity, and

Whereas, the Association reports that the United States has in excess of 6,500 nuclear weapons that combined are massively more powerful than all the bombs used in World War II, and

Whereas, according to a Congressional Budget Office estimate, from 2017 to 2046, the United States will spend \$1.2 trillion, in inflation-adjusted dollars, on nuclear weapons, and

Whereas, these figures represent a major rebuilding of the United States' nuclear weapons arsenal, constituting a gross misuse of funds that could be devoted instead to improving security, health, and education, and

Whereas, the United States maintains roughly 900 nuclear weapons on high alert to be ready for launch within minutes of a presidential decision to proceed, making these nuclear weapons vulnerable to accidents, unauthorized use, cyberattacks, miscalculations, and increasing the risk of their use, and

Whereas, according to the U.S. Department of Defense's publication, *Nuclear Posture Review*, if a nuclear-armed nation such as China, North Korea, or Russia launches a nonnuclear attack against the United States, the President, who has the sole authority to order a nuclear attack, reserves the right to launch a nuclear response, resulting in a nuclear war with globally devastating consequences, and

Whereas, the sole purpose of U.S. nuclear weapons should be to deter a nuclear attack on the United States, its forces, and its allies, negating any reason for the United States to ever use nuclear weapons first, and

Whereas, both an executive order and a corresponding federal law prohibiting the first use of nuclear weapons would severely constrain the ability of the President to order a nuclear attack, authorizing an American nuclear response only when an actual nuclear attack has occurred, and

Whereas, Americans, and all people on the planet, should have the right to live a life free from the threat of nuclear weapons being used, and

Whereas, the United States should take urgent steps to change its policies as well as actively pursue verifiable agreements with other nuclear-armed nations in order to reduce the number of nuclear weapons and ultimately eliminate them from the planet, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly urges the President to issue an executive order and the Congress to enact a federal law prohibiting a U.S. nuclear first strike, and be it further

Resolved: That the General Assembly urges Congress not to appropriate funds for the development and production of additional U.S. nuclear weapons that can produce a relatively small nuclear explosion, as such weapons would tempt rogue nuclear war fighting and potentially lower the threshold for a nuclear first strike, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United States, the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, the U.S. Senate Majority Leader, and the members of the Vermont Congressional Delegation.

