



Organizing Guide for Resolutions, Proclamations and Public Statements

Securing support for “Back from the Brink: The Call to Prevent Nuclear War” from organizations, elected officials and legislative bodies, is a critical way to demonstrate broad and politically influential support across the country for the initiative and the five fundamental changes in US nuclear weapons policy for which we are advocating. This document offers some suggestions and best practices for how to pursue these efforts effectively.

Establish Goals and Desired Outcomes

Determine which elected official or municipal legislative body (such as a town or city council or county board) that you would like to engage. If possible start close to home, so that you begin the process with the inherent power that you have as a constituent. If you want to approach a legislative body, familiarize yourself with the terminology for its prior statements of support on other issues. Many municipalities refer to such statements as resolutions, but others refer to them as memorials, or proclamations, or statements included in their administrative record.

A sample resolution and request for support can be found on the Advocacy Tools page of our website www.preventnuclearwar.org which you can customize for your municipality. You may wish to include “whereas” statements about your municipality’s history related to nuclear disarmament, the health and environmental impact of a nuclear weapons-related facility if there’s one nearby, or the staggering nuclear weapons-related costs to taxpayers in your municipality. Thoughtful whereas statements that highlight the intersections between nuclear weapons and other issues – such as climate change or economic, environmental, and racial justice – can strengthen your resolution and help you build a diverse coalition of support. The only requirement for the resolution to be considered part of the Back from the Brink initiative is that it includes support for all five points in our policy platform. We also strongly recommend language indicating that the municipality will send a copy of the resolution to that area’s congressional delegation and the President (per our sample resolution.)

Our sample resolution includes an optional “let it be resolved” calling on the United States to embrace the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW.) Municipalities that include this statement in their resolution will be included in the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons’ Cities Appeal, which is a movement to gain support for the TPNW from cities throughout the world that was inspired by Back from the Brink.

Working with Allies/Building a Coalition

Identify and reach out to your existing partner groups and other community leaders and seek their involvement and ideas BEFORE approaching the elected officials that you want to work with you on this effort.

1. Ask organizations in your area to endorse Back from the Brink. Peace, faith, health, environmental, policy and justice groups are natural allies, but you may want to reach out to other local civic organizations as well. A sample request for support is on our website www.preventnuclearwar.org.
2. Review the list of organizations who have endorsed Back from the Brink on our website's "Who's on Board" page. Many have chapters or members throughout the country, possibly near you, who could join you in your efforts.
3. Contact Back from the Brink organizers at info@preventnuclearwar.org and we will help connect you to others in your area.

Throughout this process, we urge you to build and strengthen relationships with groups in your community working on an array of critical social issues, especially racial justice. We who work for peace and justice cannot be silent about systemic racism. We must work together to dismantle systems of oppression in the U.S., from our original sin of racism to the ever-present threat of nuclear annihilation. We hope that the relationships that you build while organizing for Back from the Brink will be lasting and mutually beneficial for your community.

Learn the Local Process and Rules

Every legislative body has different rules for how they operate, when and what types of issues can be considered, filing deadlines, legal vetting, etc. Research these rules and talk to the appropriate staff members, such as city clerks, staff for your representative, or the office of legislative counsel in a state legislature. In particular, research the procedures for resolutions or proclamations, as those kinds of items may have a different process than legislation.

If you have a relationship with a representative on the legislative body from which you're seeking support, contact that person and ask for his or her advice on introducing a Back from the Brink resolution. Ask your local partners or allied groups if they have helpful relationships or experience with that legislative body and if so, if they have recommendations on how to proceed or if they would make an introduction to any officials who have championed their efforts. Research the legislative body and prospective resolution sponsors. How have these kinds of initiatives been managed in the past? Which elected official/s would be most likely to sponsor or introduce a Back from the Brink resolution?

Be persistent and make sure to follow up if your queries go unanswered for more than a week or two. Don't assume that a lack of response indicates an unwillingness to consider a resolution, as it may simply be that the person to whom you've reached out is busy. If it appears that getting a resolution adopted by a legislative body is unlikely, you may want to approach a community leader such as a Mayor, Council President, or your own local representative, and ask if that person will endorse Back from the Brink

If an elected official agrees to sponsor your resolution, consult with them to make sure you know the date and time the resolution will be heard in the legislative body including any committee hearings. They may also have helpful advice on which elected officials need extra attention from you, such as calls or a meeting, in order to gain a supportive vote. Ask your allies and partners to submit letters of support and to attend and testify at meetings where the resolution will be up for a vote. Learn the rules for public testimony, such as when the testimony is heard (at the beginning of the meeting or just prior to the resolution vote), how community members sign up to speak, and importantly, how much time each community member will be allotted for public testimony. Share information on social media to educate your community, and tag elected officials in your posts to put pressure on them to support the resolution.

Talk to Groups Who Have Experience Doing This

Reach out to groups who've helped conceive and manage successful Back from the Brink efforts and can share lessons learned and things to avoid. One lesson we've learned is that while the resolution processes have commonalities, each has also been a little different in its own way. Some have required months of effort and individual meetings with multiple legislators, while other processes were more simple and streamlined. We can help you get started, connect you with groups who have experience with Back from the Brink resolutions, and provide support all along the way – just contact us at info@preventnuclearwar.org.

Share Your Progress

Be sure to let us know when your Back from the Brink resolution has been introduced, when it is up for a vote, and the results of the vote so that we can help support you and amplify your success. Take photos during and after relevant meetings, post them on social media (tag us on Facebook [@preventnuclearwar](#), Twitter [@backfrombrink](#), and Instagram [@backfrombrink](#)) and send photos to us so we can share them too. Write a press release or summary of your experience and send that to us to share as well. If your resolution also included support for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, remember to contact ICAN at info@icanw.org so that they can add it to their Cities Appeal campaign. Finally, remember to thank the elected officials who championed your resolution and the legislative body that adopted it.

Help Build the Movement

Once you've had time to celebrate and rest, consider approaching another nearby town or city. Each Back from the Brink success inspires others and helps build our movement for a safer, nuclear weapons free world. Consider scheduling a visit with your Congressional representative to let him or her know about the growing support in your community for our five-point policy platform. Two of those policies – Renouncing First Use (H.R. 921 and S. 272) and Restricting Presidential Authority (H.R. 669 and S. 200) are currently represented in legislation before Congress, and all five of our policy points are included in House Resolution 302 (H.Res302.)