



H. RES. 77 Q&A BACKGROUNDER FOR HOUSE OFFICES

A resolution calling on the United States to take concrete steps to prevent nuclear war and pursue global nuclear disarmament May, 2023

Summary

Introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives on January 31, 2023 by Rep. Jim McGovern (D-MA) and Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), H. Res. 77 is a critical legislative organizing vehicle to elevate congressional debate and leadership on nuclear disarmament and risk reduction at a time when the risk of nuclear war is greater than it's been in over 60 years.

What Does H. Res. 77 Propose?

H. Res. 77 calls on the United States to embrace the goals and provisions of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) and to take concrete steps to prevent nuclear war including:

- actively pursuing and concluding negotiations on a new, bilateral nuclear arms control and disarmament framework agreement with the Russian Federation before 2026 and pursuing negotiations with China and other nuclear-armed states on an agreement or agreements for the verifiable, enforceable, and timebound elimination of global nuclear arsenals;
- renouncing the option of using nuclear weapons first;
- ending the President's sole authority to launch a nuclear attack;
- taking the nuclear weapons of the United States off hair-trigger alert; and
- canceling the plan to replace the nuclear arsenal of the United States with modernized, enhanced weapons.

Who Supports H. Res. 77?

Over [150 national and local organizations from around the country have endorsed H. Res. 77](#). Those groups include Union of Concerned Scientists, Physicians for Social Responsibility, Sierra Club, Natural Resources Defense Council, Pax Christi USA, Soka Gakkai International USA, United Church of Christ, 350, Islamic Society of North America, Friends of the Earth USA, Peace Action, United Methodist Church and dozens of local and regional organizations. H. Res. 77's policy prescriptions mirror those of [Back from the Brink \(BftB\): Bringing Communities Together to Abolish Nuclear Weapons](#), a national grassroots coalition which worked closely with Rep. McGovern's office to develop the legislation and which is actively working to promote it and increase support for it. Some 446 organizations have endorsed BftB and [77 municipalities, counties and state legislative bodies have passed BftB resolutions](#).

Is this really a good time to be advocating for nuclear arms control & disarmament?

Yes. This time of war, Vladimir Putin's nuclear saber rattling and heightened global tensions is precisely the moment when the United States, Russia, China and all nuclear weapons states need to recognize their mutual self-interest—and that of all humanity—in preventing a catastrophic nuclear war. In the mid-1980's at the height of the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union did just that and negotiated significant arms control and reduction agreements that made the world much safer. Today, there is only one agreement remaining—New START, which is set to expire in February, 2026—that places limits on US and Russian nuclear forces and prevents a costly, dangerous global nuclear arms race.

Why Should U.S. House Members Cosponsor H. Res. 77?

It is one of the most important responsibilities of most local, state and federal elected officials to do all they can to keep their constituents safe. Nuclear weapons do not make us safe and threaten all of humanity and every community. Nuclear weapons did nothing to deter Vladimir Putin from invading Ukraine and cannot help to end the war. The hundreds of billions spent annually to develop and maintain nuclear weapons rob communities and our nation of taxpayer dollars to support programs that address real security concerns and threats in our communities, including poverty, lack of affordable housing and health care, climate change and other environmental threats, and the ongoing scourge of gun violence. Before the unthinkable happens, it is imperative that more members of Congress assume leadership in advocating for bold, common sense policy reforms and for the United States to reaffirm and commit to pursuing a world free of nuclear weapons.

For it to act, the Biden administration needs to know that nuclear arms control and disarmament is a key priority for many members of Congress who have the Administration's back and support the policies being proposed by H. Res. 77.

Does H. Res. 77 Call on the United States to Sign & Ratify the [Treaty on the Prohibition on Nuclear Weapons \(TPNW\)](#)?

No. The title and first line of the resolution calls for “embracing the goals and provisions of the TPNW” which is an urgent call for the United States to begin negotiations with the other eight nuclear-armed states to eliminate all nuclear weapons and begin ushering in a new security environment that is not dependent on weapons that can end human civilization.

More specifically, embracing the goals and provisions of the TPNW is an affirmation that it is in the interests of the United States to (1) not undermine the TPNW, (2) recognize it as a growing international norm, and (3) work toward the goal of negotiations with the other eight nuclear-armed states for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons in accord with its existing commitment under Article VI of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT).

In regards to point (3), the framework for such negotiations, whether it be the TPNW, NPT, or some other framework that does not yet exist is secondary. H. Res.77 urges support for whatever pathway toward negotiations is most politically viable for the United States.

Does the Biden Administration Support Efforts to Abolish Nuclear Weapons?

Yes, and the Administration needs to know Congress has its back if it takes action. In August, 2022 [President Biden reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to the “ultimate goal of working toward a world free of nuclear weapons”](#) and stated “there is no benefit to any of our nations, or for the world, to resist substantive engagement on arms control and nuclear non-proliferation.”

Who Should We Contact to Co-Sponsor H. Res. 77?

To cosponsor H. Res. 77 or for more information, please contact Cindy Buhl (Rep. McGovern) at cindy.buhl@mail.house.gov or Tucker Johnson (Rep. Blumenauer) at tucker.johnson@mail.house.gov.