

2022 -- S 2423

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2022

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SENATE RESOLUTION

URGING THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO PURSUE A BROAD RANGE OF MEASURES TO REDUCE THE DANGER OF NUCLEAR WAR, TO SIGN AND RATIFY THE TREATY ON THE PROHIBITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS (TPNW), TO MAKE NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT THE CENTERPIECE OF OUR NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY, AND TO SPEARHEAD A GLOBAL EFFORT TO PREVENT NUCLEAR WAR

Introduced By: Senators Mack, Bell, Euer, Burke, Calkin, F Lombardi, Acosta, Anderson, Lawson, and Rogers

Date Introduced: February 15, 2022

Referred To: Senate Special Legislation and Veterans Affairs

1           WHEREAS, Nuclear weapons are the most destructive weapons ever created by  
2 mankind, with immense destructive capacity and lingering radiation effects after detonation; and

3           WHEREAS, Ninety-five percent (95%) of these weapons are in the hands of the United  
4 States and Russia, and the rest are held by seven other countries: China, France, Israel, India,  
5 North Korea, Pakistan, and the United Kingdom; and

6           WHEREAS, The use of even a tiny fraction of these weapons could cause worldwide  
7 climate disruption and global famine; for example, as few as 100 Hiroshima-sized, small bombs  
8 by modern standards, would put at least five million tons of soot into the atmosphere and cause  
9 climate disruption across the planet, cutting food production and putting two billion people at risk  
10 of starvation; and

11           WHEREAS, A large-scale nuclear war would kill hundreds of millions of people directly  
12 and cause unimaginable environmental damage and catastrophic climate disruption by dropping  
13 temperatures across the planet to levels not seen since the ice age; under such conditions, the vast  
14 majority of the human race would starve and it is possible we would become extinct as a species;  
15 and

16           WHEREAS, Since the height of the Cold War, the United States and Russia have reduced  
17 their active weapons by more than 25,000 nuclear weapons, but approximately 4,000 still exist on  
18 both sides, thousands of which are on alert for use on short notice; and

1           WHEREAS, Under current federal law, the President has the authority to unilaterally  
2 initiate the use of nuclear weapons, and during times of crisis, individuals lower in the chain of  
3 command might mistakenly do so; and

4           WHEREAS, Despite assurances that these arsenals exist solely to guarantee that they are  
5 never used, there have been many occasions when nuclear armed states have prepared to use  
6 these weapons, and war has been averted at the last instance; and

7           WHEREAS, The power of the United States stockpile of nuclear weapons is too  
8 devastating, and the result of their use too irrevocable to be left to the sole authority of the  
9 President; and

10          WHEREAS, Nuclear weapons do not possess some magical quality that prevents their  
11 use; and

12          WHEREAS, Former Defense Secretary Robert McNamara said, in speaking about the  
13 Cuban Missile Crisis, "It was luck that prevented nuclear war... yet our nuclear policy cannot be  
14 rationally based on a hope that our luck will continue"; and

15          WHEREAS, The United States maintains nuclear missiles on hair-trigger alert, capable  
16 of being launched within minutes after a presidential order, greatly increasing the risk of  
17 accidental, mistaken, or unauthorized launch; and

18          WHEREAS, As the effects of climate change place increased stress on communities  
19 around the world and intensify the likelihood of conflict, the danger of nuclear war will grow; and

20          WHEREAS, The planned expenditure of more than \$1 trillion to enhance our nuclear  
21 arsenal, and the ever so many more trillions worldwide for similar expenditures by other nuclear  
22 weapons countries will not only increase the risk of nuclear disaster, but fuel a global arms race  
23 and divert crucial resources needed to assure the well-being of the American people and peoples  
24 all over the world; and

25          WHEREAS, The United States taxpayers spend over \$4 million every hour of every day  
26 on nuclear weapons; and

27          WHEREAS, There is an alternative to this march toward nuclear war; and

28          WHEREAS, The United States, as well as the United Kingdom, China, France and  
29 Russia, are obligated under the Treaty of the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to take  
30 concrete steps toward eliminating their nuclear arsenals but, since 1970, such steps have not been  
31 forthcoming; and

32          WHEREAS, In July of 2017, the United Nations adopted the Treaty on the Prohibition of  
33 Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) and as of January 22, 2021, the Treaty went into effect; and

34          WHEREAS, The Treaty (TPNW) makes it illegal under international law to develop, test,

1 produce, manufacture or otherwise acquire, possess or stockpile, transfer, use, or threaten the use  
2 of nuclear weapons, and sets out procedures for nuclear-armed signatories to destroy their  
3 existing nuclear stockpiles; and

4 WHEREAS, A public renouncing of the option of launching a first strike would reduce  
5 tensions and may invite reciprocal public renunciations; and

6 WHEREAS, The United States, as well all other nuclear weapons powers are not yet  
7 signatories to this Treaty (TPNW); and

8 WHEREAS, A leadership role for the United States in the elimination of the existence of  
9 nuclear weapons is appropriate and desirable and could lead to new and fruitful international  
10 negotiations toward their elimination; now, therefore be it,

11 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island hereby urges the federal  
12 government to spearhead a global effort to prevent nuclear war by renouncing the option of using  
13 nuclear weapons in a "first strike", ending the President's sole authority to launch a nuclear attack,  
14 taking nuclear weapons off hair-trigger alert, canceling any plan to replace or modernize its  
15 nuclear arsenal with enhanced nuclear weapons, and, actively pursue a verifiable agreement  
16 among nuclear armed states to eliminate their nuclear arsenals; and be it further

17 RESOLVED, That this Senate further urges the President and the Senate of the United  
18 States to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons; and be it further

19 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to  
20 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the President of the United States, the Majority  
21 and Minority Leaders of the United States Senate, the Speaker and the Minority Leader of the  
22 United States House of Representatives, and each member of the Rhode Island Congressional  
23 Delegation.

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