

S.Res.323 Backgrounder for Senate Offices

A resolution urging the United States to lead a global effort to halt and reverse the nuclear arms race

Companion to H.Res.317 in the House

Call to Action for Senators

S.Res.323 is a principled, pragmatic roadmap for responsible leadership on nuclear disarmament. Introduced in July 2025 by Senators Markey, Merkley, Welch, Sanders, and Van Hollen, and co-sponsored by Senator Warren, the resolution calls on the United States to lead a global effort to halt and reverse the nuclear arms race and actively pursue the elimination of nuclear weapons.

It affirms disarmament as a national security imperative and outlines a comprehensive framework for reducing nuclear risks, restoring diplomatic leadership, and supporting impacted communities. **Senators are strongly encouraged to cosponsor and champion S.Res.323 as part of a broader commitment to diplomacy, justice, and global security**—ensuring the United States meets this moment with moral clarity, strategic resolve, and international credibility.

To cosponsor S.Res.323 or for more information, please contact Tom Collina (Sen. Markey's office) at tom_collina@markey.senate.gov.

Key Provisions of S.Res.323

The resolution urges the United States to:

1. Declare nuclear disarmament a national security imperative

- Recognize that the continued existence of nuclear weapons undermines global stability and U.S. security.
- Affirm disarmament as a strategic priority, not a symbolic gesture.

2. Pursue verifiable negotiations with other nuclear-armed states

- Recommit to diplomacy and arms control as essential tools for reducing risk.
- Engage in good-faith efforts to halt nuclear buildups and reduce stockpiles.

3. Adopt a no-first-use policy

- Clarify that the United States will never initiate a nuclear strike.
- Reduce the risk of miscalculation and escalation in moments of crisis.
- Signal restraint and responsibility to allies and adversaries alike.

4. End “hair-trigger” launch policies

- Eliminate rapid-launch postures that heighten the risk of accidental war.
- Extend decision time and reduce pressure on military and civilian leaders.

5. End sole unchecked presidential launch authority

- Ensure that nuclear decision-making is subject to responsible safeguards and oversight.
- Prevent reckless unilateral launch decisions.
- Reinforce checks on the most consequential domain of executive power.

6. Cancel plans for new nuclear weapons and delivery systems

- Halt development of the Sentinel ICBM and other costly modernization programs.
- The Sentinel program alone is projected to cost \$141 billion, with total nuclear spending nearing \$1 trillion over the next decade.
- These taxpayer funds could be redirected toward essential public needs like healthcare, housing, education, and climate resilience.
- Avoid triggering a new arms race with Russia, China, or other nuclear states.

7. Maintain the moratorium on nuclear testing

- Uphold scientific integrity and global norms against resuming explosive testing.
- Prevent environmental harm and geopolitical backlash.
- Support international verification regimes and nonproliferation efforts.

8. Support a just transition for communities harmed by nuclear weapons development and testing

- Expand health monitoring, medical care, and compensation for uranium miners, downwinders, and nuclear workers.
- While the recent RECA expansion—passed as part of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act—was a vital step forward, many communities remain excluded or under-supported.
- S.Res.323 calls for continued expansion of eligibility, full environmental remediation, and long-term investment in economic recovery.

9. Ensure a just economic transition for the nuclear weapons labor force

- Recognize the skilled workforce that has supported nuclear weapons development, maintenance, and modernization across DOE sites, national labs, and defense contractors.
- Invest in retraining, job placement, and economic diversification in communities historically dependent on nuclear weapons infrastructure.
- Affirm that disarmament must be paired with economic justice—not abandonment.

10. Preserve and strengthen arms control agreements, including New START

- With New START set to expire in February 2026, the U.S. faces a critical decision point.
- The treaty has served as a bulwark against unconstrained arsenal expansion and provided essential verification tools.
- S.Res.323 calls for the United States’ leadership role in global nuclear disarmament by actively pursuing verifiable agreements with nuclear-armed nations, including Russia and China, to reduce nuclear arsenals and prevent nuclear war.

Reasons to Cosponsor S.Res.323

1. Escalating Tensions

- From Russia's nuclear posturing in Ukraine to Israel's recent strikes on Iranian nuclear sites, and renewed friction between India and Pakistan, the risk of miscalculation is dangerously high.

2. Minuteman III Extension

- The Air Force confirms Minuteman III ICBMs can be extended through 2050, undermining urgency behind the \$141B Sentinel program and raising questions about cost, necessity, and impact.

3. Democracy Under Strain

- Project 2025 proposes sweeping consolidation of executive power, weakening institutional checks on nuclear launch authority. Combined with calls to resume testing and dismantle arms control, it threatens democratic oversight.

4. Economic Justice

- The U.S. is projected to spend \$1 trillion on nuclear weapons over the next decade. Funds could support healthcare, housing, education, and climate resilience. Communities harmed by nuclear testing still lack full compensation and care.

5. Cultural Wake-Up Call

- Major films reflect rising public concern:
 - *A House of Dynamite* (Bigelow): fictional strike on Chicago.
 - *Ghosts of Hiroshima* (Cameron): aftermath of atomic bombings.
 - *Nuclear War: A Scenario* (Villeneuve): modern war simulation.
- These stories echo real fears—S.Res.323 offers a path forward.

6. Faith-Based Leadership

- Faith leaders urge bold action.
 - Pope Leo XIV, marking 80 years since Trinity and Hiroshima, declared: "Nuclear arms offend our shared humanity and betray the dignity of creation."
 - His call for "a peace that is unarmed and disarming" resonates globally.

7. Grassroots Momentum

- Back from the Brink now boasts 500+ endorsing organizations across health, faith, environmental, and peace sectors.
- 450+ officials have signed letters urging Congress to act on nuclear policy, with 50 Members of Congress expressing support through cosponsorship of resolutions.
- 25+ regional hubs drive local events and outreach, while Students for Nuclear Disarmament mobilizes Gen Z across 15+ campuses.

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