

Legislation Text

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Urging the United States of America's federal government to enter the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which calls for the abolition of nuclear weapons among all United Nations member states, to prevent the threat of nuclear war and devastating humanitarian consequences to Philadelphia and our international neighbors.

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 180322 adopted by this body on April 19, 2018, cautioned against the danger and potential harms of nuclear war and called on the United States Congress to prevent the President's unilateral power to launch a nuclear first strike without receiving congressional or judicial approval; and

WHEREAS, Nuclear warheads are the most powerful weapons of mass destruction in our country's military inventory with immense radioactivity consequences in the aftermath; and

WHEREAS, The United States, one of the global nuclear power states, has the second highest nuclear missile count and is not a signatory to or a member of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons that requires nuclear disarmament and the prohibition of nuclear activities; and

WHEREAS, More than ninety percent of the world's nuclear arms belong to the United States and Russia. Other countries known to hold the remainder of nuclear weapons are China, France, India, Israel, North Korea, Pakistan and the United Kingdom; and

WHEREAS, Although the United States' reduced its active nuclear weapons by more than 25,000 since the height of the Cold War, the United States still has almost 4,000 warheads in its arsenal, nearly half of which are programmed for short notice detonation; and

WHEREAS, Launching even one nuclear warhead could prompt a large-scale nuclear war, immediately kill millions of people, and cause irredeemable destruction to the world with potential casualties extending to worldwide climate disruption, global famine, species extinction, and immeasurable environmental damage from a 'nuclear winter'; and

WHEREAS, Projections on the detonation of a 300-pound nuclear warhead with powers analogous to U.S. warheads over the City of Philadelphia would kill 280,000 and injure 450,000 people. The most massive U.S. warhead weighs over twenty times more at 6,200 pounds, threatening widespread obliteration of humanity and the earth; and

WHEREAS, The residents of Philadelphia, the birthplace of political freedom and independence in the United States, like all communities across the world, deserve to live a life free from the threat of nuclear weapons and nuclear war; and

WHEREAS, Assurance by the United States government that nuclear arsenals will never be used are unreliable as under current law, the President has the sole authority to unilaterally initiate the use of nuclear weapons, global tensions escalate and nuclear-armed countries boldly taunt their nuclear power; and

WHEREAS, The taking U.S. nuclear weapons off hair-trigger alert, canceling the plan to replace the United States' entire nuclear arsenal with enhanced weapons, and actively pursuing a verifiable agreement among nuclear-armed states to eliminate their nuclear arsenals will contribute to a more peaceful, secure, and stable global community; and

WHEREAS, The planned expenditure of about \$500 billion over the next decade to maintain and enhance our nuclear arsenal, including developing and deploying new nuclear weapons and broadening the conditions for use, will not only increase the risk of nuclear disaster, but fuel a global arms race and divert crucial resources needed to fulfill domestic needs such as public education, healthcare, public transportation, and many more public institutions and common resources; and

WHEREAS, An alternative exists, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons adopted by the United Nations in July of 2017 has been signed by 79 countries, and prohibits the development, testing, production, stockpiling, transfer, use, and threat of use of nuclear weapons, and sets out procedures for nuclear-armed signatories to destroy their existing nuclear stockpile; and

WHEREAS, The United States signing the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons would spearhead a global effort to prevent nuclear war by renouncing the option of using nuclear weapons first and end the President's sole authority to launch a nuclear attack; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia hereby joins the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the cities of Baltimore, Los Angeles, Salt Lake City, and Washington D.C. and the states of California, Maine, and New Jersey who all resolved that the United States sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, urges the United States of America's federal government to enter the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which calls for the abolition of nuclear weapons among all United Nations member states, to prevent the threat of nuclear war and devastating humanitarian consequences to Philadelphia and our international neighbors.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Philadelphia City Council will transmit copies of this resolution to the President of the United States, the United States Senators from Pennsylvania, each Congressional Representative from Philadelphia, and to the Governor of Pennsylvania, asking them to support the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.