

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 2

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By: **Senators Carter, Lam, and Muse**

Introduced and read first time: January 29, 2024

Assigned to: Education, Energy, and the Environment

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

1 A Senate Joint Resolution concerning

2 **Use of Nuclear Weapons**

3 FOR the purpose of stating that the General Assembly joins certain other state legislative
4 bodies, counties, and municipalities in passing a Back from the Brink resolution on
5 reducing the possibility of the use of nuclear weapons; urging members of the State's
6 Congressional Delegation who have not yet done so to cosponsor a certain federal
7 resolution related to the use of nuclear weapons; and urging the U.S. President and
8 the U.S. Senate to endorse the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

9 WHEREAS, Nuclear weapons are the most destructive weapons ever created by
10 mankind; and

11 WHEREAS, 90% of nuclear weapons are controlled by the U.S. and Russia, with the
12 rest being controlled by seven other countries: China, France, Israel, India, North Korea,
13 Pakistan, and the United Kingdom; and

14 WHEREAS, The use of even a small fraction of nuclear weapons, such as 100
15 Hiroshima-sized bombs, which are small bombs by modern standards, could put at least
16 5.5 million tons of soot into the atmosphere and cause climate disruption across the planet,
17 cutting food production and putting 250 million people at risk of starvation; and

18 WHEREAS, A large-scale nuclear war would kill hundreds of millions of people
19 directly, risk starvation for 5 billion people worldwide including in the U.S., and cause
20 unimaginable environmental damage and catastrophic climate disruption by dropping
21 temperatures across the planet to levels not seen since the Ice Age, causing the vast
22 majority of the human race to starve and possibly cause humans to become extinct as a
23 species; and

24 WHEREAS, The U.S. and Russia rely on the assurances of deterrence, that nuclear
25 arsenals are never used, and yet there have been many close calls due to human or
26 mechanical error; and



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1 WHEREAS, The U.S. President has the authority to unilaterally initiate the use of
2 nuclear weapons, and during times of crisis, individuals lower in the chain of command
3 might mistakenly do so; and

4 WHEREAS, The U.S. maintains nuclear missiles on hair-trigger alert, making them
5 capable of being launched within minutes and greatly increasing the risk of unintended or
6 unauthorized launch especially in current times when tensions are mounting between
7 nuclear powers and the U.S. maintains the right to initiate a nuclear launch; and

8 WHEREAS, The on-going expenditure of \$1.7 trillion over 30 years to enhance the
9 U.S. nuclear arsenal is fueling a global arms race; and

10 WHEREAS, Despite the incredible expenditure on nuclear weapons, one in six
11 military families are food insecure; and

12 WHEREAS, Marylanders paid an estimated \$2 billion in taxes in fiscal year 2023 for
13 the nuclear weapons complex; and

14 WHEREAS, Living in the shadow of Washington, D.C., Marylanders are especially
15 at risk if there is nuclear war, making it appropriate that the General Assembly of
16 Maryland urge the federal government to do everything possible to reduce the risk of
17 nuclear war starting by error or by intent; and

18 WHEREAS, Two major conflicts in 2023 involving nations that possess nuclear
19 weapons make multilateral negotiations between nuclear nations more important now than
20 ever; and

21 WHEREAS, In July 2017, the United Nations adopted the Treaty on the Prohibition
22 of Nuclear Weapons which makes it illegal for ratifying nations to develop, test, produce,
23 manufacture or otherwise acquire, possess or stockpile, transfer, use, or threaten the use
24 of nuclear weapons; and

25 WHEREAS, As of August 6, 2023, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons
26 has been ratified by 69 nations; and

27 WHEREAS, House Resolution 77 introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives
28 embraces the goals and provisions of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, as
29 well as the five policies of Back from the Brink to: (1) actively pursue a multilateral
30 verifiable agreement among nuclear armed states to eliminate their nuclear arsenals; (2)
31 renounce the option of using nuclear weapons first; (3) end the President's sole authority
32 to launch a nuclear attack; (4) take nuclear weapons off hair-trigger alert; and (5) cancel
33 current plans to replace or modernize its nuclear arsenal; now, therefore, be it

34 RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the General
35 Assembly of Maryland joins the seven state legislative bodies, including the Senates of
36 Rhode Island, Maine, Oregon, California, and over 75 municipalities and counties,

1 including Baltimore County, Frederick County, Washington, D.C., Montgomery County,
2 and Prince George's County, in passing a Back from the Brink resolution; and be it further

3 RESOLVED, That the General Assembly of Maryland urges members of the
4 Maryland Congressional Delegation who have not yet done so to cosponsor House
5 Resolution 77, which embraces the goals and provisions of the Treaty on the Prohibition of
6 Nuclear Weapons and the Back from the Brink resolution; and be it further

7 RESOLVED, That the General Assembly of Maryland urges the U.S. President and
8 the U.S. Senate to endorse the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons; and be it
9 further

10 RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of
11 Legislative Services to the Honorable Wes Moore, Governor of Maryland; the Honorable
12 William C. Ferguson, IV, President of the Senate of Maryland; the Honorable Adrienne A.
13 Jones, Speaker of the House of Delegates; and the Maryland Congressional Delegation; and
14 be it further

15 RESOLVED, That certified copies of this Joint Resolution be sent by the Secretary
16 of State to: the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, President of the United States of America, 1600
17 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, D.C. 20500; the Honorable Kamala Harris, Vice
18 President of the United States, President of the United States Senate, Suite S-212, United
19 States Capitol Building, Washington, D.C. 20510; the Honorable Patricia Murray,
20 President Pro Tempore of the United States Senate, 154 Russell Senate Office Building,
21 Washington, D.C. 20510; the Honorable Chuck Schumer, United States Senate Majority
22 Leader, 322 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510; the Honorable Addison
23 Mitchell McConnell III, United States Senate Minority Leader, 317 Russell Senate Office
24 Building, Washington, D.C. 20510; the Honorable James Michael Johnson, Speaker of the
25 United States House of Representatives, Suite H-232, United States Capitol Building,
26 Washington, D.C. 20510; and the Honorable Hakeem Jeffries, United States House of
27 Representatives Minority Leader, 2433 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C.
28 20515.