

Senate Joint Memorial 5

Sponsored by Senator DEMBROW, Representatives SANCHEZ, KENY-GUYER; Senators FREDERICK, GOLDEN, MANNING JR, MONNES ANDERSON, STEINER HAYWARD, Representatives EVANS, GOMBERG, HELM, LIVELY, MARSH, MCLAIN, NOSSE, POWER, REARDON, WILLIAMS (at the request of Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility)

SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure **as introduced**.

Urges Congress to lead global effort to reduce threat of nuclear war.

JOINT MEMORIAL

To the President of the United States and the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled:

We, your memorialists, the Eightieth Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon, in legislative session assembled, respectfully represent as follows:

Whereas nearly 14,500 nuclear weapons still exist in the world and pose an intolerable risk to human survival; and

Whereas the United States has roughly 6,450 nuclear weapons, constituting the world's most lethal nuclear weapons capability, and it is the only country to have used nuclear weapons in war; and

Whereas nuclear weapons pose a threat simply by existing, due to the possibility of accidents and miscalculations, many of which have been documented in the past; and

Whereas the United States is currently planning to spend at least \$1.2 trillion rebuilding our entire nuclear weapons arsenal; and

Whereas Oregon taxpayers spend approximately \$188 million on nuclear weapons annually, which takes funding away from necessary programs such as education, health care, infrastructure and the environment; and

Whereas in July 2017, 122 nations called for the elimination of all nuclear weapons by adopting the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons; and

Whereas the United States Constitution gives Congress the sole power to declare war, but the President of the United States currently has de facto sole authority to order nuclear attacks, without any required consultation or any system of checks and balances; and

Whereas Oregonians currently benefit from the safety and security provided by existing nuclear arms reduction treaties, including the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty and New START, and previously benefited from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action; and

Whereas members of Oregon's Congressional Delegation, including Senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley and Representatives Earl Blumenauer, Peter DeFazio and Suzanne Bonamici, are leaders in Congress on nuclear disarmament and have cosponsored legislation to end nuclear first strike capability, reduce spending on nuclear weapons and support the INF treaty; and

NOTE: Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter [*italic and bracketed*] is existing law to be omitted. New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

1 Whereas plutonium for the bomb the United States dropped on Nagasaki was produced at the
2 Hanford Nuclear Reservation, a site on the banks of the Columbia River in the State of Washington
3 that displaced area residents, affected the health of “downwinders” and caused sacred sites, villages
4 and fishing areas of Native American tribes to be lost; and

5 Whereas the Hanford Site remains the most toxic contamination site in the Western Hemisphere,
6 threatening the health and environment of our region; and

7 Whereas the Marshall Islands were the site of 67 nuclear weapons tests by the United States
8 during the Cold War, and Oregon currently has one of the largest populations of Marshall Islanders
9 in the nation, many of whom continue to suffer health consequences from this testing; and

10 Whereas Oregon has been home to many courageous people who have dedicated their lives to
11 the eradication of nuclear weapons, including Hiroshima survivor Dr. Hideko Tamura Snider of
12 Medford, Nobel Peace Prize recipient Linus Pauling, Hanford “downwinder” Pat Hoover and Carol
13 Urner, who organized the first Hiroshima commemoration in Portland in 1962; and

14 Whereas the mining, milling, production, testing, storage and use of nuclear weapons dispro-
15 proportionately affect communities of color, indigenous peoples and women, and adequate compensation
16 has not been made for the environmental and health consequences of nuclear weapons activities
17 pursued by the federal government during the 50 years of the Cold War, most often on Native
18 American land; and

19 Whereas in order to survive climate change, it is crucial that our brightest scientific minds and
20 limited resources no longer be squandered on weapons, because as the climate crisis increases stress
21 on communities around the world and intensifies the likelihood of conflict, the potential for nuclear
22 war will grow; and

23 Whereas a single nuclear detonation in a major city in Oregon could cause hundreds of thou-
24 sands of immediate fatalities, hundreds of thousands of injuries and illnesses from radiation and
25 devastating effects on agricultural land and natural resources for decades; and

26 Whereas the Oregon cities of Ashland, Beaverton, Corvallis, Eugene, Lincoln City, Portland and
27 Tualatin are all “Mayors for Peace” cities that have supported the call from the mayors of
28 Hiroshima and Nagasaki for the abolition of nuclear weapons; and

29 Whereas Oregonians have the human right to live a life free from nuclear contamination and
30 the threat posed by the reckless use of nuclear weapons; now, therefore,

31 **Be It Resolved by the Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon:**

32 That we, the members of the Eightieth Legislative Assembly, respectfully urge the Congress of
33 the United States to take appropriate steps to lead a global effort to prevent nuclear war by es-
34 tablishing a system of checks and balances to ensure that the President of the United States no
35 longer have the sole and unchecked authority to launch nuclear weapons, renouncing the option of
36 using nuclear weapons first, taking U.S. nuclear weapons off hair-trigger alert, canceling the plan
37 to replace the entire U.S. nuclear arsenal with next-generation nuclear weapons and actively pur-
38 suing a verifiable and multilateral agreement among nuclear-armed states to eliminate their nuclear
39 arsenals; and be it further

40 Resolved, That the State of Oregon supports the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons
41 and we call upon the federal government to join the treaty; and be it further

42 Resolved, That a copy of this memorial shall be sent to the President of the United States, to
43 the Senate Majority Leader, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and to each member
44 of the Oregon Congressional Delegation.