

Bills in 116th Congress (2019-2020) concerning nuclear weapons (updated 8/6/19)

- H.R.669 – Restricting first use of nuclear weapons act
 - Author – Ted Lieu (D-CA)
 - Sacramento area co-sponsors
 - Yes: Garamendi
 - No: Bera, Matsui, McClintock, McNerney
 - Pro's:
 - President may not use the Armed Forces of the United States to conduct a first-use nuclear strike unless such strike is conducted pursuant to a declaration of war by Congress that expressly authorizes such strike.
 - Con's:
 - “First-use nuclear strike” means an attack using nuclear weapons against an enemy that is conducted without the President determining that the enemy has first launched a nuclear strike against the United States or an ally of the United States.
 - Trump can't be trusted to determine whether enemy has first launched a nuclear strike.
- S.200 - Restricting first use of nuclear weapons act
 - Author – Edward Markey (D-MA)
 - Sacramento area co-sponsors
 - Yes: Feinstein
 - No: Harris
 - Pro's and con's same as H.R.669
- H.R.2429 – To provide for nuclear abolition
 - Author – Eleanor Homes Norton (D-DC-At Large)
 - Sacramento area co-sponsors: None
 - Pro's:
 - Calls for U.S. to provide leadership by signing and ratifying the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons; and to convert all nuclear weapons industry processes, plants, and programs, to constructive, ecologically beneficial, peace purposes.
 - Con's:
 - Only one co-sponsor so far (James McGovern, D-MA)
 - Treaties must be ratified by two thirds of Senate and signed by President
- S.272 – No first use policy
 - Author: Elizabeth Warren (D-CA)
 - Sacramento area co-sponsors
 - Yes: Feinstein
 - No: Harris
 - Pro's: “It is the policy of the United States to not use nuclear weapons first.”
 - Con's: One-liner bill with no teeth in it.
- H.R.921 - No first use policy
 - Author: Adam Smith (D-WA)
 - Sacramento area co-sponsors:
 - Yes – Garamendi
 - No: Bera, Matsui, McClintock, McNerney
 - Pro's & Con's: Same as S.272

- H.Res.302 – Embracing the goals and provisions of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons
 - Author: James McGovern (D-MA)
 - Sacramento area co-sponsors: none
 - Pro's:
 - Calls on the President to embrace the goals and provisions of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and make nuclear disarmament the centerpiece of the national security policy of the United States; and
 - Calls on the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, all other Federal and congressional leaders of the United States and the American people to lead a global effort to prevent nuclear war by”
 - renouncing the option of using nuclear weapons first;
 - ending the President’s sole authority to launch a nuclear attack;
 - taking the nuclear weapons of the United States off hair-trigger alert;
 - canceling the plan to replace the nuclear arsenal of the United States with modernized, enhanced weapons; and
 - actively pursuing a verifiable agreement among nuclear-armed states to mutually eliminate their nuclear arsenals.
 - Con's: non-binding resolution
- H.Res.495 – Calls on Trump administration to re-enter the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (Iran nuclear deal) and immediately establish and utilize diplomatic and military deconfliction channels with Iran to prevent miscalculations and defuse tensions as they arise.
 - Author: Barbara Lee (D-CA)
 - Sacramento area co-sponsors:
 - Yes – Garamendi
 - No: Bera, Matsui, McClintock, McNerney
 - Pro's: Diplomacy is only reasonable approach to keeping Iran from developing nuclear weapons
 - Con's: Non-binding resolution
- S.401 – Hold the LYNE (low yield nuclear explosives) Act
 - Author: Edward Markey (D-MA)
 - Sacramento area co-sponsors:
 - Yes: Feinstein
 - No: Harris
 - Pro's:
 - This bill prohibits the Department of Defense or the Department of Energy from using funds for the research and development, production, or deployment of the Trident D5 low-yield nuclear warhead.
 - Low-yield nuclear weapons lower the threshold for using nukes, increasing the likelihood that they'll be used.
 - Con's: Bill doesn't go nearly far enough in preventing wasteful spending on nukes.
- H.R.1086 – Hold the LYNE act
 - Author: Ted Lieu (D-CA)
 - Sacramento area co-sponsors:
 - Yes – Garamendi
 - No: Bera, Matsui, McClintock, McNerney
 - Pro's & Con's: Same as S.401

Nuclear Weapons Talking Points

General Reasons to abolish nuclear weapons & not develop new ones (excerpted from H.Res.302)

Since the height of the Cold War, the United States and Russia have dismantled more than 50,000 nuclear warheads, but 14,500 of these weapons still exist and pose an intolerable risk to human survival.

Ninety-five percent of these weapons are in the hands of the United States and Russia and the rest are held by seven other countries: China, France, Israel, India, North Korea, Pakistan, and the United Kingdom.

The use of even a tiny fraction of these weapons could cause worldwide climate disruption and global famine—for example, as few as 100 Hiroshima-sized bombs, small by modern standards, if used to attack urban industrial targets would put at least 5,000,000 tons of soot into the upper atmosphere and cause climate disruption across the planet, cutting food production and putting 2,000,000,000 people at risk of starvation.

According to scientific studies and models, a large-scale nuclear war could kill hundreds of millions of people directly and cause unimaginable environmental damage and catastrophic climate disruption by dropping temperatures across the planet to levels not seen since the last ice age; under these conditions much of humanity might face starvation and humans might even be at grave risk as a species.

Despite assurances that these arsenals exist solely to guarantee that they are never used, there have been many occasions when nuclear armed states have prepared to use these weapons, and war has been averted only at the last minute.

The current nuclear weapons policies of the United States do not inherently prevent their use.

The United States intelligence community's January 29, 2019, annual assessment of worldwide threats warned that the effects of climate change and environmental degradation increase stress on communities around the world and intensify global instability and the likelihood of conflict, causing the danger of using nuclear weapons or nuclear war to grow.

In October 2017, the Congressional Budget Office estimated that the Nuclear Modernization Plan to upgrade and enhance nearly every element of the nuclear arsenal of the United States would result in costs of more than \$1.2 trillion over 30 years, not adjusting for inflation.

The Congressional Budget Office further estimates that annual spending on nuclear weapons will peak at about \$50 billion during the late 2020s and early 2030s.

A February 6, 2018, report by the Government Accountability Office report warned that the "National Nuclear Security Administration's (NNSA) plans to modernize its nuclear weapons do not align with its budget, raising affordability concerns", thereby increasing the pressure on the defense budget and the implicit trade-offs within that budget, diverting crucial resources needed to assure the well-being of the American people and the ability to respond to global crises and priorities, increasing the potential risk of nuclear accidents, and helping fuel a global arms race.

On February 2, 2019, the United States and the Russian Federation withdrew from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, signed in 1987 by President Ronald Reagan and Soviet Union leader Mikhail Gorbachev, which has prohibited the development and deployment of ground-launched nuclear missiles with ranges of 310 miles to 3,420 miles, and has resulted in each country dismantling more than 2,500 missiles and has kept nuclear-tipped cruise missiles off the European continent for three decades, thus sparking increased concern in a renewed nuclear arms race between the two countries and other nuclear-armed nations.

On July 7, 2017, an alternative global nuclear policy was adopted by 122 nations by signing the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which calls for the elimination of all nuclear weapons.

Specific reasons for not developing Low Yield Nuclear Explosives (excerpted from S.401)

A new low-yield nuclear weapon to be carried on a ballistic missile submarine risks lowering the threshold for nuclear use and increasing the chance of miscalculation that could escalate into all-out nuclear exchange.

When launched, such a low-yield nuclear warhead would be indistinguishable to an adversary from the high-yield W76 and W88 submarine-launched warheads.

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