



**City of Northampton**

MASSACHUSETTS

*In the City Council, December 5, 2023*

Upon the Recommendation of:  
Councilor Karen Foster and Councilor Stanley Moulton III

**R-23.402 A RESOLUTION CALLING ON THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO PULL “BACK FROM THE BRINK” OF NUCLEAR WAR**

**WHEREAS**, nine nations collectively have approximately 12,500<sup>1</sup> nuclear weapons in their arsenals, most of which are far more destructive than those that killed hundreds of thousands of people in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, in 1945<sup>2</sup>;

**WHEREAS**, the detonation of even a small number of these weapons could have catastrophic human and environmental consequences that could threaten human civilization itself<sup>3</sup> and affect everyone on the planet;

**WHEREAS**, the United States maintains several hundred nuclear missiles in underground silos on hair-trigger alert, capable of being launched within minutes after a presidential order, which greatly increases the risk of an accidental, mistaken or unauthorized launch<sup>4</sup>;

**WHEREAS**, the United States continues to reserve the right to use nuclear weapons first, which reduces the threshold for nuclear use and makes a nuclear war more likely<sup>5</sup>;

**WHEREAS**, the U.S. president has the sole and unchecked authority to order the use of nuclear weapons<sup>6</sup>;

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<sup>1</sup> <https://fas.org/initiative/status-world-nuclear-forces/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://thebulletin.org/2020/08/counting-the-dead-at-hiroshima-and-nagasaki/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ippnw.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/ENGLISH-Nuclear-Famine-Report-Final-bleed-marks.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ucsusa.org/resources/frequently-asked-questions-about-hair-trigger-alert>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ucsusa.org/resources/no-first-use-explained>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.ucsusa.org/resources/three-heads-are-better-one>

**WHEREAS**, the full cost of U.S. nuclear weapons in 2023 alone, including for weapons development, testing and maintenance, environmental clean-up, missile defense and non-proliferation initiatives will be an estimated \$90 billion.<sup>7</sup>

**WHEREAS**, the United States plans to spend an estimated \$756 billion between 2021 and 2030<sup>8</sup> and \$1.7 trillion by 2046<sup>9</sup> to replace its entire nuclear arsenal and the bombers, missiles and submarines that deliver them with more capable, more usable versions;

**WHEREAS**, U.S. taxpayers spend roughly \$10.3 million every hour of every day to maintain the U.S. nuclear arsenal and its associated costs<sup>10</sup>;

**WHEREAS**, the climate crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, and numerous human security and social justice concerns highlight the need for greater investment in our communities, requiring the diversion of some of the \$90 billion being spent this year to maintain the nuclear arsenal;

**WHEREAS**, a grassroots coalition called “Back from the Brink: Bringing Communities Together to Abolish Nuclear Weapons” has been endorsed by over 465 health, environmental, academic, peace, faith, and justice organizations and over 80 U.S. municipalities, counties and states have adopted resolutions supporting “Back from the Brink’s” policy solutions, including Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, Salt Lake City, Tucson and Washington, D.C.<sup>11</sup>;

**WHEREAS**, the United States, as well as Britain, China, France and Russia, are obligated under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to take concrete steps toward eliminating their nuclear arsenals<sup>12</sup>;

**WHEREAS**, in July 2017, 122 nations approved the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) which entered into force on January 22, 2021, making it illegal under international law to develop, test, produce, manufacture, or otherwise acquire, possess or stockpile nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices; As of September 30, 2023, 93 countries have signed the TPNW and 69 countries have ratified it<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.psr-la.org/nuclear-costs>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/59054>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2017-12/news/cbo-nuclear-arsenal-cost-12-trillion>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.psr-la.org/nuclear-costs>

<sup>11</sup> <https://preventnuclearwar.org/whos-on-board/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/nptfact>

<sup>13</sup> [https://www.icanw.org/signature\\_and\\_ratification\\_status](https://www.icanw.org/signature_and_ratification_status)

**WHEREAS**, a total of 218 mayors, city councilors, county commissioners and state legislators signed a letter sponsored by "Back from the Brink" that was delivered Nov. 16 to the Biden administration. It urges the president to send an observer delegation to the second meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, and to initiate negotiations with nuclear weapons states toward a verifiable, time-bound agreement to eliminate all nuclear weapons from the planet;

**WHEREAS**, on November 16, 2017, the Northampton City Council unanimously passed R-17.425: *A Resolution Calling for the United States to "Pull Back from the Brink" and Prevent Nuclear War*,

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, the City of Northampton, Massachusetts calls on the United States to lead a global effort to prevent nuclear war by:

- actively pursuing a verifiable agreement among nuclear-armed states to eliminate their nuclear arsenals;
- renouncing the option of using nuclear weapons first;
- ending the sole, unchecked authority of any president to launch a nuclear attack;
- taking U.S. nuclear weapons off hair-trigger alert; and
- canceling the plan to replace its entire arsenal with enhanced weapons.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that Northampton, MA calls on the United States to embrace the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that a copy of this resolution will be sent to U.S. Senators Markey and Warren and U.S. Congressman McGovern and to President Joseph R. Biden.

In City Council, December 21, 2023  
Adopted in Final Reading on Roll Call Vote of 9 Yes, 0 No, 0 Absent

Attest: Laura Kruttschnitt, Clerk of Council

Passed final reading and enrolled.  
I hereby certify that the above Resolution was adopted by the Northampton City Council on December 21, 2023

Per Charter Section 3-6, non-binding resolutions are not required to be presented to the Mayor for approval.

Attest: Laura Kruttschnitt, Clerk of Council