

House State Government & Elections

February 5, 2024

Re: Testimony in support of House Resolution 7329

Dear Chairperson Shanley and members of the State Government & Elections:

I am Helen O'Grady from District 13 and am a member of the RI AntiWar Committee and No Endless War or Excessive Militarism (NEWEM). I support House Resolution 7329 URGING THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO PURSUE A BROAD RANGE OF MEASURES TO REDUCE THE DANGER OF NUCLEAR WAR, TO SIGN AND RATIFY THE TREATY ON THE PROHIBITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS (TPNW), TO MAKE NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT THE CENTERPIECE OF OUR NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY, AND TO SPEARHEAD A GLOBAL EFFORT TO PREVENT NUCLEAR WAR.

- Why support the Treaty for the Prevention of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)?
- Isn't this a national security matter and, therefore, a federal not a state issue?
- Why pass a State Resolution? Why? Because all governing bodies—federal, state, and local—have a stake in keeping us safe. This is about public safety with all its global and local ramifications.

Our RI Senate has already passed a resolution in support of this treaty.

And

- RI already has local towns and municipalities stepping up to pass resolutions supporting this treaty and taking the lead in urging our federal government to sign and ratify it.
- Jamestown and East Providence have passed such resolutions,
- joining 72 U.S. cities and towns,
- including 15 in Massachusetts
- as well as four states (California, Oregon, New Jersey, and Maine).
- and major cities like New York, Boston, Los Angeles, Honolulu, Philadelphia, as well as Washington, DC.

The Jamestown Resolution states, "We firmly believe that our residents have the right to live in a world free from this threat." This is important advocacy as we watched in horror right after President Putin invaded Ukraine and had Russia's nuclear weapons poised for launch. It was a throwback to the Cuban missile crisis when our missiles were readied to launch.

It reminds me of a story I heard in the 80's. At the time I was living in Wyoming—the state, that is, and advocating against the deployment of the MX missile. A number of ranchers had Minutemen missiles installed alongside their property that the federal government had purchased from them. A number of these ranchers were also part of the peace movement then protesting deployment of the MX. I remember one rancher who had Minutemen missiles adjacent to her ranch telling us that during the Cuban missile crisis, all the missile silos were open, poised, and ready to be launched. This was what they witnessed right from their own backyards.

Russia's willingness to use nuclear weapons has proven that MAD—Mutual Assured Destruction—is not working. It's really MADness. That MAD is not working was also evident when former President Trump questioned why we shouldn't use nuclear weapons. And this is a good example why we need a policy of no first use by an American president.

More recently, Prime Minister Netanyahu threatened to use a nuclear weapon against Iran (although he did walk back his statement after he was criticized).

Given these facts, how many of us really feel assured that these weapons will not be used? I don't. What can we do to stop this MADness? We can step up to urge our federal delegation to push for the acceptance and ratification of the TPNW. As a state legislative body, you can be instrumental in urging our federal delegation to act on this. Please move this resolution out of committee for a full house vote.

Sincerely,

Helen O'Grady

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