

Honorable Chairman and Members of the Committee,

I urge you to support House Bill 5876 and pass it on to the full RI House of representatives for consideration. This legislation would create a Commission to study the effects of nuclear weaponry on Rhode Island – both the terrible effects of a nuclear war and the ongoing economic effects of the fabrication of these weapons in our small state.

Nuclear weapons raise many issues. Some people favor them and believe that we should maintain them forever into the future. Others think that they are a constant threat to our health and safety and put forward methods by which they might be abolished worldwide.

But the fact is that public discussion of these issues has severely diminished since 1982 when two million people gathered in New York's Central Park to call for a Freeze on Nuclear Weaponry. Our national press, now focused on the chaos that Mr. Trump is creating in our Federal government, and on the wars in Ukraine, Sudan and Israel, hardly has time to mention the continued existence of nuclear weapons.

The Study Commission created by this bill would rectify this lapse, by authorizing five public hearings around the state where people of all walks of life, from Cold Warriors to housewives, from gray-haired peace activists like myself to teenagers excited for their upcoming careers, can all have their say about these weapons. The fruits of this discussion might have important consequences for all of us.

Thank you,

William W. Smith III  
244 Hull Cove Farm Rd, Jamestown, RI 02835