



# Allegheny County Council

County of Allegheny  
436 Grant Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219  
Phone (412) 350-6490  
Fax (412) 350-6499

## Legislation Text

---

**File #:** 12189-22, **Version:** 1

---

Motion of the Council of Allegheny County embracing the goals and provisions of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and urging the President, administration, and Congress to engage in fiscally responsible defense modernization programs that are geared towards current needs, rather than the outdated and unacceptably risky doctrine of mutually assured nuclear destruction.

**Whereas**, 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; and

**Whereas**, 95 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; and

**Whereas**, As of June of 2021, the current nuclear arsenal of the United States includes approximately 3,800 total nuclear warheads in its military stockpile, of which approximately 1,800 are deployed with five delivery components: land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles, submarine-launched ballistic missiles, long-range strategic bomber aircraft armed with nuclear gravity bombs, long-range strategic bomber aircraft armed with nuclear-armed air-launched cruise missiles, and short-range fighter aircraft that can deliver nuclear gravity bombs. The strategic bomber fleet of the United States comprises 87 B-52 and 20 B-2 aircraft, over 60 of which contribute to the nuclear mission. The United States also maintains 400 intercontinental ballistic missiles and 14 Ohio-class submarines - each armed with approximately 90 nuclear warheads - and up to 12 of which are on patrol at any given time; and

**Whereas**, 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; and

**Whereas**, 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; and

**Whereas**, 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; and

**Whereas**, the current nuclear weapons policies of the United States do not inherently prevent their use; and

**Whereas**, in the 2003 documentary, “The Fog of War: Eleven Lessons from the Life of Robert S. McNamara”, former Defense Secretary Robert McNamara said, when describing the Cuban Missile Crisis, “It

was luck that prevented nuclear war”-yet the nuclear policy of the United States should not be based on the hope that “luck” will continue; and

**Whereas**, 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; and

**Whereas**, between fiscal years 2019 and 2028, the United States will spend \$494,000,000,000 to maintain and recapitalize its nuclear force, according to a January 2019 estimate from the Congressional Budget Office, an increase of \$94,000,000,000 from the Congressional Budget Office’s 2017 estimate, with additional cost driven in part by the new nuclear weapons called for in former President Donald Trump’s 2018 Nuclear Posture Review; and

**Whereas**, adjusted for inflation, the Congressional Budget Office estimates that the United States will spend \$1,700,000,000,000 through fiscal year 2046 on new nuclear weapons and modernization and infrastructure programs; and

**Whereas**, the projected growth in nuclear weapons spending is coming due as the Department of Defense is seeking to replace large portions of its conventional forces to better compete with the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China and as internal and external fiscal pressures are likely to limit the growth of, and perhaps reduce, military spending. As then-Air Force Chief of Staff General Dave Goldfein said in 2020, “I think a debate is that this will be the first time that the nation has tried to simultaneously modernize the nuclear enterprise while it’s trying to modernize an aging conventional enterprise. The current budget does not allow you to do both.”; and

**Whereas**, in 2017, the Government Accountability Office concluded that the National Nuclear Security Administration’s budget forecasts for out-year spending downplayed the fact that the agency lacked the resources to complete multiple, simultaneous billion dollar modernization projects and recommended that the National Nuclear Security Administration consider “deferring the start of or cancelling specific modernization programs”; and

**Whereas**, 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; and

**Whereas**, 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; and

**Whereas**, 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;

***The Council of the County of Allegheny therefore hereby moves as follows:***

Allegheny County Council hereby calls on the President to embrace the goals and provisions of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and exercise fiscal prudence by making nuclear disarmament the centerpiece of the national security policy of the United States; and

Allegheny County Council further 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:

- (A) Renouncing the option of using nuclear weapons first;
- (B) Ending the President's sole authority to launch a nuclear attack;
- (C) Taking the nuclear weapons of the United States off hair-trigger alert;
- (D) Canceling the plan to replace the nuclear arsenal of the United States with modernized, enhanced weapons; and
- (E) Actively pursuing a verifiable agreement among nuclear-armed states to mutually eliminate their nuclear arsenals.