

ARTICLE 46: CITIZENS' PETITION – NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT [with amendments] as passed May 12, 2025 by the 2025 Needham, MA Annual Town Meeting

INSERTED BY: Joseph McCabe et. al.

Moved, that Town Meeting adopt the following Resolution, or take any other action in relation thereto:

WHEREAS, the May, 2019 Needham Town Meeting passed an article calling upon our federal leaders and our nation to make nuclear disarmament the centerpiece of U.S. national security policy and to implement the national “Back from the Brink” platform, which calls on our federal leaders to work toward the goal of signing the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and to take immediate steps 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 President’s sole, unchecked authority 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; and

WHEREAS, there are now specific bills filed in the Massachusetts Senate and the U.S House of Representatives that make the same proposals as the article passed by the May, 2019 Needham Town Meeting; and

WHEREAS, nuclear war would directly kill hundreds of millions of people and cause unimaginable environmental damage; and

WHEREAS, there is a high probability that a nuclear war would lead to catastrophic climate disruption dropping temperatures across the planet to levels not seen since the last ice age, thus resulting in the starvation of the vast majority of the human race, quite possibly leading to our extinction and the extinction of multiple other species; and

WHEREAS, even the use of a tiny fraction of the more than 12,000 weapons currently in existence would cause worldwide climate disruption and global famine; e.g., as few as a 100 Hiroshima-sized bombs (small by modern standards)

would put at least 5 million tons of soot into the upper atmosphere and cause climate disruption across the planet, decimating food production and putting 2 billion people at risk of starvation; and

WHEREAS, despite the notion that these arsenals exist solely to guarantee they will never be used, on multiple occasions nuclear-armed states have proceeded to the brink of using these weapons, and their use was narrowly averted; and

WHEREAS, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the repeated threats to use nuclear weapons and the People's Republic of China's plans to increase its arsenal have dramatically increased the danger of nuclear war; and

WHEREAS, although it is the federal government and not the state or municipal governments which have jurisdiction over matters relating to nuclear weapons, it has been shown that local policies can lead the way to important and necessary changes at the federal level and even internationally; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts played a leading role in ending the nuclear arms race with the Soviet Union in the 1980s, by adopting a Nuclear Freeze resolution and encouraging other states to follow our example; and

WHEREAS, over 40 years later it is not a "freeze" of nuclear weapons that is needed to save the Commonwealth, and the world, from the unthinkable catastrophe of a nuclear war or a nuclear accident, but the complete elimination of these weapons, in line with the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which entered into force as international law on January 22, 2021; and

WHEREAS, twenty other cities and towns in Massachusetts, the legislatures of California and Oregon, the Maine State Senate, the New Jersey Assembly, and the Rhode Island Assembly and Senate have passed resolutions similar to Needham's to take action to protect their citizens from the existential threat of nuclear war.

Be it RESOLVED, that Needham Town Meeting urges our State Senator, Rebecca Rausch and our State Representative, Josh Tarsky, to cosponsor Senate Resolution S. 1649, which states that it shall henceforth be the policy of the General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to pursue whatever measures may be found necessary and appropriate to protect the citizens of the Commonwealth from the

existential threat posed by nuclear weapons and to contribute in whatever ways it can, as a Commonwealth, towards the total elimination of these weapons from all countries, in line with the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Resolution S. 1649 urges all Massachusetts members of the House of Representatives to co-sponsor H.Res. 317, which calls upon the United States federal government to adopt the policy provisions of the "Back from the Brink" platform. S. 1649 also calls on the US Senators from Massachusetts to introduce a companion resolution in the United States Senate; and

Be it further RESOLVED that Needham Town Meeting urges our representative in the US House, Jake Auchincloss, to cosponsor H. Res 317; and

Be it further RESOLVED that copies of this article be transmitted by the Needham Town Clerk with a request for reply to our state senator and state representative, to our US Representative and Senators, the President and Vice President of the United States, the Speaker and Minority Leader of the United States House of Representatives, the Majority and Minority Leaders of the United States Senate, and the Governor of the Commonwealth.