

Testimony in support of Senate Joint Memorial 5, -1

My uncle, Vic Juhola, of Portland was an Atomic Veteran. He was he was forced to lay in trenches and then march to ground zero with other soldiers to practice fighting at atmospheric nuclear weapons tests Shot Charlie (Oct 30, 14 Kt) and Dog (21 Kt Nov 1) in 1951. He was sterilized due to his exposure and adopted my cousins. He was a decorated Korean war veteran with the Silver Star who survived brutal combat in Korea, in one case, he was one of only 8 men to return out of 200.

He told me nothing in the world was as terrifying as nuclear weapons. He gave me his blessing to my grassroots work for a nuclear weapons free future because they were so horrible, they must be abolished.

That was my patriotic duty, he said.

In 2008 he died a painful suffering death due to the strange cancers from his exposure. I wish he were alive to testify today, but if he were here, I know he would thank you for your bravery to stand up for a better world.

It is time now for all civilians and civil society to take a stand against nuclear war and a new arms race and for a better tomorrow. We have already paid so much for them, in so many ways. In just my family, I lost my uncle and my auntie because of nuclear weapons. My aunt Susan Mann grew up in Portland. She used to swim in the Columbia every warm sunny day, not knowing about the secret discharges of radioactivity into the river from Hanford Nuclear Reservation. She died of breast cancer at a very young age, 48.

As a lifelong anti-nuclear activist and now teacher at Oregon State University, I have studied the lives of Ava Helen and Linus Pauling and their leadership in the worldwide failed effort to ban nuclear weapons since 1945. We carry these efforts to you here today and lay them before your hearts to humbly ask for your mercy and your help. I don't want to give these burdens to the next generation. If we do not ban nuclear weapons in my lifetime, perhaps the next generation has no chance to survive, much less thrive. Abolishing nuclear weapons is one act of repair that fixes many other things by providing the resources and wisdom we need to really show we can all work together to survive climate change and create a true democracy with equality and justice for all.

I have heard the memories of August 6<sup>th</sup> 1945 from Hideko Tamura Snider who lived through the hell of what was created by what is now today, a "small" or low yield nuclear weapon compared to the thermonuclear weapons of today. She has since dedicated her life to the abolition of nuclear weapons and this Memorial rightly honors her legacy for peace and the work of a handful of other Oregonians, including the late Yakama tribal leader Russell Jim who fought for the repair of his ancestral land taken from him, Hanford Nuclear Reservation. The Memorial acknowledges Pat Hoover, who worked to get to the truth of the health effects caused by nuclear weapons production. The Memorial honors Portland international leader in abolition, Carol Urner, a founder of Women for Peace who created the first Hiroshima Nagasaki commemorations in Portland in 1962 and later was directly influential in the creation and support of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) which is the civil society umbrella for hundreds of organizations responsible for passage of the 2017 UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

This list however, could also include a many more Oregonians. It could include members of the Oregon Marshallese Community. It could include the National Association of Atomic Veterans and Fred Schafer, past Commander and current Vice Commander of that national organization who lives in Lebanon Oregon. I have heard the stories of the Marshallese Islanders as well as the uranium miners and their widows. I have studied the secret human radiation experiments. I also know the stories of the workers in the bomb factories who were told it was safe. It wasn't.

Author Ellen Scarry called America a thermonuclear monarchy. Nuclear weapons--- as Dr. Martin Luther King warned in his Nobel Peace Prize lecture in 1964, inherently undermine the soul of this country and with it, the hope of democracy and equality. Because of these weapons resources are squandered on an arms race to profit corporations while neglecting the needs of the human race.

I do not like what nuclear weapons teach. Like you, I want something better for the future.

These weapons teach values to us subconsciously. Nuclear weapons entitle some to threaten to destroy the earth and innocent people as opposed to learning to coexist and share.

These weapons teach disrespect for life and cause what educator David Orr calls "a disorder of thought." When a person thinks about suicide, how can they think their one, single life matters if their government threatens to destroy millions of people and ruin entire countries in order to have its way? If nuclear weapons are your model of leadership, does it even matter if you kill a handful of people, in a rage, when you didn't get your way? Why do we think of such people as insane but nuclear supremacy is thought of as giving power? Aren't mass shooters just in step with nuclear leadership when they "go ballistic?"

Nuclear weapons teach inequality. Nuclear supremacy was described by African American leaders who protested against nuclear weapons as a technological extension of white supremacy. These leaders tried to warn the rest of society. Just as African Americans live today knowing they can be shot by police or lynched and burned alive at any moment, not for any crime or wrongdoing, just for *being*—nuclear supremacy concentrates this same indiscriminate hate and self-loathing to terrorize everyone. These weapons in just their making, pollute our bodies and destroy our souls. I have a poster in my office that has a quote by Kathleen Lonsdale, a scientist and a Quaker: "The real horror is not that we may be bombed but that we should ever think of using the bomb on anyone else."

Nuclear weapons teach some people can be sacrificed, for example, the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, along with many more, from the southwest uranium miners to the Atomic Veterans to the Downwinders to the First Nations and indigenous peoples. Eighty percent of the nuclear fuel chain, the mining, milling, production, testing and storage of nuclear materials, occurs on indigenous peoples' remaining communities worldwide. Making these weapons create great harm, injustice and human rights infractions without even being used.

Nuclear weapons are the crisis. They have changed how we think and our relationship to each other. They have used up our precious resources, including our brightest scientific minds. This crisis however, presents the opportunity for us to grow and respond. This Memorial to support the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is a first step to begin to repair and align our relationships in order to face the realities of nuclear war threats, limited resources and the threats of climate change.

I am the realist. Our resources, are limited. Carrie Dann of the Shoshone tribe described producing nuclear weapons as “eating our children.” In other words, we are cannibalizing them and their future by how we live in the present. We are creating intergenerational harm and pollution in the creation of plutonium and other long-lived elements that did not exist in nature. We do not know how to control radiation nor how to “clean-up” or safely store the waste created by it.

If we continue to shirk from leadership and continue to put resources into new nuclear weapons, our own children may not survive. It is up to us, there is no one else to do this but us. We must be strong and courageous as you all and especially Senator Dembrow have been in bringing this Memorial forward, to set Oregon in a new direction; to make amends and to lead us to a brighter future. We may not be able to survive climate change without such types of correction. As Dr. King said, “We still have a choice today, nonviolent coexistence or violent co-annihilation.”

It is your seemingly small action to pass this Memorial in support of the Treaty that can grow democracy and help us to learn to live together in peace, without these genocidal weapons. I have been a part of the strategy meetings with Carol Urner and as a member myself of the WILPF International Disarm! group.

I have worked on the abolition of nuclear weapons since I was 18. I walked across the US in 1986 with the Great Peace March for Global Nuclear Disarmament and I was asked at that time by Hopi, Dine and Pueblo elders to tell their stories of how nuclear weapons and uranium mining brought early death to the miners and contamination to their lives. I kept that vow as best I could and organized and facilitated nuclear education events in Ashland Oregon for many years, including the Hiroshima and Nagasaki vigils.

In 2010 I represented the cities of Corvallis and Ashland to the Mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and at that time, I did what Hibakusha (an atomic bomb survivor) ask all Americans to do, I visited the Peace Museums and Peace Parks in both cities. I also attended civil society meetings to ban nuclear weapons, including the World Conference Against Atom and Hydrogen Bombs and the Hiroshima Conference for the Total Abolition of Nuclear Weapons by 2020. I represented Oregon WILPF and civil society at the Nonproliferation Treaty Prep com in 2013 in Vienna and attended meetings with International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons. I was a part of the discussions on the disproportionate exposure of indigenous people and underrepresented groups and what later became articulated as the Preamble in the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

This Treaty is the culmination of my life’s work. I watched and participated in civil society making this treaty and reclaiming democracy in a global sense since the World Peace Forum meeting in Vancouver Canada in 2006. This treaty is as strong and as binding as any, it requires us to commit to a nuclear weapons free future with all the force of our character. It is the culmination of many years of work on behalf of so many Oregonians.

As a lifelong student of what nuclear weapons teach, you have all my admiration, respect and gratitude for taking this significant stand to support a better world.

Thank you, Dr. Linda Marie Richards, 825 SE Marion Ave Corvallis, Oregon 97333