



12 June 2019

To: Members of the House Rules Committee

From: Jeff Bissonette, Pacific NW Advocate, Union of Concerned Scientists

Re: Support for SJM 5

Please accept this letter in support of Senate Joint Memorial 5, urging Congress to lead global efforts to reduce the threat of nuclear war.

Nuclear weapons are the most destructive, indiscriminate and world-altering weapons ever invented.

One might think that an accidental launch could not occur. People might assume that the United States only has a small number of weapons and that using those weapons would require careful deliberation by our national leaders.

Those assumptions are wrong.

Although the power to declare war belongs with Congress, the President can independently order the launch of nuclear weapons at any time. At his command are approximately 6,450 nuclear weapons in the US arsenal with many on hair-trigger alert.

In addition, over the coming years, the Pentagon plans to spend another \$1.2 trillion of taxpayers' money (with about \$188 million coming from Oregonians annually) to add a new generation of weapons to our nuclear arsenal.

These policies and plans increase the risk of nuclear war in very real and dangerous ways and they need to change. That is why UCS is engaged nationally in an effort to reduce the risk of nuclear weapons. Together with other security experts and leading scientists, we develop and advocate for policies like Senate Joint Memorial 5.

Oregon has a long history of urging action to reduce the threat of nuclear war. We have leaders in Congress who have focused on nuclear disarmament issues. We are part of a region where plutonium was processed and displaced Native populations. That area is still a major toxic contamination site.

Union of Concerned Scientists urges adoption of SJM 5 to urge the Congress to lead a global effort to prevent nuclear war by pursuing the following:

- establishing a system of checks and balances to ensure that the President of the United States no longer has the sole and unchecked authority to launch nuclear weapons;
- renouncing the option of using nuclear weapons first;

- taking U.S. nuclear weapons off hair-trigger alert;
- canceling the plan to replace the entire U.S. nuclear arsenal with next-generation nuclear weapons; and pursuing a verifiable and multilateral agreement among nuclear-armed states to eliminate their nuclear arsenals.

We also urge SJM 5's passage to demonstrate that the State of Oregon supports the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and we call upon the United States government to join the treaty.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer this written testimony.