TESTIMONY for SJM 8006 Opposing Nuclear Weapons

Friday February 7, 2020, in Cherberg Building

Senate State Committee on Government, Tribal Relations & Elections

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I’m Glen Anderson, a lifelong Washingtonian.

In 1954-1955 when I was in kindergarten, we were traumatized by learning that in case of nuclear war, the kids who lived in the neighborhood around the school could go home and die there, while the rest of us who lived farther away would die at school. I’m in the generation that had the “duck-and-cover” drills, as if hiding under a school desk would save us. Even then, we knew **that** was baloney.

Over the 60 years since then, the ever-present danger has persisted continuously.

For almost half a century I have been studying nuclear weapons and working hard to abolish them.

Sometimes the public, the media, and elected officials have paid attention, but most of the time they have ignored the problem.

But the the risks of accidents, human error, and miscalculations have continued. The government and media have refused to publicize these dangers, but those extreme risks have persisted. Nuclear weapons have continuously threatened to destroy all life on earth. A small percent of risk every year is cumulative. The odds are against us!

Suppose that right now – as we speak –something goes haywire (an accident, a computer error, or a president’s reckless emotional outburst). A mistake **at this moment** could cause ALL OF US to die in just 30 minutes from now.

The U.S. Constitution states that **only Congress** can declare war, but since 1945 a ***de facto* loophole** has existed, because a president can start the biggest war of all – a nuclear war – on his own authority **without** Congress’s consent.

Let’s just hope that we never have a president who is emotionally unstable, reckless and impulsive!

New federal legislation seeks to close that nuclear loophole. Senate Joint Memorial 8006 supports closing that loophole.

Now the U.S. is provoking a new nuclear arms race, so Russia is reacting to match the U.S.’s escalations.

New nuclear weapons are being designed to be MORE USABLE than those that exist now.

The danger of nuclear war is sharply increasing for many reasons we don’t have time to discuss today.

Many experts – including many former military leaders, weapons designers, and political leaders – are trying to alert us to the extreme danger to our survival.

A small nuclear war could kill many millions of people.

But once a small war starts, more retaliations would likely be launched back and forth. A large nuclear war could throw so much ash and dust into the upper atmosphere that the sun would be blocked out for ten years. We would have a decade in which no plants could grow, causing everyone to starve to death. Nearly all humans and other animals would die.

**Senate Join Memorial 8006 mentions some of the problems and asks you to urge Congress to take some sensible actions to prevent nuclear war.**

For the sake of sanity and humanity, I urge your committee to pass SJM 8006.

Thank you!