

California Votes to Support U.N. Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty, Restrict Presidential Authority for Nuclear Strike

By [Physicians for Social Responsibility](#)

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On Tuesday, August 28, the California Senate voted to approve [AJR 33](#), a resolution introduced by Assembly member Monica Limón that urges the U.S. to embrace the U.N. Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and implement important protective nuclear policies. The Senate also approved [AJR 30](#), a resolution introduced by Assemblymember Cecilia Aguiar-Curry that supports federal legislation to restrict the President's sole, unchecked authority to launch a first nuclear strike. Both resolutions passed the Assembly last week.

AJR 33 was introduced by Senator Bill Monning. Monning is well aware of nuclear dangers, having formerly served as Executive Director of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, winner of the 1985 Nobel Peace Prize.

“Since the height of the Cold War, the United States and Russia have dismantled more than 50,000 nuclear warheads, but 15,000 of these weapons still exist and pose a risk to human survival,” he said. “Cities across California have passed similar resolutions, and California has long led the nation on important policies like this, and we must do so again, this time on the critical issue of nuclear weapons.”

The California Senate vote comes just weeks after the [Los Angeles City Council unanimously passed a resolution](#) to support the U.N. Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and other critical nuclear security policies as part of the “[Back from the Brink](#)” campaign, a grassroots movement that is growing throughout the nation.

Physicians for Social Responsibility-Los Angeles (PSR-LA) is at the front of this effort. Our organization was founded over 35 years ago with the singular mission of stopping the nuclear arms race and preventing nuclear war. We understood then as we do now that nuclear weapons pose a lethal threat to health and survival, contaminate the environment, and squander financial resources better spent on making our communities healthy and whole.

Today, nuclear threats loom as large as when PSR-LA was founded.

“Nuclear weapons pose a tremendous threat to public health,” said Dr. Robert Dodge, President of PSR-LA. “And today I’m very concerned. We are in the midst of a new arms race and have a President who has threatened to use nuclear weapons. But it’s not too late to change course. Today California endorsed two common sense resolutions that support policies which provide a clear pathway back from the brink of nuclear war.”

The “Back from the Brink” campaign has support from prominent public health, science, environmental, faith-based and justice organizations. The U.S. Conference of Mayors voted unanimously in June to support a similar resolution, and cities throughout the country are following suit. The [U.N. Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons](#) endorsed in AJR 33 also has broad support, from the American Medical Association to Pope Francis to former Secretary of Defense William J. Perry. The Treaty, which was adopted last year with the support of 122 countries, bans nuclear weapons in the same way that biological and chemical weapons are banned. The U.S. and other nuclear states currently oppose it.

PSR-LA and supporters of the Back from the Brink campaign believe that local resolutions such as those endorsed by Los Angeles and California are key to building the public awareness and political will needed to eliminate nuclear weapons.

“We intend to build upon these successes, city by city, state by state, until the United States joins the majority of the world’s nations who want nuclear weapons banned,” said Denise Duffield, Associate Director of PSR-LA. “We must take action now, while there’s still time to protect all that we hold dear.”

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