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**HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 4008**

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**State of Washington 66th Legislature 2019 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Tarleton, Tharinger, and Pollet

TO THE HONORABLE DONALD J. TRUMP, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, AND TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE AND THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, AND TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES, IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED:

We, your Memorialists, the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Washington, in legislative session assembled, respectfully represent and petition as follows:

WHEREAS, Nearly fourteen thousand five hundred nuclear weapons still exist in the world and pose an intolerable risk to human survival; and

WHEREAS, The United States has roughly six thousand four hundred fifty nuclear weapons, constituting the world's most lethal nuclear weapons capability along with the Russian Federation; and

WHEREAS, The United States is currently planning to spend at least one trillion two hundred million dollars rebuilding our entire nuclear weapons arsenal, which takes funding away from conventional military needs and social programs like education, health care, and infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, The use and detonation of even a small number of nuclear weapons could have catastrophic human, environmental, and economic consequences globally; and

WHEREAS, These weapons pose a threat simply by existing, due to the possibility of accidents and miscalculations, many of which have been documented in the past; and

WHEREAS, In July 2017, one hundred twenty-two nations called for the elimination of all nuclear weapons by adopting the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons; and

WHEREAS, The United States Constitution gives Congress the sole power to declare war; and

WHEREAS, Despite this, the President currently has de facto sole authority to launch a nuclear attack on his or her own, without any required consultation or any system of checks and balances; and

WHEREAS, By any definition of war, a first-use nuclear strike from the United States would constitute a major act of war; and

WHEREAS, Washington state citizens benefit from the safety and security provided by existing nuclear arms reductions treaties, including the Intermediate-Range Forces (INF) Treaty and the New START Treaty; and

WHEREAS, A single nuclear detonation in any major city in Washington could cause hundreds of thousands of immediate fatalities, hundreds of thousands of injuries and illnesses from radiation, and devastating destruction of agricultural land and natural resources for decades; and

WHEREAS, Washington state has the largest collection of deployed nuclear weapons in the Western Hemisphere, at Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor on Hood Canal, just twenty miles from Seattle, Washington; and

WHEREAS, This nuclear weapons installation, added to Washington state's large city centers and many other military installations, makes our state a primary target in the event of a nuclear exchange; and

WHEREAS, Washington state is home to many other nuclear weapons sites and nuclear reactor facilities, including: The Hanford Nuclear Site, the most contaminated nuclear site in the Western Hemisphere, The Midnite Mine, a former nuclear weapons uranium mine located on the Spokane Tribe of Indians Reservation, and one of the largest populations of Marshall Islanders in the United States, whose home was the site of sixty-seven atmospheric nuclear weapons tests during the Cold War; and

WHEREAS, These nuclear weapons sites and activities disproportionately affect communities of color and indigenous people, none of whom have been adequately compensated for the environmental and health consequences of nuclear weapons activities pursued by the United States government during the fifty years of the Cold War; and

WHEREAS, These nuclear weapons and nuclear-related activities in Washington state makes this a uniquely local responsibility for Washington state to lead a national conversation about reducing and eliminating the threat of nuclear war, and revamping our federal strategy, which is also known as mutually assured destruction (MAD); and

WHEREAS, Washington's citizens, and all Americans have an inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and to live a life free from the threat of nuclear weapons; and

WHEREAS, The United States could lead a global effort to prevent nuclear war by:

(1) Renouncing the option of using nuclear weapons first;

(2) Ending the President's sole, unchecked authority to launch a nuclear attack;

(3) Taking United States nuclear weapons off hair-trigger alert;

(4) Canceling the plan to replace its entire arsenal with next generation nuclear weapons; and

(5) Actively pursuing a verifiable, multilateral agreement among nuclear-armed states to eliminate their nuclear arsenals;

NOW, THEREFORE, Your Memorialists respectfully pray that Congress take appropriate steps to move back from the brink of nuclear war by establishing a system of checks and balances to ensure that the President shall no longer have the sole, unchecked authority to launch nuclear weapons, except in circumstances of retaliation to a nuclear attack, and making it the policy of the United States to not use nuclear weapons first.

BE IT RESOLVED, That copies of this Memorial be immediately transmitted to the Honorable Donald J. Trump, President of the United States, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and each member of Congress from the State of Washington.