

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 20, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

We write to you about the gravest of threats to our country and the world: the ongoing risk of nuclear war. Whether by misunderstanding, mistake, or malicious intent, the use of even a small fraction of the world's nuclear weapons could kill hundreds of millions of people, cause unfathomable suffering, and produce a humanitarian crisis the likes of which human history has never witnessed. As Members of the newly formed Nuclear Weapons and Arms Control Working Group — and others who share these concerns — we urge your Administration to take steps that will reduce, and someday eliminate, the existential threat that these weapons of mass destruction pose.

To that end, we support your pledge, issued on the 75th anniversaries of the only wartime use of nuclear weapons, to “work to bring us closer to a world without nuclear weapons, so that the horrors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are never repeated.” The United States and Russia, which together possess the vast majority of the world's nuclear weapons, bear a special responsibility to ensure that we choose this safer, more secure path forward. We therefore appreciate your efforts to secure the extension of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START), the sole remaining nuclear arms-control agreement with Russia. That treaty, now in place until 2026, gives us mutual insight into the location, movement, and disposition of strategic nuclear weapons, and will help prevent a repetition of last century's Cold War arms race.

Although New START is necessary, it is not by itself sufficient to tackle the threat that nuclear weapons present. It is our hope that you work expeditiously to pursue talks with Russia on a follow-on agreement that can safely achieve deeper, verifiable reductions in both sides' excessive strategic nuclear arsenals, and put in place new limits on non-strategic weapons, including those delivered by intermediate and shorter-range missiles. Your Administration should also seek to reach mutual understandings with Russia on limitations on strategic missile defenses and the development of new hypersonic weapons, as well as other new technologies that could threaten progress on practical measures to reduce the chance of an inadvertent nuclear war.

While taking a strong stand against Russian President Vladimir Putin's aggressive behavior inside and outside Russian borders, we believe your Administration must also prioritize work in areas where we can and should seek common ground, beginning with arms control, disarmament, and strategic stability. Re-engaging in a regular, extensive, comprehensive dialogue with Russia on these issues will be a key step towards ensuring our mutual safety and security. Renewed U.S. leadership on nuclear disarmament will also greatly improve the prospects for a meaningful outcome and a common action plan emerging from the upcoming 10th Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference.

We look forward to regular consultations with you over the course of the next several years of concerted efforts in this space. We hope to have an open and ongoing dialogue with your national security team about how we can reduce the existential threat of nuclear weapons.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator
Co-Chair, NWAC Working Group



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator
Co-Chair, NWAC Working Group



Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress
Co-Chair, NWAC Working Group



John Garamendi
Member of Congress
Co-Chair, NWAC Working Group



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress



Bill Foster
Member of Congress



Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress



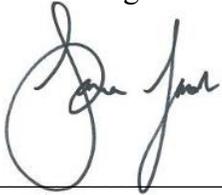
Jesus G. "Chuy" Garcia
Member of Congress



Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



Sara Jacobs
Member of Congress

/s/ Hank Johnson, Jr.

Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress

/s/ Ro Khanna

Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



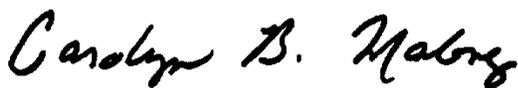
Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress



Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress



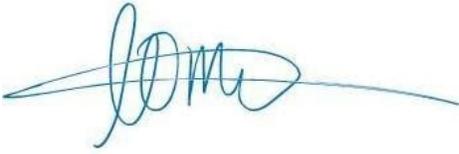
James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress



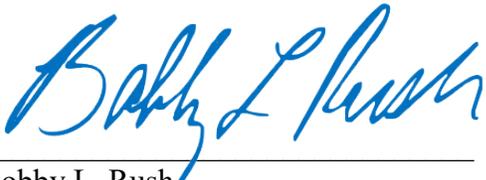
Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



Katie Porter
Member of Congress



Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress



Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



Dina Titus
Member of Congress



Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



Peter Welch
Member of Congress



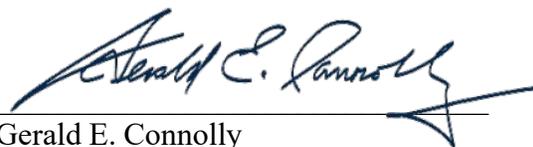
Jim Costa
Member of Congress



Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

/s/ André Carson

André Carson
Member of Congress



Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress