



June 22, 2022

Hon Marcy Kaptur
U.S. House of Representatives
1 Maritime Plaza # 600
Toledo, OH 43604

RE: Requesting your support for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

Dear Congresswoman Kaptur:

The First Meeting of States Parties (1MSP) to the *Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons* (TPNW) convenes this week, on June 21, 2022 through June 23, 2022, in Vienna, Austria. Governments participating in this meeting will seize the opportunity to respond to the recent threats of use of nuclear weapons, and the increased risk of nuclear conflict.

And with respect to The First Meeting of States Parties to the *Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons* (TPNW), Toledo's Northwest Ohio Peace Coalition respectfully makes three urgent requests of you today:

First, that you take conscious and aggressive steps now, to promote the signature, ratification, and enforcement of the 2017 UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons ("TPNW") in the United States Congress. The TPNW, which entered into force on January 22, 2021, provides a clear pathway to the elimination of the nuclear threat concerns that have re-entered the public consciousness since before, but certainly also during, the currently ongoing Russia-Ukraine war; and

Second, that you co-sponsor and sign onto H.R. 2850, the "Nuclear Weapons Abolition and Economic and Energy Conversion Act of 2021," related to the Treaty, the purpose of which is "To provide for nuclear weapons abolition and economic conversion in accordance with

District of Columbia Initiative Measure Number 37 of 1992, while ensuring environmental restoration and clean-energy conversion.”

Third, that you move to terminate, indefinitely, all federal assistance to the proposed next-generation of Small Modular Nuclear Reactors, also called Advanced Nuclear Reactors (SMRs) because they will not be technologically developed in time to serve as supposedly “carbon free” power generators – and indeed, SMRs are not carbon-free in any event. They cannot compete with other available alternatives; and dedication of funds to SMRs takes away precious resources needed to resist the ravages of planetary heating.

2017 UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (“TPNW”) – ICAN Legislative Pledge

Congresswoman Kaptur, you chair the very powerful U.S. House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy & Water Development, which provides the U.S. Department of Energy its massive annual funding for nuclear weapons, and nuclear power -- programs amounting to many tens of billions of dollars. Pending before you are proposals from the domestic nuclear power industry as well as the nuclear weapons lobby, pushing corporate welfare for accelerated development of Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) to make the U.S. competitive in global sales. Far from being a “clean” or “green” energy option, SMRs are nuclear weapons proliferation machines that would bring the potential for developing thermonuclear weapons to authoritarian and dictatorial regimes everywhere.

We respectfully request that you please sign the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons’ (ICAN’s) legislative pledge, which is a commitment to work for the total elimination of nuclear weapons by all countries via the universal adoption of the 2017 UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (“TPNW”). The pledge states:

We, the undersigned legislators, warmly welcome the adoption of the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on 7 July 2017 as a significant step towards the realization of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

We share the deep concern expressed in the preamble about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that would result from any use of nuclear weapons and we recognize the consequent need to eliminate these inhumane and abhorrent weapons.

As legislators, we pledge to work for the signature and ratification of this landmark treaty by our respective countries, as we consider the abolition of nuclear weapons to be a global public good of the highest order and an essential step to promote the security and well-being of all peoples.

There are many reasons why you should help us pursue universal adoption of the TPNW:

The U.S. ratified the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) 50 years ago along with Britain, France, Russia and China. The NPT is a legally-binding commitment to eliminate all nuclear

weapons. In 2000, the United States, together with those same countries, published an “unequivocal undertaking” that they would fulfill this commitment to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. But the US continues to develop and “modernize” its nuclear arsenal, which is a clear statement that it intends to persist in having thermonuclear weapons indefinitely. These illegal efforts contribute to a much more dangerous world in which every other nation can also decide to claim the same right to develop its own nuclear weapons.

Unless we get rid of all nuclear weapons, sooner or later, they are going to be used, whether on purpose or by accident. The repeated statements from the Putin regime in Russia that thermonuclear weapons are an option in Russia’s prosecution of the war against Ukraine is enormous cause for concern, given the U.S. withdrawal in recent years from important arms control treaties. The TPNW, which became effective on January 22, 2021, provides the way to verifiable and irreversible elimination of all nuclear weapons by all nations.

Currently there are 86 signatories and 65 states parties that have ratified this historic International Treaty. TPNW makes it illegal under international law to develop, test, produce, possess, stockpile, transfer, use, or threaten to use nuclear weapons. It also makes it illegal to assist, encourage or induce, in any way, anyone to engage in any activity prohibited by the Treaty.

As more countries sign and ratify the TPNW, including key allies of the United States, it will become increasingly difficult for the U.S. to develop, manufacture, deploy or justify its continued dependence on nuclear weapons. Some countries will be interpreting the “no assistance” clause to mean that American companies engaged in the manufacture and development of nuclear weapons will be prohibited from doing business in those countries. Congress should be protecting American jobs by promoting conversion to more globally acceptable activities.

H.R. 2850, the “Nuclear Weapons Abolition and Economic and Energy Conversion Act of 2021”

H.R. 2850 requires the United States Government to provide leadership by signing and ratifying the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons or any other international agreement that provides for: the dismantlement and elimination of all nuclear weapons in every country; and strict and effective international control of such dismantlement and elimination; that redirects resources that are being used for nuclear weapons programs to use in converting all nuclear weapons industry processes, plants, and programs, and in retraining employees, to shift to a constructive, ecologically beneficial peace economy, which includes strict control of all fissile material and radioactive waste; and in addressing human and infrastructure needs, including development and deployment of sustainable carbon-free and nuclear-free energy sources, health care, housing, education, agriculture, and environmental restoration, including long-term radioactive waste monitoring; and actively promote policies to induce all other countries to join in the commitments described in this subsection to create a more peaceful and secure world.

We call on you, as Chair of the House Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies to stop approving hundreds of millions, and even billions, of dollars of federal taxpayer funding to promote nuclear power industry initiatives which would expand nuclear weapons proliferation, add to our nuclear weapons stockpile, and deny us the resources for a just transition toward safer, more secure, healthier, and more environmentally protective alternatives for power and defense. Next-generation nuclear power plants and thermonuclear weapons are unaffordable detours and dangerous dead ends. Please exercise your powers to move us toward nuclear disarmament and against global weapons proliferation, and as well against unwise corporate welfare and governmental waste.

We urge you to support and sign the legislative pledge, co-sponsor and sign onto H.R. 2850, and to indefinitely cut off corporate welfare for Small Modular Reactors.

The Catholic Church and the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

Notably, members of the Catholic Church have long been at the forefront of grassroots movements to oppose nuclear weapons and promote disarmament, including the **Plowshares movement**, which advocates active resistance to war.

Congresswoman Kaptur, with all due respect, should not all Catholics, including you, President Joe Biden and all other Catholic politicians, be following the lead of Pope Francis in advocating for total nuclear disarmament? During his historic visit to Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 2019, Pope Francis declared that "the use of atomic energy for purposes of war is immoral, just as the possessing of nuclear weapons is immoral."¹

The Pontiff said the world "must never grow weary of working to support the principal international legal instruments of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, including the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons."

Francis' pronouncement was clear: The very possession of nuclear weapons is immoral! Therefore, if it is wrong for followers of Jesus to possess nuclear weapons, then it is equally wrong to build and modernize them, let alone use them.²

It should be profoundly noteworthy to you that the Catholic Church has been a leading proponent of the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. In fact, The Vatican was among the first states to ratify the TPNW in New York in September 2017.

“We must never grow weary of working to support the principal international legal instruments of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, including the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear weapons.”

- Pope Francis, Nagasaki, 24 November 2019³

¹ https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/pont-messages/2019/documents/papa-francesco_20191124_messaggio-incontropace-hiroshima.html

² <https://www.ncronline.org/news/opinion/catholics-must-act-francis-mandate-abolish-nuclear-weapons>

³ https://www.icanw.org/the_catholic_church_and_the_treaty_on_the_prohibition_of_nuclear_weapons

Thank you.

Co-Convenor of Northwest Ohio
Peace Coalition (NWOPC)

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