

## **Why Should My Organization Support the Petition to Study Nuclear Risk?**

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If you belong to a group that is working on arms control, peace and justice, or nuclear abolition, a natural question is “Why should my organization support the petition to study nuclear risk?” In addition to the petition’s obvious use for increasing the chance that Congress will request the study, which would then be an effective vehicle for raising public awareness, there are other reasons to consider supporting it:

**1. The petition answers a frequent objection to becoming involved.** When confronted with a problem this big, people often object, “But what can I do that will make a difference?” Raising awareness is prerequisite to concrete changes in our nuclear weapons policies, but does not feel significant enough to many people. The petition raises awareness, while working toward a significant, concrete goal that is achievable at this early stage of the process. Unlike treaty ratification, where  $\frac{2}{3}$  approval is required, a single, interested Congressional representative can make this happen.

**2. The petition is an ice breaker.** Peace and nuclear weapons are not the easiest issues to inject into a conversation. Asking someone to sign a petition to improve our national security provides a good ice breaker. As noted on our FAQ sheet, after someone has signed the petition, members or your organization can explain how the petition fits into your specific issue, providing an opportunity to introduce new people to your group.

**3. The petition resonates with a larger potential audience.** A recent messaging study, “Talking About Nuclear Weapons to the Persuadable Middle,” found the language of risk and statements of support by military leaders to be most effective. This petition concerns risk and has been signed by a four star admiral who directed the National Security Agency, increasing the receptivity of your potential audience.

**4. Its goal is hard to dispute.** While nuclear abolition and some other goals raise fears in many people, it’s hard to object to studying the risk inherent in our current nuclear weapons strategy.

**5. It adds coherence to our messages, while preserving our individuality.** Some groups are working on arms control, others on nuclear abolition, and yet others on issues of peace and justice. As is well known in advertising and marketing, that lack of coherence prevents our efforts from reinforcing one another. This petition has the potential to provide a common first step to our efforts, thereby increasing our effectiveness.