

How to Get Your City or Town Council to Pass a Resolution

Since the threat of nuclear war and the way our federal government mis-allocates the budget have a profound impact on every community, the voices of our local community leaders matter. That's why the U.S. Conference of Mayors adopted a resolution at its 2018 annual convention in Boston that "calls on the United States to lead a global effort to prevent nuclear war by renouncing the option of using nuclear weapons first; ending the sole, unchecked authority of any president to launch a nuclear attack; taking U.S. nuclear weapons off hair-trigger alert; cancelling the plan to replace its entire arsenal with enhanced weapons; and actively pursuing a verifiable agreement among nuclear armed states to eliminate their nuclear arsenals."

The same resolution also "calls on the President and Congress to reverse federal spending priorities and to redirect funds currently allocated to nuclear weapons and unwarranted military spending to support safe and resilient cities; to fully fund Community Block Development Grants and the Environmental Protection Agency; to mitigate climate change; to create jobs by rebuilding our nation's crumbling infrastructure, and to ensure basic human services for all, including education, environmental protection, food security, housing and health care."

You can bring a similar resolution to your local Town or City Council and be part of a national effort to reduce the threat of nuclear war and shift our nation's resources from war-making to urgent priorities.

Form a Committee and Draft Your Resolution

- 1) Form a small committee to sponsor the resolution. This can be a short-term, informal group or part of an ongoing community organization. Three people is enough to get started.
- 2) Write your resolution. Sample resolutions are available from advocacy groups.

Find a Champion and Get to Know Your Local Council

- 1) If your community has a City Council, Board of Aldermen, or Town Council, find out who the members are and when they meet. If you've never been to a meeting, attend one to get a sense of how they function. Find out what the process is for consideration of resolutions, including whether they would get reviewed by a subcommittee and whether the Mayor or another official has control over the agenda.
- 2) Look at the list of members. Are they people you know? If not, ask your neighbors who they know.
- 3) Find one or two members whom you think will agree with you about the importance of the issue in your resolution. Meet with them. Ask if they would be willing to introduce the resolution. If they say yes, ask about other members who might become co-sponsors. (The more members of the Council who support the resolution from the start, the better are your chances of getting it passed.)
- 4) Review the wording of the resolution with your "champion" so that you can reach agreement on the final wording. Hint: if you make it too long, it will be harder to get people's attention.
- 5) Work with the sponsor(s) to develop a plan to shepherd the resolution through the council's process.

Educate Your Neighbors

- 1) Strategize with the sponsor(s) and your committee about ways to reach more community members. Think about existing clubs, congregations, meeting places, unions, or other groups where people get together.
- 2) Draw up a petition. Use it, a) to persuade the Council that the resolution has popular support, b) as a way to open up conversations with your neighbors about the issue, and c) to identify people who want to actively support your local campaign.
- 3) Educate your community. Create leaflets you can pass out and flyers you can post in public places. Organize an event with a speaker or a film.
- 4) Create a Facebook page to support your resolution campaign. Get people from your community to “like” and share it. Use it for updates on the issue and to get everyone contacting their Council members.
- 5) Write letters to the editor of the newspaper that serves your community to educate about the issue and the resolution. Are there local talk radio shows? Call in!

Mobilize for the Public Hearing

- 1) Find out if the Council will hold a public hearing on the resolution before they vote. If there will be a public hearing, it is important to turn out as many people as you can to attend.
- 2) Use your list of petition signers, Facebook friends, and members of supportive groups to get people to the public hearing.
- 3) Make a plan for testimony. Are there particular points you want to emphasize? Who are the best people to present them? Can you anticipate arguments that might be made by opponents?

Mobilize for the Council Vote

- 1) Find out when your resolution will be brought up for a vote, which might even be the same day as a public hearing.
- 2) Get your supporters to contact their Council members, who may represent everyone as “at-large” members or may represent a particular ward.
- 3) Show up together and be visible at the meeting where the vote will take place.

Celebrate Your Victory and Keep Going

- 1) When your resolution passes, be sure to privately and publicly thank the sponsor(s) and everyone who voted for it.
- 2) Send out a news release and post it on your Facebook page.
- 3) Schedule a meeting of your supporters. Discuss what else you can do to educate and mobilize your community. Find ways to connect with other groups in New Hampshire and beyond. Keep on organizing!