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PRESS RELEASE: Norton Introduces Bill Requiring Dismantling of Nuclear Weapons

WASHINGTON, D.C. Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) introduced the Nuclear Weapons Abolition and Economic and Energy Conversion Act of 2021 today. Since 1994, Norton has introduced a version of the bill, which would require the United States to sign and ratify an international agreement to disable and dismantle Americas nuclear weapons upon certification that other nuclear powers have begun elimination of theirs.

**Statement of Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton
On the Introduction of the
Nuclear Weapons Abolition and Economic and Energy Conversion Act of 2021**

April 26, 2021

Ms. Speaker:

Today, I am introducing the Nuclear Weapons Abolition and Economic and Energy Conversion Act of 2021, a version of which I have introduced since 1994, after working with the District of Columbia residents who were responsible for the Nuclear Disarmament and Economic Conversion ballot initiative, passed by D.C. voters in 1993.

My bill still requires the United States to sign and ratify an international agreement to disable and dismantle Americas nuclear weapons, to provide for strict control of fissile material and radioactive waste and to use nuclear-free energy. In lieu of joining such an agreement, this new version of the bill also gives the United States the option to ratify the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (Treaty). Many nations have already signed onto the Treaty. The Treaty was drafted by the United Nations in conferences in March and July of 2017, which is why I did not include it in my previous bills. According to the United Nations, the Treaty is a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination. I am pleased by the international progress on this important issue.

Our bill continues to provide that the funds used for nuclear weapons programs be redirected to human and infrastructure needs, such as housing, health care, Social Security, restoring the environment and creating carbon-free, nuclear-free energy. The conversion to a peace economy would occur when the President certifies to Congress that all countries possessing nuclear weapons have begun elimination under an international treaty or other legal agreement.

The bill is particularly timely considering the ongoing nuclear threat from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Our country still has a long list of urgent domestic needs that have been put on the back-burner. As the only nation that has used nuclear weapons in war, and that still possesses one of the largest nuclear weapons arsenals, I urge support for my bill to help the United States reestablish its moral leadership in the world by redirecting funds that would otherwise go to nuclear weapons to urgent domestic needs.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

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