

Freeze the Nukes, Fund the Future

From: The Honorable Edward J. Markey

Sent By: joseph.wender@mail.house.gov

Date: 9/22/2011

Dear Colleague,

The Super Committee should target nuclear weapons. Our country plans to spend over \$700 billion during the next decade on these archaic weapons of the past. We must cut funding for these weapons, and we must protect our children, our seniors, and our most vulnerable. The letter below advises the Super Committee to propose substantial cuts to the U.S. nuclear arsenal. I urge you to sign on to this letter. Please have a member of your staff contact Joseph Wender of my staff at x52836 or at Joseph.Wender@mail.house.gov if you would like to sign on or if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Edward J. Markey

Freeze the Nukes, Fund the Future

Dear Members of the Super Committee:

The Berlin Wall fell. The Soviet Union crumbled. The Cold War ended. Yet 20 years later, we continue to spend over \$50 billion a year on the U.S. nuclear arsenal. This makes no sense. These funds are a drain on our budget and a disservice to the next generation of Americans. We are robbing the future to pay for the unneeded weapons of the past. Now is the time to stop fighting last century's war. Now is the time to reset our priorities. Now is the time to invest in the people and the programs to get America back on track.

The Super Committee is best positioned to cut this outdated radioactive relic. The Soviets are long gone, yet the stockpiles remain. The bombs collect dust, yet the bills are with us to this day. We call on the Super Committee to cut \$20 billion a year, or \$200 billion over the next ten years, from the U.S. nuclear weapons budget. This cut will enable us to stay safe without further straining our budget. This cut will improve our security. This cut will allow us to continue funding the national defense programs that matter most.

Consider how this savings compares to vital programs on which Americans rely. We spend approximately \$20 billion per year on Pell Grants to help students pay for college. We spend \$5 billion to ensure that Americans do not freeze in their homes during the winter. We need to freeze our nuclear weapons, and fuel our stalled economy.

The Ploughshares Fund estimates that the U.S. will spend over \$700 billion on nuclear weapons and related programs over the next ten years. Nuclear weapons and missile defense alone will consume over \$500 billion. We can no longer justify spending at these levels. We can save hundreds of billions of dollars by restructuring the U.S. nuclear program for the 21st century.

Our current arsenal totals over 5,000 nuclear warheads. This enormous stockpile will allow us to annihilate our enemies countless times. At any one time there are 12 Trident submarines cruising the world's seas. Each submarine carries 24 nuclear weapons. Each submarine is capable of destroying all of Russia's and China's major cities. Why then do we need all of these weapons? There is no good reason. America no longer needs, and cannot afford, this massive firepower.

The Super Committee should not reduce funding to vital programs relied upon by millions of Americans. Cut Minuteman missiles. Do not cut Medicare and Medicaid. Cut nuclear-armed B-52, B-1, and B-2 bombers. Do not cut Social Security. Invest in the future, don't waste money on the past.

We do not need to maintain our current level of nuclear weapons to secure our country. The President agrees. The Senate agrees. The New START treaty will reduce our level of deployed strategic warheads to 1,550. This is a 25 percent cut from today's levels. Fewer nuclear weapons should equal less funding.

We should not cut entitlement programs first. We should not target our seniors, our children, and our sick first. Instead we should target outdated and unnecessary nuclear weapons. Let's freeze the nukes so we can fund the future.

Sincerely,