INTRODUCTION

Our nuclear policy is so outdated it’s scary. It puts the power to launch nuclear weapons in the hands of the president alone, with no checks or balances. It also gives the US president the power to launch nuclear weapons and start a nuclear war even if we have not been attacked first. Over the years, there have been dozens of false alarms and accidents. Imagine the consequences if the president was tired, under extreme stress, or a crisis broke after he or she had taken medication? Anyone can make a bad call, but this one could kill millions.

Things have gotten worse since 2016. The Trump administration is taking us in the wrong direction. They are taking us out of landmark nuclear arms control agreements—like the Iran Nuclear Deal and treaties that have kept us safe for decades—and are moving forward with $1.2 trillion plans to rebuild the entire nuclear arsenal. These moves only increase the chance of a catastrophe that could kill millions.

Our leaders need to recognize that just like climate change, nuclear weapons pose an existential threat to the planet that the next generation will inherit.

With stakes this high, every 2020 presidential candidate should have a strong position on these issues. Some candidates are already starting to talk about it.

But we need to make this a key issue in the election.

There’s no future in nuclear war. That’s why students across the country are calling on candidates to take a stand and tell us—the voters—what they plan to do to make us safe from nuclear war.
EVENTS ON CAMPUS

It’s easy for the potential consequences of our nuclear policy to seem far away or like the ending of some dystopian novel. But our generation will be the ones paying for our bloated nuclear arsenal, and living with the risk they pose.

It’s even worse when you consider our generation will be the ones who have to pay for it. We could spend $1.2 trillion in so many better ways: It could help forgive student loans, build thousands of miles of roads and train tracks or help pay for the healthcare for people who need it.

Candidates need to hear from voters that this matters, and hearing from young people in particular will make a big difference in the next election. We could be a pivotal swing vote in 2020 and candidates will be looking for ways to satisfy our demands.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

This election, we’re working with students all across the country to call on candidates to make nuclear weapons a priority and raise the profile of this issue. You can help by taking action on your campus. Are you a faculty or staff member on a college campus? We need your help with this too, and we’ve got some ideas for ways to take action below.

We know you’re busy, so we’re helping students organize projects that fit their capacity and schedule.

This could mean something simple like making some noise on social media or gathering petition signatures, or something bigger, like hosting a debate-watching party or surveying your peers and sharing the results. It could be something totally out of the box, like making art or putting on a performance that draws attention to the issue—whatever sounds fun and engaging to you!

And we won’t leave you hanging—Union of Concerned Scientists staff can help you plan your activities and even provide funding if you need it.
Not sure where to start? Check out some of our event and activity ideas below. Pick something that sounds good to you or brainstorm a new idea! Use the resources and materials in the toolkit to help you. We can also work to provide anything else you want but don’t see here—including funding if needed.

Be sure to use materials with our branding to make this a coordinated campaign across the country.

Get in touch with Lilly (lilly.ucs@gmail.com) for help and support. Remember, we are here to support you!

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START HERE

Here are some ideas:

- If you’re really busy and only have time to do one thing, use our easy **“Gather Voices”** tool to capture video statements from students on why they think nuclear weapons should be a main issue in the election and what they want to hear from candidates. We’ll be collecting these from students all over the country.

- Tag some of the 2020 candidates and members of Congress on social media.
  - A social media post may seem like a small thing but it will help raise the profile of the issue on social media and get the attention of targets.
  - Make sure to incorporate your video statements from our Gather Voices tool.
  - Use the sample posts, hashtags, memes and fun graphics below.

- Gather signatures on campus for our [Open Letter to 2020 Presidential Candidates](#), urging them to make nuclear weapons a priority in the election.

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Open Letter to 2020 Presidential Candidates

We, the undersigned, are gravely concerned about the growing risk of nuclear war and urge all of you—the 2020 presidential candidates—to make this a top priority in your presidential campaign. We call on you to offer specific policy proposals that will keep our loved ones, our communities, and the entire planet safe from nuclear threats.

Signed By

[Signature box]

[Email box]

[Phone box]

[State box]

[Check box]

[Comment box]

[Donate button]

SIGN THE PETITION
TAKE THE NEXT STEP

Are you fired up about this issue and want to get a little more involved than just doing stuff online? Try out some of these ideas.

‣ Ask professors for time to make a class announcement or even take a portion of class time to share information and encourage people to take action. We can help you prepare a quick presentation.

‣ Speak at clubs or activists groups you might be involved in.

‣ Set up a table at an existing event, or in a high-traffic area on campus. We’ll help give you materials and talking points to make it easy.

‣ Writing a piece for the school newspaper is a great way to get involved if you just can’t find the energy to deal with other humans in real life (we’ve all been there).

‣ Make a video on the issue and share it with your friends.

BE A LEADER

Are you ready to be a leader on campus and organize your friends to take action? We can help. If you’re interested in any of the options below, we can provide materials, cover expenses up to $400 and even send staff to help support the event!

‣ Set up a “Wheel of Near Misfortune” at an event or in a popular spot on campus and invite students to spin the wheel to learn about all the times that we ALMOST accidentally started a nuclear war.

‣ Host a debate-watching party for the next presidential debate, and discuss how the candidates do or don’t talk about nuclear weapons issues.

‣ Organize a training of your fellow students on how to “bird-dog” a politician (meaning follow around and demand action on an issue).

‣ Create a piece of public art: whether it’s as simple as a banner, as elaborate as a mural or as striking as a projection on the student center.

‣ Organize a die-in or another protest that demands people pay attention to this issue.

‣ Organize a meet-up at a local cafe or bar (21+ of course for the latter).

‣ If you or your friends are one of those people who are always gearing up for a fight, host a debate with your classmates about our current nuclear weapons policy.

‣ Interview students on campus and publicize interviews via video or write-up, like students did here.
There are a lot of ways you can support students taking action on campus! Here are some ideas to get you started:

- First - share this toolkit with your students!
- Take some class time to discuss the issue. You can start a great discussion using one of the videos we list below, a recent news article, or factsheets and other resources from the Union of Concerned Scientists.
- If a student on your campus is organizing an event, offer extra credit for your students to attend, or help promote their event in your classes.
- Work with your academic department to send out some educational resources to students on these issues.

Want to take it a step further?
- Organize an event with students on campus: host a speaker on campus, set up a debate on the issue with other faculty, organize a movie screening, or check out any of the other ideas for events above.
SAMPLE POSTS: FACEBOOK

- Our generation will inherit outdated and dangerous nuclear weapons policies if we don't act now. Come join us at [PLACE] for an afternoon writing letters to our leaders urging them to take action! RSVP HERE ->

- Our president has the power to launch nuclear weapons at any time: even if we have not been attacked first. That policy is scarily outdated. This election, I'll be working to make sure the presidential candidates know it needs to change.

- America’s outdated nuclear weapons policy is a danger to all of us. It gives the president sole authority to launch nuclear weapons, even if we have not been attacked first. Together, we need to make sure our leaders know that this generation won’t stand for the status quo.

- 🚨 DEBATE ALERT 🚨 The next debate is coming up soon and we still don’t know where most of these candidates stand on changing our outdated and dangerous nuclear weapons policy. It's time that they let us know! Tag a candidate and ask them how they're going to keep us safe from nuclear weapons.

- Have a plan to watch the next presidential debate? Come join us at XX! We’ll watch to see which candidate has the best plan to keep us safe from nuclear war. Plus, free drinks and pizza!

SAMPLE POSTS: TWITTER

- America’s outdated nuclear weapons policy is a danger to all of us. Come to our event and learn more about how we can protect our future. <link> #NukeVote2020

- 🚨 DEBATE ALERT 🚨 The next #DemDebate is coming up soon and we still don’t know where most of these candidates stand on #nuclearpolicy. It's time that they let us know! Tag a candidate and ask them how they're going to keep us safe.

- Our president has the power to launch nuclear weapons at any time: even if we have not been attacked first. That policy is scarily outdated. This election, I’ll be working to make sure the presidential candidates know it needs to change. #NukeVote2020

- America’s outdated nuclear weapons policy is a danger to all of us. It gives the president sole authority to launch nuclear weapons, even if we have not been attacked first. Together, we need to make sure our leaders know that this generation won’t stand for the status quo.

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Our generation will inherit this nuclear weapons crisis if we don't act now. Come join us at [PLACE] for an afternoon writing letters to our leaders urging them to take action! RSVP HERE ->

**Hashtags**
- #NoFirstUse
- #NukeVote2020

**Handles to tag**
- Union of Concerned Scientists: @UCSUSA
- Candidates (see below)

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Media to promote:

**Union of Concerned Scientists**
- [The Craziest Nuclear Weapons Policy That You’ve Never Heard Of](#)

**BBC**
- "Nuclear Weapons Explained in Numbers"

**Physicians for Social Responsibility**
- [Nuke Buster, First Prize, Student Category](#)

**John Oliver on Nuclear Annihilation**
- [Nuclear Annihilation](#)

**Kurzgesagt**
- [What if We Nuke a City?](#)

**Princeton University**
- [Plausible Scenario: 90 Million Dead or Injured within Hours](#)

**Outrider Foundation**
- [What Happens in a Bomb Blast](#)
- [How to Dismantle a Nuclear Bomb](#)
Planning an inclusive, accessible event

Organizing a call-in day

Hosting a letter-writing party

Hosting a public education event

Checklist for organizing an effective event

Starting a local science cafe