

# A Call To Halt

## Nuclear Weapons Referenda Vote Report

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### About this Report

The following is a report of the Nuclear Weapons Referenda Vote tally from the DEMOCRACY exhibition on display in the Playhouse Gallery at the Overture Center for the Arts in Madison, Wisconsin. The installation was on view from March 7th through June 4, 2023.

Report prepared by Brandon Bauer (June 2023)

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## **About the *A Call To Halt* Project**

A Call To Halt is a project by the artist Brandon Bauer. The project is an installation and critical timeline of the Euromissiles Crisis and the nuclear abolition movement in the United States from 1977-1987. The installation includes a reenactment of the 1982 Nuclear Freeze Referenda, in which Wisconsin was the first state to put nuclear disarmament policy to a popular vote. The Full installation consists of two parts: The Euromissiles Crisis Portfolio, a portfolio of twenty-two images creating a historical narrative of the Euromissiles Crisis and the nuclear abolition movement that arose in response to the crisis from 1977-1987, and the Wisconsin Nuclear Freeze Re-enactment Installation, A participatory installation where visitors can vote on the Nuclear Freeze Referenda. The Wisconsin Nuclear Freeze Re-enactment installation includes a voting booth, ballot boxes, and ballots, as well as a selection of books on the history of the Nuclear Freeze and nuclear abolition movements and photographs from archives of the organizing materials of the Nuclear Freeze campaign.

For the DEMOCRACY exhibition at the Overture Center for the Arts, a scaled-back installation was exhibited, including four prints from the Euromissiles Crisis Portfolio selected by the curator, Beth Racette, and the Wisconsin Nuclear Freeze Re-enactment Installation without the books or photos from the archives.

## **Summary of Nuclear Weapons Referenda Vote Results**

The following is a summary of the vote result from the Nuclear Weapons Referenda restaged for the DEMOCRACY exhibition at the Overture Center for the Arts. The final vote was 210 YES to 42 NO, with 3 MAYBE ballots cast. There was evidence of ballot stuffing on the NO side, but it did not have an effect on the outcome.<sup>1</sup>

The final result is that the YES vote won (See Figure 1).

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<sup>1</sup> There were in excess of 30 blank ballots stuffed into the NO ballot box to give the appearance of more votes than were actually cast for the NO position. There were also several votes cast that had the same character to the mark made in checking the NO box. In absence of proof of an individual overvote, all of the checked ballots that had the same checkmark character were counted in the final vote total.

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Nuclear Weapons Referenda  
Nuclear Weapons Referenda Vote Totals from the DEMOCRACY exhibition on display in the Playhouse Gallery at the  
Overture Center for the Arts, Madison, WI - March 7th through June 4, 2023.

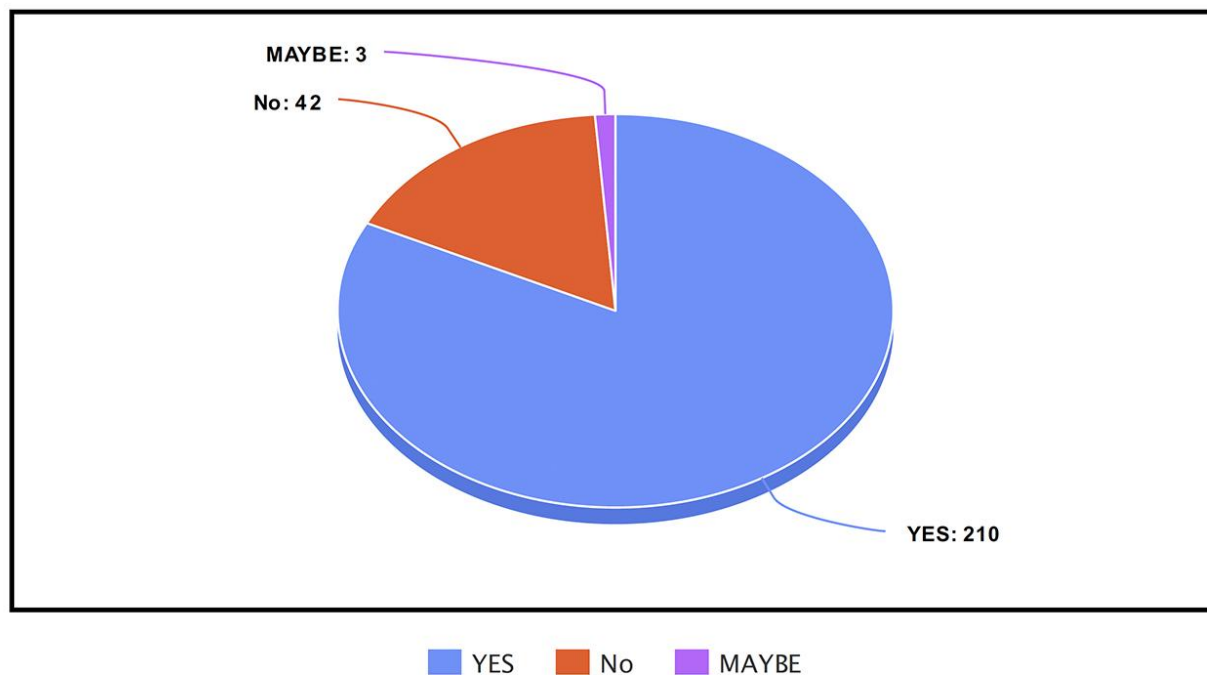


Figure 1: Total Votes and Results

## Summary of Nuclear Weapons Referenda Vote Comments

**YES Comments:** Comments on the proposal from the YES side spoke about the need to eliminate the danger of nuclear weapons to maintain a world for future generations, to eliminate these weapons and then focus on combating the climate crisis, and some offering policy solutions like resuming the START treaty and adding China to it. One comment questioned why F-35 fighter planes were stationed in Madison when the city was designated a “Nuclear Free Zone.” Beyond this, there were many general calls for peace and eliminating nuclear weapons in the YES comments.

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**NO Comments:** In the NO comments, several nihilistic comments expressed the desire for nuclear weapons to “kill them all” or took cynical jabs at the “live, laugh, love” mentality along with comments about how “other countries don’t care about being woke or politically correct.” There were also some sincere comments questioning if Russia can be trusted and asserting that we need to maintain our defensive capabilities.

**MAYBE Comments:** The 3 MAYBE votes were all comments. One stated, “perhaps” as a newly created checkbox option, one questioned how people would vote on this proposal in Ukraine, and one just stated, “God please help us!”

## **Full Transcribed Nuclear Weapons Referenda Vote Comments Categorized**

### **YES COMMENTS**

#### **(General support)**

- This and so much more needs to be done!
- Enough is enough!
- Of course!!
- Now!
- We need peace [drawn peace sign]
- Overdue
- [scribble] now!
- Love M
- YES! -absolutely
- Thank you for asking.
- Immediately before it’s too late!
- Good Luck!!
- !
- Yes, and put me in your next Democracy show, please. Marlon Banks  
marlonbanks.com
- Good stuffs
- [large drawn smiley face]
- No only for protection

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- For Peace!
  - Obviously!
  - Law for Intercontinental
  - US should take its responsibility
  - Most definitely. Make sure the U.S. does it first.
  - ASAP
  - We all really need this!
  - [drawn happy cat face and another cartoon creature]

**(For the future - general)**

- This is the only option for the survival of the human race
- We hope to still have a world to leave to our grandchildren
- We can do this save humanity & all living beings turn our attention to healing the planet, the people, the ecosystem & all creatures. / Slow & stop the climate disaster all weapons massively contribute to this climate crisis. We also need the \$ for human and eco needs We can stop this madness. Si Se puede
- We must protect our earth & all its children. [drawn heart]
- It's essential to our survival.
- If we don't I fear for my grandchildren.

**(No nukes / no weapons / no war)**

- No war no nuclear weapons peace only!
- No need for more weapons
- #elimination
- Nuclear is bad. Abort the patriarchy. - A concerned person [two drawn smiley faces]
- Weapons that cause this much destruction shouldn't exist
- End the bombs forever more
- Its not nice when people die regardless of their status as your ally or enemy.
- Nuclear weapons have no place here nuclear power can save lives and our planet  
End fossil fuel dependence End capitalist greed Begin our future with hope
- Yes, yes, yes! Money & resources for the planet & her residents, not for death machines!
- All nuclear weapons should be eliminated / decommissioned

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- Stop all ammunition production!
  - I like not having mutually assured destruction
  - [drawn face with wide eyes and braces saying] No Nuke
  - Eliminate nuclear weapons!
  - No! Nukes! Slay! [drawn smiley face]
  - Mass destruction doesn't solve anything!
  - War is bad
  - Please! I would not like to have a world war 3 with nukes.
  - I don't want us to see a nuclear war.
  - The threat of nuclear war would bring unknown destruction and the loss of lives that should be saved
  - While the threat of nuclear weapons may prevent large scale wars, it leaves humanity too close to the end at all times
  - [drawn oval person with a frown and stick limbs holding a nuclear bomb] No more nukes!
  - Nuclear free world
  - No Nukes!

### **(Policy reflections)**

- Renew Start I & add China as a tri-lateral treaty
- Mutual moratorium & reduction - Mutual is key / Yes indeed! Thanks!
- We need to do more than freeze them. Get rid of them all. Let us slash the military budget and turn attention to the climate crisis.
- And demand Sen. Baldwin & Sen. Johnson to co-sponsor the bill.
- Why is Madison (illegible) F-35's (Planes made for nuclear bombing) to Madison - a nuclear free zone?
- Enough already negotiate a freeze
- Wisconsin public education system does not provide adequate reading comprehension skills for this style of question to be on the ballot

### **(Historical Reflection)**

- Let's be as smart as we were in 1982!
- Look where we are now! We need a new vote! Now!!

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**(Cynical / dismissive / troll comments)**

- I am trans give me money!!
- I'm too coked out for this. My hairspray smells like piss Yes, I do agree nukes are not for me and whoever denies it I'll dismiss

**(Illegible / unknown intention)**

- [two small drawn cubes]
- [illegible signature]
- [illegible signature]
- [illegible scribble]
- [illegible scribble]

**NO COMMENTS****(Defense concerns)**

- Ukraine has showed us that nuclear disarmament only leaves us vulnerable. Russia can't be trusted.
- We still need to be defended
- We have seen what disarming has allowed to happen in Ukraine

**(Rights of others)**

- I feel we don't have the right to suppress the values of others to protect themselves in any manner they see fit

**(Cynical / nihilistic / troll comments)**

- I recommend nuclear warfare. Other countries don't care about woke and politically correct. It is called DEFENSE for your safety. - A moderate, blue collar American
- Nuclear bomb!
- I LIKE EXPLOSIONS!!!
- I LOVE NUKES KILL THEM FUCKEN ALL!
- War bad! Live, Laugh, Love
- #MAGA

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- [drawn explosion]
  - I say no because with nuclear weapons can destroy earth and kill lots of people
  - ANY BUT KAZAKHSTAN [drawn head shoulders and arms of person with square head, square smile, and two thumbs up]
  - I hope they blow us all up to be honest. This state, and country has gone to shit unfortunately

#### **MAYBE COMMENTS**

- Perhaps [drawn checkbox - checked]
- What would the vote be in Ukraine
- GOD Please help us! [exclamation point has a drawn heart for the point]