

New Hampshire Residents Overwhelmingly Support No-First-Use of Nuclear Weapons

HIGHLIGHTS

A new University of New Hampshire Survey Center poll shows that nearly three-quarters of New Hampshire residents (73 percent) believe the United States should never use nuclear weapons first in a conflict. This view is shared by well over half (57 percent) of self-described “conservatives.” Only 20 percent of those polled believe there are circumstances in which such use is acceptable.

The poll also shows that 84 percent of residents believe it is important for presidential candidates to give their views on nuclear weapons, and that the overwhelming majority of residents do not believe one person should be able to order a launch that would start a nuclear war.

The choice to use nuclear weapons is one of the most significant, impactful decisions that a leader or country could ever make. A single warhead or bomb could kill hundreds of thousands of people; the use of even a small number of weapons could cause dramatic and disastrous impacts. Currently, the United States reserves the right to use nuclear weapons first in a conflict, and the authority to launch nuclear weapons lies solely with the president. A recent University of New Hampshire Survey Center poll highlights how New Hampshire residents feel about these policies.

Acceptability of Using Nuclear Weapons First

One in five Granite Staters (20 percent) think there are circumstances where it would be acceptable for the United States to use nuclear weapons first in a conflict. Just over half (55 percent) say the United States should only use nuclear weapons after a nuclear attack on the United States or one of its allies. According to the survey, 18 percent of New Hampshire residents volunteer that the United States should never use nuclear weapons, while 7 percent don't know or are unsure (Figure 1).

Importance of Presidential Candidates Discussing Views on Nuclear Weapons

According to the survey, 84 percent of New Hampshire residents think it is very (54 percent) or somewhat (30 percent) important for candidates in the upcoming

FIGURE 1. Using Nuclear Weapons First

In your opinion, are there any acceptable circumstances for the United States to use nuclear weapons first in a conflict or should the United States only use them after a nuclear attack on the United States or one of our allies?

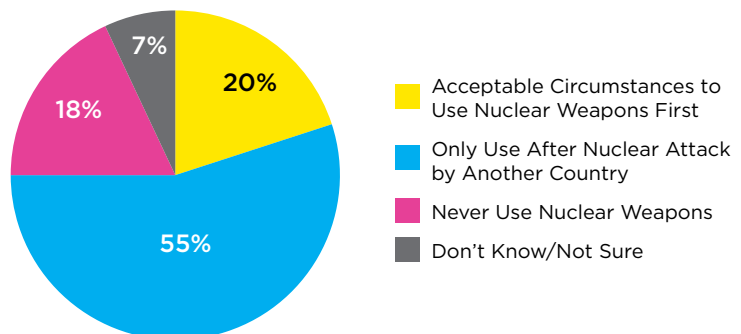
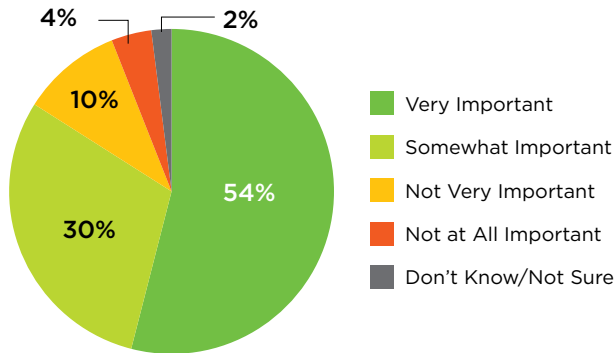


FIGURE 2. Views on Nuclear Weapons

How important is it to you for candidates in the upcoming 2020 presidential election to lay out their views regarding nuclear weapons?



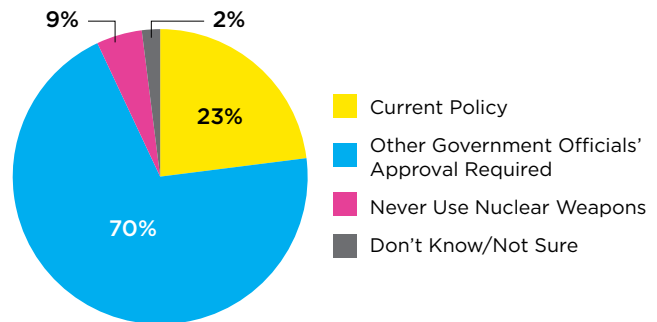
2020 presidential election to lay out their views regarding nuclear weapons. Only 10 percent think it is not very important that they do so, 4 percent say it is not at all important, and 2 percent don't know or are unsure (Figure 2).

Single or Multiple Person Approval for Use of Nuclear Weapons

Respondents were asked whether they are comfortable with the current policy of sole authority—the president is the only person who can order the use of nuclear weapons, does not need to consult with anyone, and the decision cannot be overruled—or if they would prefer that one or two other government officials be required to approve the use of nuclear weapons. Just under a quarter of Granite Staters (23 percent) say they are comfortable

FIGURE 3. Sole Launch Authority

Currently, the president can order the use of nuclear weapons on his or her own and the decision cannot be overruled. Are you comfortable with this policy or would you prefer that one or two other senior government officials be required to approve the use of nuclear weapons?



with the current policy; seven in ten (70 percent) would prefer that one or two other government officials be required to approve of the use of nuclear weapons; 5 percent volunteer that they do not want to ever use nuclear weapons; and 2 percent don't know or are unsure (Figure 3).

Methodology

All responses come from the Winter 2019 Granite State Poll, conducted by the University of New Hampshire Survey Center. Out of 12,910 randomly selected telephone numbers, 604 randomly selected adults in New Hampshire were interviewed, between February 18 and February 26, 2019. The sampling margin of error is +/- 4.0 percent.