

2020 Report to Yearly Meetings

“Quaker lobbying is a form of ministry to the nation. By treating elected officials with integrity, FCNL seeks to open their hearts to other perspectives and... reach beyond self-interest.” – Margery Post Abbott, *A Theological Perspective on Quaker Lobbying*

Our faith and practice as Quakers calls us to work for the peaceful, just, equitable, and sustainable world we seek. Since 1943, the Friends Committee on National Legislation has carried on this witness of the Spirit through action on Capitol Hill. Here are just some of the highlights of this year’s work, made possible by your advocacy, engagement, and financial support.

Influencing Federal Policy to Advance the World We Seek

It is a challenging time to work for peace and justice in Washington, DC. We are faced with an administration that is dismantling protections for families, immigrants, our planet, and even our democracy itself and a Congress that is deeply divided. Despite these challenges, FCNL’s approach for Quaker advocacy is making a difference.

As a non-partisan organization, FCNL works with all members of Congress to claim their constitutional authority on decisions of war and peace and their authority over appropriations of the federal budget as well as on other vital issues that promote justice and peace. Find out more at fcnl.org/impact.

- **Congress Says No to War in Iran, Yemen.**

In the past year, both the House and Senate passed legislation prohibiting the president from attacking Iran without congressional approval, and majorities voted for legislation to end U.S. support for the Saudi-led war in Yemen. FCNL’s relentless lobbying was critical in securing bipartisan votes for these bills.

- **Addressing Root Causes of Violence.**

In December 2019, the U.S. government committed to its first comprehensive strategy to address the causes of violence worldwide when Congress passed the Global Fragility Act into law. FCNL worked with peacebuilding colleagues to develop this bipartisan legislation and provided staff support in lobbying for its passage.

- **Help for Native American Crime Victims.**

Responding to FCNL’s advocacy, Congress set aside a record amount – five percent, or \$132 million – from the Crime Victims Fund for tribal use. This funding, part of appropriations legislation passed in December 2019, will help improve services for victims of crime in Native American communities.

- **Research on Gun Violence Epidemic Resumes.**

Reversing years of prohibitions, FCNL has advocated for funding for the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) on the public health impact of gun violence. In late 2019 Congress approved \$25 million for the CDC and the National Institutes of Health to conduct vital research on gun violence as a public health crisis. We continue to press the Senate to take up H.R. 8, the bill passed by the House to require universal background checks, an initiative that over 90% of the American electorate supports.

William Penn House: Hospitality and Advocacy on Capitol Hill

On September 1, 2019, the FCNL Education Fund assumed responsibility for ownership and operations of the William Penn House, a Capitol Hill guest house that shares a more than 50-year history with FCNL.

Following the completion of necessary repairs to the 102-year-old building this summer, we anticipate reopening the House in the fall of 2020 for group rentals. The House offers Friends and friends a venue for education and advocacy training in a highly desirable location. We look forward to welcoming you to Washington, DC later this year!

Our Strong Community

The many Friends who work with FCNL enriches all that we do.

- FCNL's **Advocacy Teams** include 1,500 people in more than 120 teams across the country who are committed to use their power as constituents to make change in Washington. Both Friends and others participate in this vital grassroots approach to advocacy. Their work this year led to successful votes to repeal war authorization legislation.
- Organizers in our youth **Advocacy Corps** spend nine months training, building relationships, and advocating in their communities on one of FCNL's priority issues. This year they have focused on gun violence prevention.
- FCNL's Young Adult Program offers four popular opportunities. **Advocacy Corps Members** spend nine months training, building relationships, and advocating in their communities on one of FCNL's priority issues. This year's priority: gun violence prevention. **Young Fellows** are program assistants in policy, communications and Quaker outreach who work as members of FCNL's full-time staff for 11 months. Our Young Fellows recruit in colleges and universities for **Spring Lobby Weekend, Summer Interns, and Advocacy Corps**.
- Through the **Friend in Washington** program, seasoned Friends volunteer on a short-term basis on specific projects and contribute to the spiritual richness of FCNL. This year we welcomed DeAnne Butterfield (Intermountain Yearly Meeting), Michelle Caughey (Pacific Yearly Meeting), and Marge and Carl Abbott (North Pacific Yearly Meeting).

Annual Meeting: Discerning FCNL's Policy Statement and By-Laws Changes

FCNL has a new Policy Statement, *The World We Seek*—thanks to the discernment of Friends across the country. The engagement of Friends' meetings and churches in the creation of our policy statement and in helping set our legislative priorities is essential to FCNL.

In 2019, FCNL revised our Policy Statement, which was approved by our General Committee in November, 2019. This Policy Statement states our concerns and our vision on a range of complex issues and will guide FCNL's position on legislation for years to come.

Thank you to the more than 120 Friends meetings, churches, and individuals who participated in discernment on FCNL's Policy Statement. It is available at fcnl.org/updates/policystatement.

The General Committee also changed our bylaws regarding membership. The new provision states the General Committee's service requires that those serving "must be members of the Religious Society of Friends or otherwise demonstrate a history of connection with and commitment to the Religious Society of Friends."

This change allows broader inclusion in FCNL's governance for those who have not established formal membership but who have a strong connection to the Religious Society of Friends.



FCNL General Secretary Diane Randall (center) with Advocacy Corps Coordinator Larissa Gil Sanhueza (left) and Katie Breslin. Photo by Joe Moleri.

In the year ahead, we look forward to your participation with FCNL, in your community and in Washington, D.C., as we work for a world free of war and the threat of war, a society with equity and justice for all, a community where every person's potential may be fulfilled, and an earth restored. 