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FRIENDS COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL LEGISLATION

... a Quaker lobby in the public interest

August 15, 2012

Report to Pacific Yearly Meeting on Friends Committee on National Legislation

Stephen McNeil (Strawberry Creek) reported that four PYM Representatives and a nominee were at this Annual PYM Session: Nate Secrest, Eric Moon, Amy Southwick, and Mark Runyon. He encouraged Friends with concerns or questions to talk to these Friends. Stephen thanked the FCNL/Education Fund donor activists because besides money, FCNL depends on Friends taking actions informed by FCNL's staffers. He also thanked all those who participated in the Legislative Priorities process that occurs every two years with a new Congress: participation does make a difference on what work is taken up by FCNL staff and resources. FCNL provides personal, direct, and effective actions on federal policies and legislative initiatives. Currently FCNL is asking us to contact our Senators and Representatives to support calls for diplomacy, not war, with Iran. Pre-printed postcards to your Senators are available at the back of the room and in Maple Room where the FCNL information table is located. While we have all heard about the impasse and incivility in Congress, FCNL through its activists has been able to have concrete outcomes that positively affect lives. One example was in working to include specific language in the renewal of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) that addressed jurisdictional mess in Indian Country that had led to few prosecutions of sexual attacks and violence against Native American women.

Friends are strongly encouraged to attend the first Quaker Public Policy Institute on November 15-16 that will inspire and renew us all after the Fall national elections. The focus will be expert presentations on arguments in favor of cutting military spending in preparation for a lobby day on that concern. The FCNL Executive Committee would like Friends to hear their call to action on this concern:

FCNL Executive Committee Minute and Call to Action Encouraging Friends to Act to Reduce Pentagon Spending May 5, 2012

The FCNL Executive Committee is laboring under a concern for the critical decisions on the federal budget that must be made by the end of this year (2012). Growth of U.S. spending on war threatens our ability to address essential human needs. Current law—the Budget Control Act of 2011—requires a reduction in projected Pentagon spending of \$1 trillion over 10 years, providing a momentous opportunity to shift budget priorities. This prospect faces powerful opposition that could persuade Congress to restore Pentagon funding by making major reductions in budgets for the peaceful prevention of deadly conflict and other human needs.



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(continued)**

The Friends Committee on National Legislation has identified this Pentagon budget reduction as a means to realign national priorities and now urges active engagement and lobbying efforts from Friends across the nation. The Executive Committee urges Friends meetings and churches to embrace this historic opportunity and take action, such as the following:

- Minute endorsement of the reduction in projected Pentagon spending and the preservation of federal budgets which support the peaceful prevention of deadly conflict and other human needs.
- Encourage Friends to communicate their support for these budget priorities to the public and to Congress.
- Encourage Friends within the meeting to contact their elected officials to report this message.

This is a holy time, a time of great possibility, great testing. May we respond bravely and faithfully to the task before us.