

Pacific Yearly Meeting

Friends Committee on National Legislation Representative

Report to Representative Committee 2020

SUMMARY

Involvement of PYM Friends in the work of Friends Committee on National Legislation has continued to broaden and deepen in the last year through grassroots lobbying on issues related to traditional Quaker concerns about peace, the environment, economic justice, and democracy.

FCNL Advocacy Teams

In the past few years, FCNL has developed a network of 123 local groups in 41 states to lobby their Congressional Representatives and Senators. There are currently eight Advocacy Teams within PYM (San Jose, Santa Cruz, Irvine, Pasadena, Berkeley, Davis, Sacramento, Sonoma County). Two more teams are being formed (Santa Monica and Las Vegas). Each year, the teams work on a specific issue that has bipartisan support. In 2019 FCNL's Advocacy Teams urged Congress to take the first step towards ending endless war by repealing the 2002 Iraq Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF). FCNL's efforts appeared to succeed when both houses of Congress voted for the repeal. This was a major victory, however the repeal did not become law because of last-minute pressure from the Pentagon. Undeterred, the Advocacy Teams will again focus on the same issue this coming session of Congress.

FCNL Annual Meeting

A total of 30 Friends from California and Hawaii joined more than 400 other Quakers and others at FCNL's annual meeting held in Washington, DC, in November. One day was spent on Capitol Hill where Friends visited a total of 227 offices of members of Congress to lobby for the repeal of the 2002 AUMF. Highlights of the annual meeting included presentations by East Bay Congresswoman Barbara Lee and New York Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, as well as a well-received talk by Diana Ohlbaum, FCNL's senior foreign affairs staff member. Her talk focused on how the "Military Paradigm" has dominated not only our foreign policy but also has permeated our culture. Characteristic of the FCNL approach to political issues, she stressed the spiritual dimension of the problem. She concluded her talk with these words: "Love is more potent than anger and hate. Together we have the power to change the world, to heal the world, and to achieve the culture of peace that is our highest calling."

<https://www.fcnl.org/updates/building-the-movement-for-a-new-peaceful-foreign-policy-2465>

Update of the "The World We Seek" policy document

At the Annual Meeting, FCNL's governing board (General Committee) meets to conduct business. It is composed of approximately 180 Friends, the majority of whom have been appointed by 26 Yearly Meetings (including the delegates from PYM) and seven national Friends' organizations. This year the General Committee updated the "The World We Seek" document that functions as FCNL's statement of legislative policy. Friends meetings and churches throughout the country were asked to provide input for the update. Many PYM meetings met to provide their ideas and suggestions, which were taken into consideration by the FCNL committees which met during the year to incorporate them into a draft document that was considered by the General Committee. Those of us who were in attendance were impressed with how Bridget Moix, FCNL's Clerk, conducted the meeting in the manner of Friends.

<https://www.fcnl.org/updates/the-world-we-seek-25>

The Committee consists of Klara East, Alison Kirkegaard, Carolyn Levering, Michele Shields, Julia Thompson, and Robert Levering (Clerk).