

Santa Monica Meeting April 2018

Santa Monica Monthly Meeting Minute on Income Inequality

“Santa Monica meeting approves the following minute on income inequality, economic inequality and social justice noting our desire to share it widely, and acknowledging the discernment involved in preparing it.

Friends (Quakers) believe that there is a divine spark in everyone, and on that basis, we believe in the equality of all people. That belief leads us to create community among ourselves, foster community in the broader society, and promote equal justice and equal opportunity.

We find that the laws, tax structure, and regulations of our society now disproportionately favor and reward the few, while disproportionately impoverishing the many. Wealthy special interests have used their resources and access to influence politics, the courts and regulatory agencies to redistribute wealth to enrich themselves at the expense of the middle class and the poor, who now experience declining wealth, declining earning power and Declining levels of education. Our society now experiences rising poverty, homelessness, mental illness, drug addiction and environmental degradation. These factors in combination result in the weakening of our democratic institutions and our social fabric. We also find that this inequality is reversible, with corrections of the tax codes, regulations, laws, and political reform.

We call on Friends to teach themselves and others about the truth of economic inequality. We call on Friends, people of other faiths, and people of goodwill to recognize the need to change our tax code, our regulations and our electoral processes to restore our social safety net and our educational systems to create a more just, healthier and more sustainable society based on principles of equality and respect for our fellow human beings. We call on Friends, people of other faiths, the people of goodwill to work to reduce income inequality in our society by supporting actions that redistribute the fruits of our economy more broadly and equitably in order to build a stronger, more just, more rewarding and more stable society.

Economic inequality is at the root of many social ills we now see. We seek to reduce income and wealth disparity, while recognizing that success in doing so will not cure all social ills. Our goal is to reduce economic stress in our society to the point that people of modest means may lead happy, productive lives and realize their God-given potential. We seek to restore the social fabric and respect for the inherent dignity of all.

Our goal reflects our Quaker testimonies on simplicity, equality, peace, community, and integrity.”