

Friends Committee on National Legislation Report to Annual Session 2019

PYM Friends have been increasingly active in Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) over the past few years.

The greatest growth has been in the emergence of local Advocacy Teams, an initiative FCNL launched in early 2016. Advocacy Teams are composed of local groups, typically led by Friends and hosted in local Friends Meetings. These teams meet regularly with their local Congressional Representatives and Senators on specific issues identified by FCNL as having bipartisan support and have some possibility of passage. Last year, for instance, the Advocacy Teams focused on legislation related to preventing war with North Korea. This year, the teams lobby their Congressional Representatives and Senators on a bill introduced by Rep. Barbara Lee of Oakland (HR 1274) that would repeal the AUMF, which was passed shortly after 9/11 in 2001, which successive administrations has used to justify the use of military force in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and other countries in the Middle East and Africa.

Santa Cruz Meeting was first PYM meeting to create an Advocacy Team in early 2016. As of this year, there are nine teams with Friends from 8 different meetings: Berkeley, Davis, Irvine, Los Angeles, Pasadena, Sacramento, San Jose, and Santa Cruz. In addition, there is an advocacy team in Morgan Hill. This growth reflects what is happening nationally. Since its inception in 2016, the number of FCNL Advocacy Teams has grown annually: by the end of 2016, there were 34 teams; 2017, 80; 2018, 97. Currently there are 107 FCNL Advocacy throughout the country. All teams participate in monthly teleconference calls with FCNL staff and policy experts to get updates, reports from other Advocacy Teams, and strategize about future lobbying efforts.

PYM Friends have also got involved in FCNL's work by attending the organization's four-day Annual Meeting, held in November in Washington, DC. Last year some 40 PYM Friends attended. Those of us who go have found that the organization takes its relationship with the Society of Friends quite seriously and always closes with a powerful meeting for worship on the last day. In addition to lobbying on Capitol Hill, Friends invariably find it inspirational to hear from the new Young Fellows, who spend 11 months working along with FCNL's lobbyists on issues of concerns to Friends.

Submitted by Robert Levering, PYM Representative to FCNL