



FCNL's Legislative Priorities for the 108th Congress

The Friends Committee on National Legislation seeks to bring spiritual values and Friends' testimonies to bear on public policy decisions. In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, our nation's "war on terrorism" threatens to make permanent a war economy and national security state. We see rapid erosion of civil liberties and disregard of basic human needs. Security is being used as a justification for furthering U.S. unilateralism, militarism, withdrawal from treaties, blocking or ignoring multilateral efforts for peace and justice, and disregard for international law. Especially in times of warfare, Quakers are called to bear witness to God's love for every person by providing a clear voice for peace and by opposing violence and articulating its alternatives. We recognize that achieving lasting peace involves not just a cessation of war, but addressing the injustices and disparities that give rise to violent conflict among people.

FCNL has selected the following priorities to address during the 108th Congress:

- Promote arms control and disarmament initiatives, especially the control and elimination under international auspices of all weapons of mass destruction through non-violent means.
- Identify, articulate, and promote peaceful alternatives to the "war on terrorism," including United States adherence to international law and participation in multilateral efforts to prevent and resolve violent conflict through institutions such as the United Nations and international courts of law.
- Promote a more peaceful and equitable world by shifting federal budget priorities away from military spending and toward funding basic human needs at home and abroad.

- Preserve and advance full civil liberties for all persons in the United States, and promote human rights around the world through international institutions and treaties.
- Remove dependence on oil as a source of violent conflict, injustice, and environmental degradation by reducing United States' energy consumption and encouraging the development of renewable sources of energy and alternative modes of transportation.

FCNL will resume active advocacy on Native American issues. As way opens, FCNL will continue Friends' long-standing witness for the rights of conscience, ending institutional racism, criminal justice reform, and the abolition of the death penalty.

FCNL's work will be based on legislative opportunity, specific expertise and leadings, and time available. FCNL has the flexibility, within the Statement of Legislative Policy, to respond to crises and important legislative opportunities.

The General Committee calls upon its members, other Friends, and like-minded people to work on these issues. In addition to the issues which FCNL has the resources to address, many other deeply-held concerns will continue to receive attention from individual Friends, Monthly Meetings and Churches, Yearly Meetings, and other Quaker organizations. Omitting an issue from these priorities does not imply a change in our policy.

As we work to find solutions to complex problems, Friends continue to seek divine guidance and ask for renewed strength and hope. ■

Approved by FCNL's General Committee, 11/10/02