



## FRIENDS COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL LEGISLATION

*... a Quaker lobby in the public interest*

### **FCNL's Successes: Fall 2008**

*In the fall of 2008, Congress moved closer to approving a U.S.-India nuclear deal and failed to advance Indian health care funding or provide help for the many workers who have lost their jobs in the recent economic downturn. Yet even in this election year, we at FCNL can mark several significant successes, including the extension of a ban on cluster bomb exports and successfully lobbying to fund a civilian response corps that will increase the ability of the United States to help prevent and resolve conflicts.*

#### **Iran Blockade Legislation Fizzles**

In June, House leaders reportedly pledged to "fast track" legislation that urged the president to initiate an international blockade on Iran, prevent Iranian diplomats from traveling, and possibly provoke a war. FCNL spent the next 4 months intensely lobbying against the bill, H. Con. Res. 362, and helped convince 5 representatives to remove their names from the legislation, a rare step. Despite gaining cosponsorship from more than half the House, the bill is now unlikely to pass the House this year.

#### **No Permanent U.S. Military Bases in Iraq**

For the third year in a row, Congress approved the FCNL-initiated proposal to ban the U.S. government from establishing permanent U.S. military bases in Iraq. The measure was included in the 2009 military authorization bill, which President George W. Bush signed into law on October 14. While FCNL opposes authorizing and spending more money for war, Congress included specific provisions that we support in the military authorization bill.

#### **Congress Bans Cluster Bomb Exports**

A one-year moratorium on cluster bomb exports was set to expire on September 30, 2008. In the waning hours of the 110th Congress, members included an extension of the ban on the export of most types of cluster bombs in a bill that will keep the government running through March 2009. While this extension is short term, it provides another clear victory for FCNL's campaign to ban cluster bombs. Congress still needs to approve legislation that would ban U.S. forces from using these weapons in civilian-populated areas.

## **Congress Says No to New Nuclear Weapons**

FCNL lobbying has once again helped block funding for the Bush administration's proposed Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW) program. The final nail in the weapon's coffin came in September, when a House-Senate conference committee for the 2009 military authorization bill refused to allow any money to be spent on RRW. Earlier this year, FCNL's Quaker Nuclear Disarmament Program helped prevent funding for RRW from being included in the 2009 military spending bill. This is the second year FCNL has helped block this program.

## **Congress Invests in Peace**

The 2009 military authorization bill recently signed by the president includes legislation to create a civilian response corps, which will strengthen the ability of the United States to help prevent and resolve conflicts around the world. The corps could be sent to crisis-torn areas to help countries restore basic services to their citizens and support political and economic reconstruction. FCNL has been lobbying for the corps as part of the Reconstruction and Stabilization Civilian Management Act (H.R. 1084), which had passed the House but not the Senate. Earlier in the year, Congress provided \$55 million for the creation of the corps but had not yet passed formal authorization language until late September. While FCNL opposes authorizing and spending more money for war, Congress included some provisions that we support in the military authorization bill.

## **Congress Renews Energy Tax Credits**

Tax credits that encourage production of electricity from renewable sources, such as wind and solar energy, were set to expire on December 31, 2008. As part of the financial bailout bill, Congress extended these tax credits for at least one more year.

## **Child Tax Credit to Reach Millions More**

Congress expanded the child tax credit so that families who make as little as \$8,500 a year qualify. This change will make the credit available for the first time to 3 million more children and increase support for 10 million more. The expansion was included in the financial bailout bill that Congress passed in early October.

## **Congress Boosts Money for Poor, Students**

As part of a bill to fund the government through March 2009, Congress increased funding for a program providing home heating assistance to the poor, student aid, and supplemental nutrition for poor women, infants, and children.