June 2019

Greetings from FCNL!

Thank you so much for being the recipient of this box of FCNL information and bringing it to your Yearly Meeting! We are so grateful that you are the point person for this work, helping us put our best FCNL foot forward at your gathering!

Friends have many ways that they like to set up the FCNL table at Annual Sessions. Some like to bring a tri-fold to spot things to, others arrange flyers on the tables, some bring a tablecloth to put it all on.

Staff members are on hand to also help with the process; this is another way to get to know the FCNL staffer at your Yearly Meeting! Please help welcome and shepherd the staff member or visiting friend at your gathering; we want to connect FCNL to folks and vice versa!

Enclosed, please find these FCNL resources: *special instructions*

- Flyers for Advocacy Teams, Planned Giving, SLW 2019, and 2018 Successes/Impacts
- The current letter writing to Congress prompt
- Love Thy Neighbor (No Exceptions) rally sign, stickers, and buttons
- The World We Seek pens
- Friendly sign in sheets *scan or mail completed sheets back to FCNL
- We Seeks thank you cards and envelopes
- 2018 Annual Reports & 75th Year Booklets
- We Seek- Climate Advocacy Comic Book
- QWC brochures
- Thumb drive with power point of infographics and photos *You may print these photos for a trifold or display the slideshow digitally on a laptop, tablet, or projector

In the meantime, if you have thoughts or questions before your gathering, I invite you to email me at christine@fcnl.org or give me a call at 515-864-9747. We want to make sure that we meet Friends’ needs and follow Friends’ leadings, and we have much good news to share with Friends!

In Peace and Gratitude,

Christine Ashley
Quaker Field Secretary
FCNL’s Lobbying Impact

House Votes to End Endless War
In June 2019, the House for the first time in 18 years voted to repeal the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force. The law has enabled three administrations to wage war without congressional approval. This year, FCNL worked with Rep. Barbara Lee (CA) to put the grassroots muscle of the more than 1,500 Advocacy Team members behind repeal. This powerful push built on nearly two decades of dedicated work to oppose war as the answer to acts of terror and insist that Congress pursue policies to build peace.

Violence Against Women Act Protects Native Women
The House voted to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act in April 2019, including FCNL-backed provisions to strengthen protection for Native women and children. The legislation expands the jurisdiction of tribal law enforcement and takes steps to address the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women. The bill includes provisions from Savanna’s Act, which helps close the information gap preventing Native women from receiving justice. FCNL will continue to advocate for these provisions as the bill moves to the Senate.

Yemen: Congress Votes to End Illegal U.S. War
Majorities in both chambers of Congress approved legislation this year that would end U.S. support for the Saudi-led war in Yemen that has killed thousands and put millions on the brink of starvation. Although the president vetoed this legislation, a bipartisan Senate majority voted in mid-June to block new arms sales to Saudi Arabia. FCNL educated members of Congress about U.S. complicity in this massive humanitarian crisis, mobilized grassroots advocates, and led faith community lobbying to end this illegal war.

House, Senate Move to Help Prisoners Access Education
Both chambers of Congress have introduced the bipartisan REAL Act, which would restore prisoners’ eligibility for Pell grants to pay for college classes, increasing their employability and reducing recidivism. FCNL has led lobbying in the faith community to advance this legislation and encourage Congress to include it in the Higher Education Act.

New Law to Prevent Violent Conflict
The Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act became law with President Trump’s signature in January 2019. This legislation equips the U.S. government with constructive and cost-effective tools to address the root causes of violent conflict. FCNL led the strategy and lobbying that resulted in the bill’s passage in the House and Senate. This success comes after more than a decade of FCNL’s leadership to build a strong, bipartisan consensus in Congress for proactive peacebuilding investment.
What Others Are Saying

Members of Congress Speak about FCNL

“You changed my mind,” a member of Congress told members of an FCNL Advocacy Team in November 2018. He praised them for their persistence, their letters to the editor, and their respectful engagement with his office.

“You all do advocacy just right.” ~ Staff for a Republican senator, speaking to another Advocacy Team in 2018

“Your passion and activism is making a critical difference in shifting the dialogue on climate change.”
~ Former Rep. Carlos Curbelo (R-FL), addressing FCNL’s 2017 Annual Meeting

“When I was the only member to oppose the 2001 authorization to use military force, I was honored to have FCNL and the Quakers by my side standing up to war without end. And every year when I work to end reckless and unchecked Pentagon spending, I know that FCNL will join me in this effort…. Thank you, FCNL, for bringing compassion and common sense to Capitol Hill.” ~ Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA), in a message recognizing FCNL’s 75th anniversary in 2018

“It’s really up to those groups out there like the Friends Committee that are pressing for diplomatic, peaceful solutions to big problems to step up and raise their voice, because in their absence, the military solution will win all the time.” ~ Sen. Chris Murphy (D-CT), in an interview with FCNL

The Power of FCNL’s Grassroots Advocacy

“Experts don’t carry that many votes. You needed to have strong, disciplined, grassroots groups out there demonstrating support for the [2015 Iran nuclear] deal. And that’s where FCNL was so essential...There are very few organizations in town with this kind of advocacy machinery.” ~ Joe Cirincione, Ploughshares Fund President. In a 2019 meeting with an FCNL Advocacy Team, a Senate staffer volunteered that the team’s lobbying had been instrumental in the senator’s decision to vote for the deal.

“I always loved meeting with the groups you would bring in and just your overall approach to advocacy. You do it right.” ~ Congressional aide to former Rep. Patrick Meehan (R-PA)

“I agree [with the need to repeal the 2001 and 2002 Authorizations for Use of Military Force] and wanted to share some information on what I’ve been working on…Congress continues to avoid a real debate on this issue, because war votes aren’t easy.” ~ Sen. Tim Kaine (D-VA), in a letter to the editor published in the Charlottesville, VA Daily Progress, January 2019. This statement was a direct response to a letter written by an FCNL Advocacy Team member calling on Virginia officials to repeal these laws.
Dear Friends,

As Friends, we look for opportunities to live a lively faith, and witness for our vision of living with great care for one another. We look for how we may love and therefore protect one another from the greatest of harms. And we make sure to bear loving witness when others are facing harm and injury.

It is time to bear witness. Just six weeks ago, the House of Representatives overwhelmingly approved the reauthorization of H.R. 1585, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). Originally co-authored in 1994, this bill provides funding for programs that encourage the prevention and prosecution of abuse against women.

H.R. 1585 and the amendments included are particularly significant to Native women and girls across the nation. Native women experience violent crimes at disproportionately higher rates than other women in the United States and most assaults against Native American women occur at the hands of a non-Indian assailant. H.R. 1585 improves tribal access to federal crime information and standardizes protocols for responding to cases of missing and murdered Native peoples.

Now the Senate is working to pass a version of the bill, and we need you to write your Senators, with a strong message that that the House amendments are included in the Senate version of the bill. The following provisions need to be included:

- Expand tribal jurisdiction to include sexual violence, sex trafficking, stalking, child abuse and violence against tribal law enforcement attempting to execute these provisions;
- Address the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women by facilitating improved communication and coordination between federal, state, and local law enforcement;

When you write your letter, please add a personal note of 2-4 sentences letting your member know why you are concerned. Call the Congressional Switchboard at 202-224-3121 to be connected to your representative's offices. Leave a message if they do not pick-up or if you are calling after hours.

For more information, please visit FCNL lobbyist Lacina Tanggaludo Onco’s 20-minute lobby training focused on safeguarding the health and safety of our brothers and sisters in Indian Country, here.

In Faith,

Christine Ashley, Quaker Field Secretary, christine@fcnl.org
Call Script

Hello, I am calling for Senator____________________. I am a resident in [city, state] in district [number]. Please support the House amendments in the Senate version of the Violence Against Women Act and prioritize the safety of Native American women. This nation must address the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women, by expanding crucial protections to ensure the safety of Native American women, and entire communities.

Letter Template

Summer 2019

Dear Senator

The House has passed H.R. 1585, a bill to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), and I am asking that my Senators ensure that the Senate version will also include the strong amendments and provisions for Native American women.

Native American women are facing a crisis of violence. More than 80 percent have experienced violence in their lifetimes, and nearly half have experienced sexual violence at the hands of a non-Indian assailant. I understand that often the perpetrators face no repercussions and victims are left in unsafe situations

The House amendments expand tribal jurisdiction over non-Indians to include crimes of sexual assault, stalking, sex-trafficking, and child abuse. The bill also addresses the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women by improving responses to cases and data collection.

Congress has an imperative to protect her most vulnerable; now there is an opportunity to do just that, with this upcoming legislation. Lives are at stake.

[My story]

Sincerely, Name
Physical Address
Phone
Email
Dear Friends,

As Friends, we believe that our communities and families are strengthened by a judicial system that embraces restorative justice and seeks to return rehabilitated offenders to society with their full rights and obligations. A well-functioning system will include equitable and prompt adjudication; education and training for those convicted; and restitution to the victims of crime.

Today, we can right this wrong. The Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 denied incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people from applying for educational funding through Pell Grants. Fortunately, the bipartisan REAL Act (H.R. 2168/ S. 1074), introduced recently in Congress, would that would restore their access to Pell Grants. Now we need Congress to approve this bill as a part of the Higher Education Act.

Please write your representative today to pass the Restoring Education and Learning (REAL) Act (H.R. 2168 / S. 1074) and open educational opportunities for incarcerated or formerly incarcerated people. The REAL Act would:

- Expand post-secondary education in prisons which would reduce recidivism rates enough decrease prison cost by $365 million annually;
- Increase employment rates for people leaving prison by as much as 10 percent.

The lack of educational opportunities for incarcerated people adds to challenges they face upon re-entry, such as joblessness or lack of opportunities and contribute to a cycle of poverty, recidivism, and mass incarceration.

When you write your letter, please add a personal note of 2-4 sentences letting your member know why you are concerned. Call the Congressional Switchboard at 202-224-3121 to be connected to your representative’s offices. Leave a message if they do not pick-up or if you are calling after office hours.

In Faith,

Christine Ashley, Quaker Field Secretary
cashley@fcnl.org
Call Script

- Hello, I am calling for Representative/Senator _________________. I am a resident in [city, state] in district [number]. Please cosponsor and include the REAL Act (H.R. 2168 / S. 1074) in the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act to lift the ban on Pell Grants for all eligible, incarcerated people. The lack of educational opportunities for incarcerated people adds to challenges they face upon re-entry, such as joblessness. It contributes to a cycle of poverty, recidivism, and mass incarceration. Lifting the ban would create a pathway to success for formerly incarcerated people, resulting in reduced recidivism and reduced prison costs.

Letter Template

Summer 2019

Dear ______________________________

I am asking you, as my member of Congress, to restore dignity through opportunity and employment through passage of the Restoring Education and Learning (REAL) Act (H.R. 2168 / S. 1074). This act would unlock the potential of men and women who are incarcerated by lifting the ban on Pell Grants for post-secondary or technical education. More than 400,000 incarcerated people would be eligible for Pell Grants if the ban were lifted.

The Pell Grant eligibility for people incarcerated in a state or federal facility was eliminated in 1994. As a result, the number of education programs in prisons fell from over 350 in 1990 to only 12 in 2005.

The lack of educational opportunities for incarcerated people adds to challenges they face upon re-entry, such as joblessness or lack of opportunities, and contributes to a cycle of poverty, recidivism, and mass incarceration.

My story

Please talk to your colleagues, make public statements, and support legislation to Restoring Education and Learning (REAL) Act (H.R. 2168 / S. 1074).

Sincerely, Name
Physical Address
Phone
Email
End the Blank Check for War
Congress Must Decide When the U.S. Goes to War

Since 9/11, three U.S. presidents have used the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF) and the 2002 Iraq AUMF to justify U.S. military action across the globe without congressional approval. According to public records, the 2001 AUMF has been used to justify 41 military operations in 19 countries.

Article II of the Constitution gives the president power to use limited military force without congressional approval to defend the United States against a sudden or imminent attack. But under Article I of the Constitution, Congress has the sole authority to decide whether to allow the president to take the country into a prolonged war. As a Quaker organization, we oppose all war. As a matter of public policy, we believe Congress must debate and vote before the president commits our military to lethal action and should regularly evaluate and vote to approve ongoing U.S. wars.

The House Appropriations Committee recently voted to repeal the 2001 AUMF after eight months. We urge Congress to enact this provision to repeal the 2001 AUMF and to also repeal the 2002 Iraq AUMF.

The 2001 and 2002 AUMFs should be repealed because they lack:

- Sunset clause: A three-year end date will facilitate oversight and prevent endless war.
- Clear military targets: Naming each specific group or country that the U.S. is waging war against will prevent presidents from starting wars against new groups or countries without congressional approval.
- Geographic restrictions: These would limit mission creep and protect Congress’ oversight role and its power to decide where the U.S. goes to war.
- Any restrictions on the use of ground troops: Explicit congressional approval should be required before committing our troops to any new ground war.

Please cosponsor Rep. Barbara Lee’s bill to repeal the 2001 AUMF (H.R. 1274)

FCNL Contact:
Heather Brandon-Smith
Legislative Director for Militarism
HBrandon-Smith@fcnl.org

May 2019
Stop Fueling Unjust Deportation, Detention, & Border Policies

There is a humanitarian crisis at the U.S. southern border: one of immigrant children separated from their parents and migrants dying as they seek refuge. There is a crisis of walls built through communities and of refugee families detained in camps on military bases. The Trump administration is now jailing more than 53,000 people in increasingly fatal conditions.

In response, the U.S. government continues to pour billions of additional dollars into the underlying machinery of detention that is jailing more families, separating more children, and worsening these crises. Congress needs to insist the U.S. abandon this failed approach. Instead, we are urging Congress to pursue true humanitarian assistance rooted in our values through a comprehensive shift away from detention and deportation.

As Congress makes FY20 funding decisions, it is imperative that they stop fueling cruel and ineffective immigration policies. Congress' spending bills must instead:

» **Reject increased spending on detention, deportation, and border militarization.** Government spending should protect families and end unjust immigration and border policies. Increased funds for purported enforcement tears families apart and leaves vulnerable children and individuals unprotected.

» **Expand oversight of existing enforcement policies and spending practices.** The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is has overspent billions beyond what Congress allocated on sometimes fatal policies. Congress should rein in DHS authority to transfer money from other agencies to enact harmful enforcement.

» **Invest in non-restrictive, community-based alternatives to detention, rather than locking more people up.** Case management programs support individuals navigating the legal system without jailing them. A pilot Family Case Management Program was 99 percent effective in helping people show up to hearings.

In FY20, divest from immigration enforcement funding.
Invest in real humanitarian solutions and expanded oversight.

More information:
Hannah Graf Evans, FCNL’s Legislative Representative for Immigration and Refugee Policy:
Hannah@fcnl.org
Values Driven Immigration Policy

The Friends Committee on National Legislation (Quakers) is led by the call to welcome the stranger and seeks congressional immigration reforms that recognize the gifts, contributions, and struggles of immigrants to ensure equity and justice for all.

Our nation’s immigration policies should:

» Keep families together
» Bring accountability and community engagement to border policies
» Create a path to lawful status and citizenship
» Protect all workers, regardless of immigration status
» Align immigration enforcement with humanitarian values
» Preserve the human and civil rights of all immigrants
» End mass incarceration of immigrants
» Uphold international and U.S. law obligations to protect refugees, asylum seekers, and survivors of human trafficking
Legislative Priorities for the 116th Congress
Approved by FCNL’s General Committee on December 1, 2018

Since the early days of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), God’s spirit has led Friends to be a prophetic witness and to take action in the world. The Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) brings Friends’ spiritual values and testimonies to bear on U.S. public policy decisions. FCNL solicited the views and concerns of Quaker meetings, churches, and organizations around the country to help discern the following priorities for our lobbying and public education work during the 116th Congress (2019-2020):

- Peacebuilding, diplomacy and the peaceful prevention and resolution of violent conflict with an emphasis on the Middle East.
- Reduction of military spending and armed interventions.
- Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.
- A criminal justice system that is just and equitable, eliminates mass incarceration and promotes law-enforcement that is community-oriented and demilitarized.
- An immigration system that promotes and respects the rights, safety and dignity of all immigrants, refugees and migrants.
- Equitable access for all to participation in an open and transparent political process.
- Ending gun violence including through the support of policies informed by public health best practices.
- Witness and advocate on Native American concerns. Honor the treaties.
- Economic justice and equity; strengthen programs that meet basic needs including universal access to quality, affordable healthcare.
- Sustainable solutions to climate change, including reducing fossil fuel use, increasing renewable energy, strengthening environmental protections, promoting international cooperation, and protecting vulnerable populations.

Friends are called to promote genuine equality of opportunity and communities in which everyone can safely live, learn, work, worship, and love. In each priority we will identify, expose and work to eliminate institutional racism, institutional sexism and other forms of systemic discrimination. We are mindful that our nation has a special responsibility to redress the consequences of its long history of slavery, race-based discrimination and oppression.

FCNL seeks to collaborate across the political spectrum to advance these priorities. FCNL’s work will be based on legislative opportunities, specific expertise, leadings, and available resources. In addition, The World We Seek (FCNL’s Policy Statement) gives FCNL the flexibility to respond to crises and to important legislative opportunities, as Way opens.
In the last issue of *Prophetic Witness*, I promised to share some inspiring stories from donors planning a future gift to FCNL. But then I thought: Why not just let them speak for themselves? FCNL’s Young Fellow for Communications, Chris Kearns-McCoy, asked some donors what they might tell their friends about their decision to include FCNL in their estate plan. Here are their responses.

Mary Comfort Ferrell, FCNL planned giving director

**In Their Own Words**

**IT GIVES US PLEASURE AND SATISFACTION**

“What my wife Gloria and I love about our charitable gift annuity is that it lets FCNL use the money as they see fit. We get to enjoy watching the good things that the organization is doing, knowing we’re helping them in the future, too.

“I’ve been talking with people about the way we’ve done it, and the pleasure and satisfaction that it gives us. I really encourage people to consider the charitable gift annuity. We chose to give a flexible gift annuity, where we can decide when to start taking the income payments. We trust that when we need FCNL to turn on that cash stream from the annuity, they’re going to be there for us. It not only ties us psychologically to FCNL, it connects us to them daily. We feel as if FCNL is part of our long-term support team.”

~David and Gloria Mog | Arlington, VA
FCNL IS LIKE FAMILY

“I chose to include FCNL in my will to underline my commitment. If you’re really enthusiastic about FCNL, if you’re inspired, as I am, by the wonderful people, the staff, the values, the mission, and the responsiveness to critical legislation—you know it’s about even more than speaking up. We don’t go in alone. We go in with other people. Naming FCNL in your will is a great way to underline the love and respect that you have for FCNL.

“I’ve been involved with FCNL for such a long time, it’s like family. It’s just a way that someday I can say thanks so much and farewell.”

~Sue May | Atlanta, GA

GIVING THE NEXT GENERATION A VOICE

“I don’t come from money. It was a scary decision to put FCNL as a beneficiary of my 401(k). But as I thought about the purpose of my 401(k), I thought there might be a bit of money in there for the future of FCNL’s young adult program or other programs.

“FCNL gave me my voice when I was finding my faith, finding my role in the Religious Society of Friends, and finding my role in activism. I hope that the money that I will one day contribute to FCNL from my 401(k) can help give someone else a voice.”

~Katie Breslin | Washington, DC

YIELDING GOOD RESULTS

“Underlying it all is the fact that FCNL does good work across a number of issues. It presents the Quaker testimony in a secular, political setting, which gets results. That’s the bottom line. It gets the kind of results that we stand for.

“Naming FCNL as a beneficiary isn’t just a financial contribution to a charity, of which there are many worthy causes out there. It’s part of our witness on social responsibility.

“FCNL doesn’t have to agree with us on every position, but we need to support Quaker values. We think that those are represented over the long haul through FCNL positions and methodology. We’d like to see more Quakers involved in funding FCNL’s initiatives because its goals, objectives, and methodologies are most likely to yield results.”

~George and Patricia Thomas | Rio Rancho, NM

LEARN MORE:
Mary Comfort Ferrell is FCNL’s director of planned giving. To join in making FCNL part of your plans or for more information about planned giving, please contact Mary Comfort at (202) 903-2539 or marycomfort@fcnl.org.
YOU’RE INVITED:
WITNESS WEDNESDAY

Join the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) every Wednesday when Congress is in session.

Who is FCNL?

FCNL lobbies Congress to advance peace, justice, opportunity, and environmental stewardship. Founded in 1943 by members of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), FCNL fields an expert team of lobbyists on Capitol Hill and works with a grassroots network of tens of thousands of people across the country.

About the Quaker Welcome Center

Located across the street from the U.S. Senate, the Quaker Welcome Center is a place for dialogue and the promotion of peace, justice, and environmental sustainability. The Quaker Welcome Center hosts programs and events that equip people to change policy, nurture integrity in governance, and collaborate across political differences.

Lobby Training  |  9:00-11:00 am

Ready to step up your advocacy and lobby your member of Congress? Drop-in for hands-on advocacy training to prepare for a lobby visit with your Members of Congress. Your voice is powerful and can move legislators towards peace and justice!

See the full schedule and RSVP at: fcnl.org/qwc
Video conference training available on request: qwc@fcnl.org

Silent Reflection  |  5:15-6:00 pm

Calling all DC visitors, passers-by, and staffers, need a time of quiet and calm? Join FCNL for silent reflection. All are welcome to join this refreshing time of community and fellowship.

Witness Wednesday Details

Location: 245 2nd St NE, Washington DC 20002
Questions: qwc@fcnl.org
Learn more: fcnl.org/qwc

@fcnl
facebook.com/quakerlobby
@quaker_lobby
Young Adults Lobby Congress:
March 23-26, 2019

Engaging young adults in advocacy is a critical part of FCNL’s work. In March, hundreds of young people brought a clear and compelling message to Congress: Reject increased funding for immigration detention and deportation. Invest in alternatives to detention and expand accountability.

Following issue briefings and lobby trainings, this diverse group from many different backgrounds fanned out over Capitol Hill, sharing their stories with their representatives. When members of Congress consider important spending legislation in the coming weeks, they cannot cast their votes without remembering the passion and commitment of those who came to FCNL’s Spring Lobby Weekend.

We look to them to lead us—now, and in the future.

Learn more: fcnl.org/slw

By the Numbers:

500 Attendees
346 First-time Attenders
184 Lobby Visits
37 States Represented
Top: The Texas delegation poses before lobbying.
Left top: Spring Lobby Weekend Participants walk the halls of Congress.
Right top: Iowa delegation lobbies Sen. Chuck Grassley (IA).
Right middle: The Indiana delegation on their way to lobby.
Right bottom: Lobbying in action, the Tennessee delegation speaks with Rep. Phil Roe (TN).

Photo Credits: Joe Molieri, Matthew Martyr
I had long questioned whether Congress cared about what ordinary citizens think, but I’ve learned through deep advocacy with my congressional offices that our elected officials really do want to hear from us.”

Sara Avery
Colorado

“FCNL’s lobbying based in long-term relationship building and staying engaged — of just being myself — [taught me] that the power of my voice comes from being most authentically who I am.”

Trish Bruxvoort Colligan
Iowa

The Advocacy Teams network is made up of over 1,500 Quakers and friends from across the country who use their power as constituents to make change in Washington. Our success comes from our commitment to building relationships with Congress grounded in mutual respect and listening.

As a member of an Advocacy Team, you will:

**Build**
Build a team of advocates in your local community that works alongside a national network.

**Learn**
Learn the skills you need to advocate Congress and work with the media to create the news you want to see.

**Advocate**
Foster ongoing relationships with your members of Congress and their offices.

**Transform**
Create congressional champions for peace and justice.

“Trish Bruxvoort Colligan Iowa

“I had long questioned whether Congress cared about what ordinary citizens think, but I’ve learned through deep advocacy with my congressional offices that our elected officials really do want to hear from us.”

Sara Avery
Colorado

Learn more and join a team: fcnl.org/advocacyteams
START AN ADVOCACY TEAM: SIX STEPS

1. Tell us you’re interested
Think Advocacy Teams are the right fit for you? The first step is easy: Answer a few questions at fcnl.org/getstarted and we’ll get in touch to start you on steps 2-6!

2. Take the leap
We’ll support you to host an advocacy workshop that starts your team with momentum. To prepare, gather 3-8 people to join an hour-long Host Committee call with FCNL. We’ll introduce you to the Advocacy Teams program and get you started with recruiting the 15-30 people for the workshop.

3. Launch a team
An FCNL staff member will lead a workshop in your community. Together, we will dive into FCNL’s approach to advocacy, the campaign, and effective grassroots tools for social change. All you have to do is bring the people, find a location, and provide some simple supplies. You and FCNL decide whether to move forward with a team.

4. Build your skills
New teams take part in a one-time series of four trainings to build a structure and get you ready to lobby as a group.

5. Sustain the momentum
Meet in person with your team once a month around a national call to hear from experts, celebrate, and learn from other advocates. In these meetings, you’ll take action and plan for the month to come. One or more delegates from each team join an additional call twice a month for legislative updates, training, and collaboration.

6. Make real change
Advocacy Teams act for change on a regular basis, using lobbying and media engagement as their tools. Since Advocacy Teams’ founding in 2015, the network of teams has expanded rapidly. We’ve taken on campaigns in support of the Iran nuclear deal, ending endless wars, criminal justice reform, and a moral budget.

Individuals can resist injustice, but only in community can we do justice.
~Jim Corbett, “Sanctuary as a Quaker Testimony”
COMMUNICATING WITH CONGRESS: WHAT WORKS?

Talking in person with your member or their staff is the most effective way to convey your concerns, but other forms of communication also have an impact. Here’s how to make your email, phone call, or letter stand out.

1. LET THE OFFICE KNOW YOU ARE A CONSTITUENT

Let the office know you are a constituent by including your postal address or telling the receptionist where you live. It’s tempting to contact other legislators, but it can do more harm than good. Not only will the office filter out your message, it can make them less likely to trust genuine constituent communications.

2. MAKE A SPECIFIC, CONCISE REQUEST

Mention the name and number of a specific piece of legislation, if possible, and state your request at the beginning of your message. These suggestions help congressional staff quickly record your opinion and direct your communication to the right person in the office.

3. TALK ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR COMMUNITY

Personal details about your connection to an issue and its impact on people in your area make your message memorable. If you’re sending an email, these details also separate your communication from form letters, which have less of an impact on offices.

4. MATCH YOUR COMMUNICATION TO THE SITUATION

When a vote is imminent, phone calls are the best way to get your opinion to congressional offices. For issues with a longer time frame, email is an effective means of communications. Postal letters to congressional offices are screened before delivery, making them the least effective communication for timely issues. Members of Congress see daily reports of their press mentions. A letter to the editor that includes a member’s name will get directly to their desk. Increase the chances of your letter being published by referencing previous news coverage in the publication.

5. CONSIDER WRITING A LETTER TO THE EDITOR.

SURVEY TO CONGRESSIONAL STAFFERS: HOW MUCH INFLUENCE DOES THE FOLLOWING ADVOCACY STRATEGIES DIRECTED TO THE WASHINGTON OFFICE HAVE ON YOUR REPRESENTATIVE?

- In-Person Visit from Constituent: 94%
- Contact from Constituents’ Reps: 94%
- Individualized Email Messages: 92%
- Individualize Postal Letters: 88%
- Local Editorial Referencing Issue: 87%
- Comments During Telephone Town Hall: 87%
- Phone Calls: 84%
- Letter to the Editor Referencing your Boss: 84%
- Visit from a Lobbyist: 83%
- Form Email Messages: 56%

Source: Congressional Management Foundation 2015 survey of congressional staff, including Chiefs of Staff, Communications Directors, Legislative Directors, and Legislative Assistants.
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