

FCNL Priorities for the 112th Congress

Approved November 14, 2010

The Religious Society of Friends from its earliest days has recognized life to be a sacred stewardship. Under the leading of God's Spirit, Friends have helped bring the light of social change to the darkness that was slavery, the oppression of women and minorities, and the longstanding suffering inflicted on the world by violent conflict. The Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) has spent two-thirds of a century laying the firm foundation for our nonpartisan witness on Capitol Hill. FCNL has drawn upon the spiritual experience of Friends and has regularly sought the consultation of Quaker meetings, churches, and organizations around the country to discern priorities for the lobbying and public education work to be carried out during each session of Congress.

The faith that continues to sustain us and give us hope motivates us to bring light to the challenges facing humanity in the 21st century. FCNL will work to redefine the human and national security of the United States to include freedom from deadly conflict, freedom from abuse by powerful and wealthy corporations and individuals, meeting basic human needs in the face of the current economic turmoil, and protection of the Earth's air, water, and land on which all life depends. Pressing issues of energy and environment relate not only to climate change, but also to war, military spending, the nation's budget, and the capacity and willingness of the United States to meet domestic human needs and invest in the well-being of vulnerable populations abroad.

The following priorities will guide our legislative work and public education during the 112th Congress (2011-2012).

I. We seek a world free of war and the threat of war.

Build U.S. government civilian capacity for peaceful prevention and resolution of deadly conflict. Support the United Nations and multilateral problem solving. Encourage respect for human rights, and international law, including treaties.

Promote nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation, including ratification of the pending New START Treaty and progress on other strategic arms reduction. Seek U.S. ratification of and compliance with bans on nuclear testing, cluster munitions, and landmines.

Work for demilitarization of U.S. foreign policy and aid programs. Urge reductions in the overall military budget and in worldwide U.S. military operations. Emphasize multilateral aid, civilian peacebuilding, and regional and international diplomacy, especially in relation to Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

While pressing for removal of U.S. bases and combat forces from Iraq and Afghanistan, promote fulfillment of U.S. moral and legal obligations for reconstruction.

Urge vigorous U.S. leadership, in partnership with the international community, to help resolve the Israeli/Palestinian conflict and end the enforced isolation of Gaza.

II. We seek a society with equity and justice for all.

Support legislation to curb the undue influence of money and corporate power in our political system.

Support comprehensive immigration reform that respects the rights and dignity of all immigrants; demonstrates compassion for families; provides practical pathways to legal

residency and citizenship; and recognizes the important contributions of foreign workers in our economy and the need for effective application of wage, hour, and workplace safety laws for all workers. Urge Congress to use civilian governmental agencies, rather than military personnel, to manage U.S. borders.

Support the restoration of full civil liberties and habeas corpus protections for all persons. Oppose torture and secret prisons. Urge that those accused of terrorism be prosecuted in civilian courts.

Promote and preserve tribal sovereignty of indigenous peoples within the United States. Support legislation that respects their rights, clarifies jurisdictional conflicts, promotes the well-being of all Native Americans, and honors treaty commitments.

III. We seek a community where every person's potential may be fulfilled.

Promote human security and the common good through a living wage, job creation (especially "green" jobs), access to retraining and good public education, and improved affordable health care for all without discrimination. Defend safety-net programs for those in need. Support this effort through progressive taxation and cuts in military spending.

IV. We seek an earth restored.

Support bold and immediate measures to counter global climate change and assist threatened human populations at home and abroad. Pursue a fundamental shift in U.S. energy policy from extractive practices toward accelerated development of sustainable, less damaging energy sources with attention to the impacts on communities and livelihoods. Promote deep, quick, and fair reductions in U.S. greenhouse gas emissions as part of a sensible path to a low-carbon future.

Encourage U.S. leadership in promoting social equity, ecological sustainability, and environmental justice through domestic action, diplomacy, compliance with multilateral environmental agreements, and cooperation with organizations such as the United Nations to diminish resource scarcity as a cause of war.

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As way opens, FCNL will continue Friends' long-standing witness for rights of conscience, and end to institutional racism, criminal justice reform that includes principles of restorative justice and the abolition of the death penalty, and will support legislation that promotes sustainable agriculture and protects the environment and public health from the impacts of contamination, pollution, and inequitable distribution of natural resources, and promotes energy conservation and efficiency and public transportation.

FCNL's work will be based on legislative opportunity, specific expertise and leadings, and available resources. FCNL's Policy Statement gives it the flexibility to respond to crises and important legislative opportunities.

In establishing these priorities for the 112th Congress, we are encouraged by the past successes of FCNL's efforts to influence federal policy and by the strong community of Friends and other likeminded people engaged in this work. As we work to find solutions to these complex problems, Friends continue to seek Divine guidance, renewed strength, and hope.