

FCNL Priorities for the 117th Congress

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. Friends are called to promote genuine equality of opportunity and communities in which everyone can safely live, learn, work, worship, and love. The Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) brings Friends' spiritual values and testimonies to bear on U.S. public policy decisions, guided by the legislative priorities below.

As we developed these priorities, we recognized that we are living through extraordinary times: a deepening awareness of racial injustice and police brutality; the COVID-19 pandemic; an economic downturn that has escalated unemployment and profound inequalities; unequivocal evidence that the global climate crisis is here; and dire threats to the foundations of our democracy. While these multiple challenges evoke a heightened sense of distress, we also recognize that the threads that run through today's crises originate in historical concerns that have long been the focus of FCNL's advocacy. Our work continues to be understanding and addressing the root causes and long-term consequences of today's crises and our enduring challenges.

We are mindful that our nation has a special responsibility to redress the consequences of our history of slavery and genocide, together with ongoing race-based discrimination and oppression. With each priority below, we will identify, expose and work to eliminate institutional racism, institutional sexism, and other forms of systemic discrimination.

The order of these priorities does not reflect their comparative importance.

- Promote peacebuilding by emphasizing diplomacy and honoring treaties and by working towards peaceful prevention and resolution of violent conflict, especially in the Middle East.
- Confront the paradigm of global militarism, demilitarize space, reduce military spending, limit the spread of conventional weapons, prevent armed interventions, repeal the Authorizations for Use of Military Force (AUMFs), and reassert Congress' oversight role.
- Promote nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.
- Advocate for a justice system that is just and equitable, eliminates mass incarceration and police brutality, and establishes law-enforcement that is community-oriented and demilitarized.

- Ensure that the U.S. immigration system promotes and respects the rights, safety, humanity, and dignity of all immigrants, refugees and migrants.
- Support equitable access for all to participate in open, secure, and transparent political and electoral processes, protect the integrity of our democratic institutions and processes, and work to ensure honesty and accountability of elected and appointed officials.
- End gun violence by supporting policies that are informed by public health best practices.
- Witness and advocate for American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian rights and concerns. Honor the treaties and promises.
- Address structural economic inequality through measures such as a fair and progressive tax system, a living wage for all, and an adequate social safety net.
- Prioritize programs that meet basic needs including universal access to quality affordable healthcare, a necessity magnified by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Strengthen environmental protections and advance environmental justice, while recognizing the finite capacity of the earth and the need to protect human, animal and plant diversity.
- Promote sustainable, science-based solutions to the climate crisis and prioritize international cooperation to achieve global sustainability goals and protect vulnerable populations.

FCNL solicited the views and concerns of Quaker meetings, churches, and organizations around the country to help discern these priorities for our lobbying and public education work during the 117th Congress (2021-2022). The priorities selected by Friends represent new leadings as well as continuity with the issues on which FCNL has previously worked.

FCNL seeks to collaborate across the political spectrum to advance these priorities. Our 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.

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