



A New Season of Hope and Opportunity

By Diane Randall

"[T]hat's what FCNL has been bringing: a clear moral voice for change to live up to our highest ideals. It's admirable; it's necessary; and it's the time for it right now in the season of optimism, of hope ... for the next few years in our country."

— Julián Castro, former secretary of Housing and Urban Development, during the 2020 Quaker Public Policy Institute

For many, 2020 has been a year of anger, despair, and uncertainty as we try to make meaning of this devastating pandemic and polarization in the United States. It has been a year when national political leadership was sorely needed and, too often, was absent or malicious.

We are so ready for leadership that puts people first; leaders who speak truth to confront the global challenges we face—from COVID-19 to climate change to economic and racial injustice to war and the threat of war. We are ready for a time of optimism and hope.

Over 300,000 people have died from COVID-19, and tens of thousands more will die. Yet there is hope: in science and in the vaccines that have been rapidly developed and are already in use. There is hope in the certain knowledge that our lives are connected to the lives of people across the globe. This has a bearing on all the challenges we confront.

We saw Congress respond quickly on a bipartisan basis in March with the CARES Act, pouring billions of dollars into the economy and into the hands of our neighbors who needed help.

You were part of the lobbying for that relief bill. You continue to participate in our persistent lobbying for the U.S. Senate to act on another desperately needed pandemic relief bill. This will provide



unemployment benefits, food assistance, rent relief, and much greater stimulus to local, state, and tribal governments as they respond.

Confronting Police Abuse

In 2020, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery were the latest among hundreds of Black people who died at the hands of the police. They represent a chilling reality of state-sanctioned violence against Black people that is part of our country's legacy and which continues to this day.

Watching the video of George Floyd's murder awakened people. For many of us who are white or who had been cynical about change, this injustice and the ensuing Black Lives Matter protests brought a renewed commitment for action to dismantle systemic racism.

We joined many coalition partners in advocating for police reform—specifically the Justice in Policing Act (H.R.7120/S.3912). This passed the House of Representatives in June, although the Senate has yet to act on this important bill.

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Millions took to the streets in the largest civil rights demonstrations in American history. Photo taken with permission by Eric Bond/FCNL.

A New Season of Hope *(from page 1)*

More than 600 of you from 44 states virtually lobbied 80 Senate offices and 151 House offices, meeting staff and members of Congress during our Quaker Public Policy Institute in November. This was the largest turnout of lobbyists on a single FCNL legislative issue. We will persist in lobbying for this legislation in 2021.

We also responded to the generations-long systemic injustice on our Native American sisters and brothers. FCNL has advocated in solidarity with Native American organizations to urge Congress to address the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW) crisis.

With the help of your sustained advocacy, Congress passed two bills to correct such injustices: Not Invisible Act (P.L. 116-166) and Savanna's Act (P.L. 116-165). We will persist in the next Congress to advocate for tribal justice provisions in the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act.

Democracy Under Siege

Democracy continues to be a work in progress as we live up to our country's founding principle: all people are created equal. This year, we have seen efforts to deny access to voting and efforts to discount votes.

This suppression and distortion go beyond political polarization. The seemingly endless divide challenges national unity and purpose. And yet, a record-breaking 161 million people voted in the 2020 elections.

At FCNL, we will persist in building our civic education and engagement programs with young adults and people across the country—not only to vote, but to advocate with their members of Congress.

Constitutional Authority for War

We educated congressional offices and advocated with Congress to take back its constitutional power to declare war, which had been ceded to the president in 2001 and 2002. We advocated for repealing these outdated authorizations for the use of military force, in use for almost 20 years, to sanction U.S. military actions across the globe. We will persist in advocating for repeal.

In February, Congress, for the first time, invoked the Vietnam-era War Powers Act to block military action against Iran. Although the president vetoed it, this vote put Congress on record against going to war with Iran and against executive authorization of such a war.

There is hope in the certain knowledge that our lives are connected to the lives of people across the globe.

As the 117th Congress starts on January 3, 2021, we are entering a new season of hope and opportunity. With the new administration of President-elect Joe Biden, who will be inaugurated on Jan. 20, we will see movement on many FCNL legislative priorities.

However, changes in public policy to make our planet sustainable, to end and prevent war, to build peace, to dismantle systemic racism, to create opportunities for immigrants and refugees—these will require your determined passion and advocacy to create a better world.

Speak truth, act from hope, show love. Together we can work for the world we imagine.

Diane Randall is general secretary of the Friends Committee on National Legislation. 



Thank You!

As this year ends, we extend our profound gratitude to the health care workers, first responders, and families who have labored to protect and save people in their care. We extend our sympathy to all who have lost family members and friends because of the ravaging COVID-19 pandemic.

We send our love and gratitude to everyone in the FCNL network for your support and advocacy with us. *Thank you.*

Viewpoint: It's Never Been a "Silent" Crisis

By Rep. Deb Haaland (NM-01)



Native American people in this country come from communities that have historically faced genocide, forced removal, and loss of resources that date back to the arrival of Christopher Columbus in the late 1400s.

This resulted in centuries of racism and historical genocide against Indigenous people, which included severe physical and sexual violence against Native women, transwomen, and *two spirit* people. They all continue to be sexualized or overlooked in the media today.

The evidence of this crisis and false romanticizing of Native women is even hanging in plain view at the Capitol Rotunda, which ironically is the epicenter of our democracy.

If you go to the Rotunda today, you will find life-sized oil paintings that depict the so-called "beginning" of this country. They illustrate the ethnic cleansing and conquest of Native Americans—including depictions of colonizers baptizing Pocahontas in a Christian church and fearful, unclothed Native women running from the Europeans when they arrived on our land.

On the same wall in the Rotunda, you will also find a painting of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, a document that says, "all men are created equal." However, only 30 lines below that, the Founding Fathers refer to Native Americans as "merciless Indian savages."

To put this history into perspective, it has been 243 years since the Declaration of Independence was signed, 230 years since the first United States Congress met, and 194 years since these paintings in the Rotunda were hung. This shows just how long the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women's (MMIW) crisis has gone unnoticed and even normalized in American culture.

However, it has only been 23 months since my *sister*, Rep. Sharice Davids (KS-03), and I were elected as the first two Native American women to serve in the United States Congress.

It has taken Native women over 240 years to finally hold a congressional seat in the United States government where we can finally advocate for missing and murdered Indigenous women so they are no longer silent.

However, in our tribal communities, this crisis has never been "silent." It has been passed down through generational trauma from many failed federal policies and severe underfunding for basic public safety services on reservations. Yet little has been done at the state or federal level to combat the issue.

This is why I have worked so hard to shed light on these issues and introduce legislation in Congress to bring healing to our communities.

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Native American advocates, including Rep. Haaland, rally at the Capitol in support of the Violence Against Women Act. Photo: FCNL.

FCNL Priorities for the 117th Congress (2021-2022)

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.

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.



Protestors gather in front of Sen. Mitch McConnell's home near FCNL's headquarters. Photo: Matthew D'Agostino/FCNL.

- » 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 nuclear 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.

"The World We Seek: FCNL's Statement of Legislative Policy" gives FCNL the flexibility to respond to crises and to important legislative opportunities as the Quaker Way opens.

The Legislative Priorities for the 117th Congress was approved in November 2020 by the FCNL General Committee. The discernment process took nearly two years under the leadership of the FCNL Policy Committee. It is based on the discernment of more than 200 Quaker meetings, churches, and other organizations. 

A Quaker Vision for Migration Justice

Five Quaker organizations recently issued a joint statement on migration. "A Quaker Statement on Migration" draws on foundations the Religious Society of Friends and their work with migrants and on migration.

The statement lays out a Quaker vision for migration justice, "ensuring welcome, inclusion, dignity, shared security, sanctuary, love, and compassion, as needed, because we are all part of the same human family whether we migrate or not."

It acknowledges that migration is an inherent part of human behavior and enables people to move in safety and dignity.

The statement says that the line between chosen and forced migration is frequently blurred by such factors as insecurity, desperation, the search for dignity, and the climate crisis.

"People's reasons for migrating are often exacerbated by inequalities and by power structures that are built on or have profited from the control of people's movement," it adds.

Leading the development of the statement was the Quaker United Nations Office in Geneva. It was co-created with the American Friends Service Committee, Britain Yearly Meeting, Friends Committee for National Legislation, and the Quaker Council for European Affairs.

The statement was released on Dec. 10, International Human Rights Day. Copies may be downloaded from www.fcnl.org/migrationstatement. 



At the US-Mexico border. Photo: Tom Vaughan/FeVa Fotos.

"Silent" Crisis (from page 3)

Among the most crucial pieces of legislation that I have brought forward is the Not Invisible Act (P.L. 116-166), the first bill introduced by four federally recognized tribal members.

This bill works to establish an advisory committee comprised of law enforcement, tribal leaders, survivors, and the family members of survivors to address this harrowing epidemic and the jurisdictional solutions to the complex legal framework of tribal lands.

Additionally, I helped introduce an updated version of Savanna's Act (P.L. 116-165), which increases coordination and communication among state, federal, tribal, and local law enforcement

agencies to improve data collection to track missing indigenous people.

I am immensely proud to announce the both the Not Invisible Act and Savanna's Act were recently signed into law. They begin the long road ahead to bring justice to Indigenous people.

My legislative work is important to me because there is absolutely no reason why Native women and girls should have to fear that no one will act if they are harmed.

It will take a profound and unanimous effort to dismantle this destructive cycle and the corrosive narratives about

Indigenous people in this country, but I am hopeful that we will see change in our lifetimes so we create a better future for our young Indigenous women and *two spirit* people.

This article is excerpted from Rep. Haaland's speech in accepting FCNL's first Justice Award during the 2020 Annual Meeting. She was honored for leadership in addressing the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women.

Rep. Haaland is a member of the Laguna Pueblo Nation. ■



At FCNL, we have opportunities for young adults to work for peace and justice.

Advocacy Corps

APPLICATION DEADLINE
April 12, 2021

PROGRAM
August 2021-May 2022

Young Fellows Program

APPLICATION DEADLINE
February 15, 2021

PROGRAM
August 2021-July 2022

Summer Internships

APPLICATION DEADLINE
March 26, 2021

PROGRAM
June-July 2021

Spring Lobby Weekend

PROGRAM
March 20-23, 2021

For applications, visit
fcnl.org/youngadult

Questions?
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Friends Committee
on National Legislation
Lobbying with Quakers



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A Record-setting Virtual Event

By Alicia McBride



Fierce Love, the 2020 Annual Meeting and Quaker Public Policy Institute, was a record-setting event. A total of 883 people from 47 states registered to attend, nearly half of whom were first-time attendees.

FCNL's first virtual Annual Meeting created opportunities for participants who could not otherwise have come to Washington, D.C. They joined with long-time supporters to worship, build community, learn, and advocate together.

Tucked into the meeting was a celebration of the first five years of FCNL's Advocacy Teams, organizers working around the country to build relationships and change policy in Washington.

"We need to have the perseverance that so many people of previous generations did, to do our part to fight for a more just world," said Rep. Ro Khanna (CA-17) as he cited the difference FCNL's lobbying has made.

In addition to a meeting of FCNL's governing General Committee, the gathering was the occasion to recognize two members of Congress.

Rep. Deb Haaland (NM-01) was the first recipient of the FCNL Justice Award, recognizing her "commitment to end the crises of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and of violence against Native people."

Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (NY) received this year's Edward F. Snyder Peace Award for "working to bring an end to nearly two decades of endless wars, prevent new wars, and reduce the suffering of those affected by violent conflict."

As part of its journey to becoming a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization, the meeting listened to a talk by Lisa Sharon Harper, president of Freedom Road. "You can't talk about love in America ... without talking about the construct of race ... because it is embedded so deeply in the ... fabric of our nation," she said.

Participants also lobbied for strong action to address the crisis of racism, police brutality, and the militarization of police. In the biggest turnout for an FCNL lobby day to date, 615 people from 44 states lobbied 231 congressional offices to cosponsor and pass the Justice in Policing Act (H.R.7120/S.3912).

"We can only win if all of us are treated equally," said Julián Castro, former secretary of Housing and Urban Development, as the meeting closed.

A full report on Fierce Love, the 2020 Annual Meeting, including videos, is available at www.fcnl.org/annualmeeting2020.

Alicia McBride is director of Quaker leadership. 

William Penn House: What's in a Name?

By Adlai Amor



Last year, the FCNL Education Fund assumed governance and management of a historic property on Capitol Hill, the William Penn House. It had operated for several decades as a site for Quaker hospitality.

Although William Penn House remains a separate 501(c)(3), a shared services agreement with the FCNL Education Fund has enabled it to be temporarily closed for extensive repairs.

Recently, the William Penn House board decided to change the name of the building with the recognition that William Penn, a highly regarded Quaker who founded the colony of Pennsylvania, owned slaves.

The board took this step as a way of reckoning with the scourge of slavery and the continued legacy of white supremacy that perpetuates systemic racism. Despite his contribution to U.S. history and his intentions of founding a colony built on “brotherly love,” William Penn owned 12 slaves in his estate, Pennsbury.

In their discernment, the board recognized that it must go beyond changing the name to becoming anti-racist in its governance and its operations.

The board will affirm a new name as it completes the repairs to the building in 2021. It will also develop new education and advocacy opportunities for young

adults and all who want to actively work for a just, peaceful, and sustainable world.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic has slowed down the repairs and the re-opening of the house, work on the property continues with Four Brothers General Contractors and GBR Architects.

The board is also pleased to work with a building advisory committee of Friends who have experience in architecture and residential development: Cliff Messner, Benjamin Warnke, and Catherine Stratton Treadway. The contractors estimate that all repairs will be completed in spring 2021.

The board is especially grateful to the donors who have generously contributed to the extensive building repairs. This includes green building features and accessibility to the first floor. Once these repairs are completed, the building will be initially used for virtual programs.

When it will be safe to do so, the property will be used as envisioned in the business plan—civic engagement with overnight accommodations on Capitol Hill, designed to offer experiential education and advocacy engagement for young people (and maybe a few older people) as they work to create a better world.

Adlai Amor is associate general secretary for communications. 

Some of the team members tasked with the William Penn House repairs include (left to right) Thomas Swindell (associate general secretary for finance and administration), Ato Stephens (facilities coordinator), Philip Renfrow (principal architect), and Leroy Johnson (general contractor).

Photo: Eric Bond/FCNL

