

# Legislative Priorities for the 118th Congress

The Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) acts in faith to create a world free from war, a society with equity and justice for all, a community where every person's potential may be fulfilled, and an earth restored. 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: dire threats to the foundations of our democracy, including attacks on our election infrastructure; an existential global climate crisis; renewed threats of global war; intensified awareness of racial injustice and police brutality; and painful economic turmoil exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. While these multiple challenges evoke a heightened sense of distress and urgency, 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 policies and practices that are racist, sexist, or otherwise discriminatory.*

## Discernment Process and Use of Priorities

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 118th Congress (2023-2024). The priorities selected by Friends represent new leadings as well as continuity with the issues on which FCNL has previously worked. Our work is circumscribed by legislative opportunities, specific expertise, leadings, and available resources used in a strategic manner to allow for the greatest success. FCNL seeks to collaborate across the political spectrum to advance these priorities. The World We Seek (FCNL's Policy Statement) gives FCNL the flexibility to respond to crises and to important legislative opportunities, as Way opens.

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

- Promote peacebuilding and confront the paradigm of global militarism at home and abroad.

- Work towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and, as opportunity occurs, conventional and newly emerging weapons.
- Enhance diplomatic capacity to end current wars and prevent new ones. Reassert Congress' role in the use of military engagements.
- Advocate for democracy by working to remedy threats to our electoral processes that limit access to voting and undermine open, secure, and fair elections.
- Advocate for a reimagined justice system that is fair, equitable, and transparent for all. Eliminate mass incarceration and police brutality and uphold restorative justice.
- Work to end gun violence. Encourage the use of nonviolent conflict resolution methods and support programs that promote community safety.
- Center the voices of Tribal nations, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians as we work together to uphold community rights and concerns. Ensure enforcement of the federal government's treaty and trust responsibilities to protect tribal sovereignty and enhance tribal self-determination.
- Work for comprehensive immigration reform policies to establish inclusion and prosperity for immigrant communities, regardless of their status. Reject systems and processes that violate fundamental human rights.
- Center the voices of Black, Indigenous, and people of color as we work together to ensure genuine equity by dismantling institutional racism and discriminatory laws. Promote measures to uncover truth and repair slavery's ongoing societal impact.
- Address structural economic inequality, through measures such as a more equitable tax system, a living wage for all, and repairing and strengthening the social safety net programs.
- Support expansion of programs that meet basic needs, such as affordable, accessible housing and universal access to quality, affordable healthcare.
- Address the existential threat of climate change by reducing the use of fossil fuels and harmful land use practices; employ science-based mitigation and adaptation approaches.
- Strengthen environmental protections and advance environmental justice, mitigating both global and local impacts with particular focus on vulnerable or exploited populations.