



Questions for Candidates in the 2020 Elections

The 2020 elections will lay the groundwork for FCNL's advocacy for peace and justice in the next two years. FCNL is a nonpartisan organization. We encourage you to raise FCNL's legislative agenda by asking candidates any of the following questions:

Afghanistan: Do you agree that peace negotiations must involve all key stakeholders so we can responsibly withdraw all U.S. troops from Afghanistan?

FCNL View: Experts agree that there is no military solution to the Afghanistan conflict. The initial agreement between the U.S. and Taliban is a withdrawal agreement but it is not a peace agreement. Sustained peace can only be achieved through comprehensive negotiations that involve all relevant parties, including the Afghan government and Afghan women, as well as civil society more broadly. In addition to the full withdrawal of U.S. troops and other forces, we must commit to doing our part to support intra-Afghan talks and engaging regional actors diplomatically, which are critical to achieving a stable peace. We must also provide development and economic assistance for carefully tailored, locally led solutions, with robust oversight and accountability.

AUMF: Will you vote for repeal of the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force and require the president to seek congressional approval before taking our country into war?

FCNL View: As a matter of faith, FCNL believes that war is not the answer to the challenges facing our nation. As a matter of public policy, the decision to commit U.S. forces should not be undertaken lightly. To avoid concentrating power in the executive branch, the framers gave Congress the constitutional power to decide when our country goes to war. Yet Congress has largely abdicated this responsibility. Three presidents have used the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF) to justify at least



41 military engagements in 19 countries. Congress needs to cancel this blank check for war by repealing the 2001 AUMF.

Climate Change: Do you support laws that put a price on carbon emissions while protecting marginalized and low-income communities?

FCNL View: FCNL believes that an economy-wide solution like carbon pricing is an efficient way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and transition to a clean-energy economy. It is one of many critical tools needed to address climate change. Carbon pricing legislation must use the "polluters pay" principle so that vulnerable communities do not bear the burden of this transition. We specifically look for policies that recognize the impacts felt by vulnerable communities and include ways to offset potential negative consequences of a carbon tax. Revenue from such taxes can be used to train people for new jobs and offset increased energy costs.

Economic Justice: Will you work to pass another COVID relief package that prioritizes people most in need and expands the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit?

FCNL View: The economic downturn caused by COVID-19 will be severe and prolonged. The Congressional Budget Office projects unemployment to average 10% through 2021, three times what it was before the crisis. The country needs a comprehensive economic recovery. The EITC and Child Tax Credit are America's most effective anti-poverty programs, lifting more people out of poverty than any other program besides Social Security. However, adults not raising children in the home receive a small EITC, and the parents of 27 million children cannot claim the full Child Tax Credit because they don't make enough money. Expanding these credits would benefit millions of low-wage workers and effectively stimulate the economy.

Election Integrity: Do you support putting in place protections to guard against voter suppression before it happens?

FCNL View: The Voting Rights Advancement Act (H.R. 4) reinvigorates the preclearance sections of the Voting Rights Act to stop certain jurisdictions with a history of voter suppression from enacting new laws. In recent years, 1,688 polling places were closed between 2012 and 2018 in states that were formerly covered by this law. The VRAA's protections safeguard against voter suppression before it happens.

Gun Violence: Do you support passing laws that would require universal background checks for all gun buyers?

FCNL View: Universal background checks are critical in preventing people who should not have guns from buying them. Under current law, unlicensed dealers—like those selling firearms on the Internet or at gun shows—can do so without running a background check. Universal background checks would close these loopholes. Universal background checks are widely popular, with upwards of 90 percent of people in favor of enacting them—including gun owners and NRA members. Despite this support, Congress refuses to pass common-sense gun reform.

Immigrants and Refugees: Do you support legislation blocking the expansion of the failed detention and deportation system and instead focus on welcoming immigrants and refugees?

FCNL View: For decades, Congress has unduly invested in enforcement measures that hurt immigrants, refugees, and our communities. This enforcement-only approach wastes money, enriches prison corporations, and terrorizes border communities. It racially profiles immigrants and U.S. citizens and tears families apart. President Trump has capitalized on this approach with a series of bans and rapid growth of a detention and deportation. We urge Congress to enact legislation that ends the expansion of immigrant detention, welcomes more immigrants and refugees, upholds asylum, and revitalizes border communities.

Iran: Will you commit for the U.S. to rejoin the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or the Iran nuclear agreement, and take unauthorized war with Iran off the table?

FCNL View: Congress and the administration must make clear that a war with Iran would be disastrous. We can think of nothing more abhorrent than starting a new war in which hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians would be killed. The only way to de-escalate tensions and resolve our differences with Iran is through diplomacy. While the nuclear deal wasn't perfect, it represented a significant and constructive step in the right direction. When United States pulled out in 2018, Iran was in full compliance with the agreement. The Trump administration's policy of "maximum pressure," which includes crippling economic sanctions, has succeeded only in escalating the risks of a war.

Mass Incarceration: Do you support extending Pell Grants to all incarcerated individuals?

FCNL View: Currently, people in prison are banned from accessing Pell Grants. The ban denies 400,000 men and women in prison from securing a second chance in life through education. Our faith teaches us that everyone has inherent worth and dignity that doesn't get erased upon incarceration. Through education, we can give them back that dignity and sense of worth. Pell Grants should be available to all incarcerated people to give them the tools to succeed and eventually reduce their sentences. This will save \$365 million in reduced incarceration costs.

Native Americans and Alaska Natives: Do you support the restoration of tribal jurisdiction over non-Natives who commit violent crimes in Indian country?

FCNL View: More than 80 percent of Native American women have experienced violence in their lifetimes including violence from their partners, sexual violence, or stalking. Most of these are at the hands of non-Native perpetrators. Tribes only have jurisdiction over non-Natives for crimes of domestic violence. Native victims rarely see justice and are subjected to multiple assaults from repeat offenders. By restoring tribal jurisdiction over crimes of sexual assault, stalking, child abuse, and sex trafficking, tribes will be able to keep their communities safe and provide justice for victims. We urge members of Congress to push for legislation like the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act.

Nuclear Disarmament: Do you support extending the New START nuclear treaty, which expires in 2021, to ensure that U.S. and Russian nuclear arsenals are capped and inspected?

FCNL View: The New START Treaty limits the United States and Russia to 1,550 deployed nuclear warheads on 700 long-range missiles and bombers—more than the U.S. military has said is needed to deter all nuclear threats. With the stroke of a pen, the 2010 treaty can be extended for five years beyond its end on February 5, 2021. Russia has already indicated its interest in extending the treaty. U.S. military and intelligence agencies value the predictability gained from New START's verification and inspection tools. Losing New START would heighten risks of a new nuclear arms race.

Peacebuilding: Will you support doubling the U.S. investment in our tools to prevent violent conflict, including diplomacy and development?

FCNL View: FCNL seeks a world free of war and the threat of war. Failing to address the early warning signs of violent conflict results in costly military interventions later. The costs of violent conflict are vast—in lives and money. The Institute for Economics and Peace finds that each dollar invested in peacebuilding saves \$16 in the costs of conflict. However, in FY 2020, for every dollar the U.S. spent on the military and war, only 7¢ was spent supporting diplomacy and building peace. To save billions in taxpayer dollars and untold human lives, the administration and Congress must double their investments in diplomacy and development.

Pentagon Spending: Will you commit to investing at least ten cents to prevent conflict and promote peace, for every dollar we spend on fighting wars?

FCNL View: The United States government currently devotes only around 7 cents on diplomacy, peacebuilding, and development aid for every dollar it spends on war, weapons, and the Pentagon. The major challenges facing our country do not have military solutions, yet we have failed to invest in the diplomatic, economic, and political tools we need to address these challenges. Spending a mere dime on proven, non-military ways to build a more secure and just world for each dollar spent on the military would represent a major shift in America's approach to the world.

“Active and informed citizen participation in the political and electoral process is essential to the proper functioning of government.”

—The World We Seek: FCNL Statement of Legislative Policy (2019)

Yemen: Will you commit to ending all U.S. military participation in the Saudi-UAE coalition's war in Yemen, including arms sales, logistics support, and intelligence sharing?

FCNL View: In the past five years, the war in Yemen has created the world's worst humanitarian crisis, with 15.9 million people facing acute food insecurity and over 2 million people suffering from cholera. With the help of the United States, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have blockaded Yemen's ports and cut off the flow of food, fuel, medicine, and clean water. They have conducted air strikes on schools, hospitals, and agricultural infrastructure, using U.S. targeting intelligence and weapons. Congress has the power to end U.S. complicity in these atrocities. The U.S. can advance the peace process in Yemen by ending weapons sales, logistical support, and targeting assistance to the Saudi-UAE coalition.

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