



Friends Committee on
National Legislation

A Quaker Lobby in the Public Interest

April 24, 2019

Dear Members of the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs:

As you proceed towards consideration and markup of the State Department, Foreign Operations and Related Programs appropriation bill for FY 2020, the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) urges you to prioritize funding and policy support for peacebuilding, international environmental programs, and refugee protection. FCNL is a nonpartisan, faith-based organization with over one hundred advocacy teams and tens of thousands of individual activists across the country.

Preventing violence and building peace should be at the top of the U.S. foreign policy agenda. Violent conflict causes and exacerbates extreme poverty and hunger, driving 80% of humanitarian need. Failing to address brewing conflicts early puts greater demand on the United States to pursue costly military interventions later. Congress should take a proactive approach towards prevention by investing in local partners, particularly women, who are working to lay the foundations for peace. The Complex Crisis Fund is a particularly important tool for flexible and rapid-response funding to prevent and reduce violence.

Climate change poses an existential threat to humanity. The United States cannot afford to absent itself from international efforts to mitigate greenhouse gases and help countries adapt to the challenges of global warming. Bilateral and multilateral economic assistance for environmentally sustainable solutions is essential to safeguarding our future.

FCNL believes the United States has a moral responsibility, as well as an economic and political incentive, to ensure that those fleeing violence and persecution receive adequate assistance and protection. We urge you to restore bilateral and multilateral humanitarian aid for vulnerable families living in the West Bank and Gaza, and to reject the administration's proposals to slash funding and diplomatic support for refugee and humanitarian programs.

There are many other worthy and underfunded accounts in the international affairs budget. Given the valuable contributions these programs make to U.S. national security, we would urge that the Appropriations Committee allocate at least a dime for diplomacy and development for every dollar spent on defense.

Sincerely,

Diana Ohlbaum

Senior Strategist and Legislative Director for Foreign Policy