



## Fierce Love Now and Forever

By Diane Randall



*"Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."*  
– Hebrews 11:1

In these troubled times, it's not surprising that people are anxious, gripped with uncertainty. Consider this: the COVID-19 pandemic causing over 200,000 deaths in the United States; creating economic hardships and social isolation; tragic wildfires in western states; devastating flooding in southern states fueled by climate change; escalating political tensions; the controversial selection of a new Supreme Court justice; and systemic racism and economic inequality in a sharply divisive campaign season.

As an organization grounded in the faith of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), our policies, priorities, and practices provide a bedrock for these times, a spiritual grounding in God's fierce love.

For Quakers, the inward Spirit fuels outward action, and for FCNL that means we always have a way to exercise faith, hope, and love.

Each day, we practice hope as we advocate. Each day, we exercise faith as we build relationships to create community. Each day—and especially in these times—we know fierce love as we co-create the world we seek.

Our resolve, our faith to act has never been more important. Democracy in the United States is at stake right now.

The opportunity to pursue the aspirations and values we long for—equality, justice, peace, and an earth restored—requires us to act with fierce love. What does that fierce love look like?

**Vote.** Talk to people about your values and what candidates you believe comes closest to your values. Tell your story as to why voting matters. Tell how you are making sure your vote counts—whether that is voting by mail, early voting, or taking COVID-19 precautions when you go to the polls on election day.

**Reach out to candidates.** FCNL's questions for candidates provide a resource to talk to candidates running for US representative and senator. Ask their positions. Who we elect is critical—not just for the presidency but for the Senate and the House of Representatives.

**Be patient and pursue truth.** We recognize that the outcome of the Nov. 3, 2020 election may not be known at end of the day. It may take days or weeks to assure that every vote is counted, as some states do not start counting mail-in ballots until election day. If there is uncertainty of election outcomes, the time between Election Day in November 2020 and Inauguration Day in January 2021 will be tumultuous.

*(continued on page 6)*



20,000 flags were set up at the COVID-19 Memorial Project's Interfaith Memorial. Photo: FCNL/Matthew Paul D'Agostino.

# The Difficult Path to Changing Policing in America

By José Santos Woss



During FCNL's Annual Meeting and Quaker Public Policy Institute, Nov. 14-17, we will focus our legislative ask to changing policing in America.

We know that police operate very differently in Black and brown communities than they do in white neighborhoods. In Kenosha, WI, we recently saw Jacob Blake, a Black man, shot seven times in the back by police as his family looked on. This is seemingly one of an endless string of news stories involving a police officer shooting an unarmed Black person.

In changing policing legislation, we honor the lives of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Drearson "Sean" Reed, George Floyd, Tony McDade, Tamir Rice, and countless other Black people who have been killed by police officers.

These examples of state violence against Black people are proof that institutional racism exists across government, including in the police. It must be rooted out and our lobbying during Annual Meeting is especially important.

The Friends Committee on National Legislation joined the civil rights community, led by the Leadership Conference, in submitting eight recommendations to reform policing:

1. Require a national standard that use of force be reserved for only when necessary as a last resort after exhausting reasonable options;
2. Prohibit all maneuvers that restrict the flow of blood or oxygen to the brain, including neck holds, chokeholds, and similar excessive force, deeming the use of such force a federal civil rights violation;
3. Prohibit racial profiling with robust data collection on police-community encounters and law enforcement activities. Data should capture all demographic categories and be disaggregated;
4. Eliminate federal programs that provide military equipment to law enforcement;

5. Prohibit the use of no-knock warrants, especially for drug searches;
6. Change the 18 U.S.C. Sec. 242 *mens rea* requirement from willfulness to recklessness, permitting prosecutors to successfully hold law enforcement accountable for the deprivation of civil rights and civil liberties;
7. Develop a national public database that would cover all police agencies in the United States and its territories; and,
8. End the qualified immunity doctrine that prevents police from being held legally accountable when they break the law.

The path forward is a difficult one. The House acted and passed the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act (H.R.7120), which included most of the eight points.

The Senate, however, proposed a more limited approach with S.3985, the JUSTICE Act. This is a bill that seeks to study the problem and create commissions rather than taking concrete steps to address the issue. That is why it failed to move forward.

We know what the problem looks like. Police are local institutions and are funded by city, county, and state governments. What we need to support local police reform efforts are meaningful reforms at the federal level. Many Republicans feel that the Justice in Policing Act usurps the role of states and local governments. That's a part of why many did not support the House bill.

We need to continue lobbying our members of Congress that the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act (H.R.7120) is the right path forward to solving the crisis of local policing in the United States. We cannot wait for change to come from the 18,000 local law enforcement agencies around the country.

Change must come fast so that we are not lamenting the death of another Black man or woman again.

José Santos Woss is legislative manager for criminal justice and election integrity. 

# The Voting Rights Act, 55 Years Later

By Alex Frandsen



Free and fair elections are the bedrock of our democracy. Yet for most of the history of our country, voting was a privilege that could easily be revoked for nothing more than the color of one's skin.

Even though the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment, passed in 1870, prohibited states from disenfranchising voters on account of race, local authorities used poll taxes and literacy tests to shut Black voters out of the polling booth.

Then came the Voting Rights Act of 1965. This landmark legislation secured the right to vote for Black people and other people of color throughout the country, especially in the South.

FCNL's lead voting rights lobbyist, José Woss, describes it as "a stop to the vestiges of racism in our voting system." Now, 55 years after its passage and just months before one of the most critical elections in modern history, the Voting Rights Act remains as important as ever.

Since its inception in 1943, FCNL has been an ardent support of voting rights. FCNL's guiding set of principles,



A new banner hangs from the FCNL building.

Photo: Matthew Paul D'Agostino/FCNL.

The World We Seek, states: "Our democracy can live up to its potential only if the government ... safeguards the integrity of the voting process without raising unnecessary barriers."

But despite the enormous progress enabled by the Voting Rights Act, free and fair elections are under growing threat. A core tenet of the legislation was the implementation of "preclearance" provisions. As Woss explained, these required the attorney general or federal courts to preapprove new voting laws in jurisdictions with a history of racial voter suppression.

The 2013 Supreme Court case of *Shelby v. Holder*, however, knocked these provisions down and shifted the burden to the people. Now, the only vehicle for overturning a discriminatory voting law is through long and costly legal court cases.

Fortunately, Congress has an opportunity to address this glaring regression. The John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act (VRAA) (H.R. 4/S.4263), introduced by Rep. Terri Sewell (AL-7) and Sen. Pat Leahy (VT), would restore preclearance provisions. This would stop discriminatory voting laws before they can go into effect.

The legislation has not been received equally in both chambers of Congress. "The House passed the VRAA already, which is really important, but the Senate is unlikely to take action on it," said Woss.

FCNL lobbyists and advocates will continue to push for its passage. The bill is simply too important to let slide, especially as attacks on voting rights continue amid the pandemic. "We have states like Texas, where you need an excuse to vote by mail, places like Georgia where they're closing polling places left and right. We're seeing a worsening of voter suppression."

Passing the Voting Rights Act in 1965, was a landmark in ensuring that all Americans can exercise their right to vote. As we approach the November elections, the coming months will serve as a critical turning point in the continuing voting rights struggle.

Alex Frandsen is digital communications associate. 

## New Young Fellows Join FCNL



Seven new young adults joined FCNL staff as the 2020-2021 Young Fellows. During their fellowship, they will work as program assistants with FCNL staff to build their advocacy expertise.

This year's Young Fellows and their programs:

- » Bryan Bowman, *Middle East Policy*
- » Hannah Sievers, *Young Adult Outreach*
- » Julia Gledhill, *Militarism and Human Rights*
- » Kameryn Point (Lumbee/Waccamaw Siouan), *Criminal Justice and Election Integrity*
- » María Isabel León Gómez Sonet, *Immigration and Refugee Policy*
- » Mariah Shriner, *Energy and Environment*
- » Michelle Fujii, *Nuclear Disarmament and Pentagon Spending*

"It is a joy to have a group of passionate, thoughtful, and diverse young adults join FCNL this year," said Adrienne Peters, who coordinates the program. They were chosen from over 100 applicants.

This year's Young Fellows come from five states. They graduated with majors in history, global studies and international development, peace studies, anthropology, ecology, economics and business, communications, and journalism. Some of our Young Fellows have worked in journalism, advocacy, and teaching before joining FCNL.

In addition to learning how to advocate on FCNL's legislative priorities, they will also recruit participants to Spring Lobby Weekend and new applicants for the program itself.

The Young Fellows Program is one of the four Young Adult programs at FCNL. The others are the Advocacy Corps, summer internships, and Spring Lobby Weekend. FCNL originally started its internship program in 1970 to provide young Quakers frustrated with the Vietnam War a way to work for peace. Spring Lobby Weekend started in 2009; summer internships and Advocacy Corps began in 2015.

More than 2,000 young adults have had training in lobbying and organizing for peace and justice through FCNL. They are part of FCNL's growing alumni network. 

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# Yes AND Vote on November 3!

**VIEWPOINT** » By Larissa Gil Sanhueza



Amid the political turmoil, racial tensions, and global pandemic, it is difficult to know what lies ahead. For us young adults, this uncertainty makes it feel almost impossible to imagine what a November election will look like.

Despite this difficulty, my colleagues and I at FCNL's Young Adult Program have dedicated ourselves to ensuring that young voters have the tools they need to cast their ballot during what is shaping up to be the most important election they have yet experienced.

Despite their potential power, young adults have historically had low voter turnout rates. According to the United States Census, only 36% of eligible voters between the ages of 19 and 29 cast their votes in the 2018 midterm election.

Young adults have the power and the ideas to make significant changes in our political system.. However, voter turnout among young adults is low for many reasons. One reason is the concern that voting won't be effective in addressing crises such as the pandemic, economic collapse, police brutality, and systemic racism.

When I engage with young adults on the topic of voting, I approach them with a "yes and" strategy. Yes, protest the injustices faced by Black and brown communities. Yes, organize a Twitter storm to call out your legislators for delaying necessary COVID-19 pandemic relief. Yes, educate your family and friends on issues of racism.

Do all these things AND cast your vote on November 3.

The last couple of months have taught us a lot, including the importance of leadership we can trust. When I personally feel frustrated and need to be motivated, I remind myself that the incoming president and members of Congress will be responsible for continuing the United States' response to the crises we currently face. Our leadership is on the ballot.



*Celina Tijerina, Former Advocacy Corps Organizer 2018-19 Photo: FCNL.*

As a young voter, one of my biggest fears for the 2020 election is that people won't know how to vote. With the country still figuring out the safest way to vote in November, it is clear that all eligible voters need to do what they can so they can vote.

FCNL has partnered with HeadCount, a non-profit organization that usually registers people to vote at concerts, to create an online platform to make voting easier.

The first step in ensuring you can cast your ballot in the Nov. 3 election is to register to vote ([fcnl.org/vote](https://fcnl.org/vote)). If you have already registered, make sure that you confirm your address. With more states mailing ballots, it is critical that your address is current, even if you only moved a block away.

I might be nervous about this year's election and voting process, but I have never been more confident in the power of young adults as they struggle towards a more equitable and peaceful future. With the right tools and information, we can make sure our voices are heard in November – and in subsequent elections.

*Larissa Gil Sanhueza is young adult advocacy coordinator.* 

## Fierce Love *(from page 1)*

The partisanship we see now could become volatile, and our commitment to nonviolence, the rule of law, and truth-telling are ways we exhibit fierce love in the face of lies and extremism.

**Advocate with FCNL.** At FCNL's Annual Meeting and Quaker Public Policy Institute, November 14-17, we will discern the legislative priorities for the new, 117<sup>th</sup> Congress. We will also lobby for passage of the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act (H.R.7120).

This legislation, which addresses militaristic, racist, and abusive practices by police, is an important bill Congress should pass. Our voices matter in this debate.

**Make time for stillness in your life.** Pray, or ground your intentions in fierce love. Shut out the daily news for a bit and put aside the anxiety, fear, and despair to allow renewal and hope to flourish for the next step of faith.

This is not the first time that we face the brokenness of our country, of the world. Our spiritual and emotional grounding is essential. In his book, *Healing the Heart of Democracy*, Quaker author Parker Palmer reminds us:

“For those of us who want to see democracy survive and thrive ... the heart is where everything begins: that grounded place in each of us where we can overcome fear, rediscover that we are members of one another, and embrace the conflicts that threaten democracy as openings to new life for us and for our nation.”

Quakers and all people of faith and moral purpose have a unique and vital role in this uncertain time. Our history as the Religious Society of Friends was founded and shaped in a time of turmoil.

The rich legacy of Friends, who through the centuries have confronted injustice and stood for peace, continues to inspire us

today as do the voices of millions of people across the country who are standing, marching, praying, and advocating for justice.

We know we are not alone. Millions of people in this country and around the globe are practicing fierce love by embracing the hope of a world at peace, by working with faith for communities that are just.

*“Now faith, hope and love abide, but the greatest of these is love.”*  
– 1 Corinthians 13:13.

*Diane Randall is general secretary.* 



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A VIRTUAL GATHERING  
November 14-17, 2020



PHOTO: Jennifer Domacki/FCNL

Annual Meeting and  
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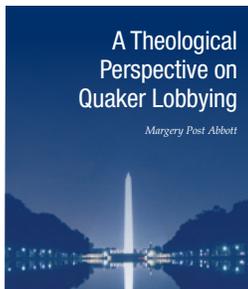
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Friends Committee on National Legislation

# Learn about Quakers and Effective Lobbying

By Alicia McBride

We are pleased to offer two new resources that explore the Quaker grounding of FCNL's advocacy. Whether you want to understand Quakerism better or to spend time reflecting on the relationship between your faith and political action, you will find a great deal to consider in these publications.



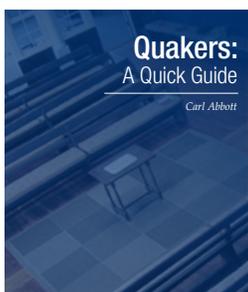
## "A Theological Perspective on Quaker Lobbying"

by Margery Post Abbott

This book examines the relationship between lobbying and Friends' spiritual practice. Drawing on Quaker history and theology, as well as the teachings of Jesus, Margery Post Abbott connects FCNL's work to the efforts of Friends through many generations to carry their concerns into the world. The book includes discussion questions for individual reflection or for use with a reading group. This new edition is an update from the original 2010 edition.

*"Lobbying from a place of faith ... is not about promoting self-interest but about advancing government policy to move toward a more powerful, just, and whole world; in other words, to be more in line with what we understand of God's kingdom on Earth."*  
– Margery Post Abbott

Download or order copies at [fcnl.org/quakerlobbying](https://fcnl.org/quakerlobbying).



## "Quakers: A Quick Guide"

by Carl Abbott

While grounded in Quaker faith, FCNL's relationship-based approach to advocacy attracts people with widely different understandings of the Quaker beliefs and values that are the foundation of FCNL's work. In this book, Carl Abbott endeavors to make the spiritual basis of FCNL's work more accessible to all, covering topics such as what happens in Quaker worship, how Quakers make decisions, and the complex answer to the question of whether Quakers are Christian.

*"If someone says, 'let's settle' to a Quaker group, they are saying settle into a worshipful state of mind (not 'settle down, you rowdy people!'). To center is to try to turn one's mind away from everyday concerns, like the coming work week and focus on openness to someone larger than oneself. It is easier said than done, as Quakers have known since the 17th century,"*

– Carl Abbott

Download or order copies at [fcnl.org/quakerguide](https://fcnl.org/quakerguide).

We are grateful to Margery Post Abbott and Carl Abbott who wrote these books during their term at FCNL as Friends (not) in Washington early this year.

Margery Post Abbott is a 'released Friend' writing and traveling in the ministry with the support of Multnomah Monthly Meeting in Portland, Oregon. She is a past clerk of FCNL's General Committee. Along with her husband, Carl, she is the author of the forthcoming book, "Quakerism: The Basics."

Carl Abbott is a member of Multnomah Meeting in Portland, Oregon. He is an author, historian, city planning specialist, and a retired professor of urban studies and planning. He and Margery Post Abbott served as Friends in Washington for FCNL in the spring of 2020, volunteering from their home in Portland due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Two more publications are currently being finalized: "A Persistent Band of Everyday Prophets" by Margery Post Abbott and "The William Penn House on Capitol Hill" by Carl Abbott.

Alicia McBride is director of Quaker leadership. 



Margery Post Abbott and Carl Abbott. Photo: Kate Holt/FCNL.

# The Electoral College Should be Abolished

## Q&A with Esther Little Dove John

On July 6, 2020, the Supreme Court ruled in *Chiafalo, et. al. v. Washington* that states have the power to require presidential electors to vote for their party's candidate for president.

One of the plaintiffs as a "faithless elector," was Esther Little Dove John, a member of the FCNL General Committee and from Sierra Cascades Yearly Meeting.

### **Have you planned for a long time to become an elector?**

When I was 13 years old in 7<sup>th</sup> grade social studies class, I learned that the Electoral College exists. I was awed by the power of the college and hoped that one day I would be eligible to participate in it.

### **How does being a faithless elector fit with Quaker faith and practice?**

I was not a Quaker when I was elected to be an elector. It fits into Quaker faith and practice uneasily.

I believe it was meant to prevent an untenable situation, but the Supreme Court does not seem to concur.

While Quakers would make excellent electors if electors were meant to prevent inappropriate candidates from being president of the United States, the Supreme Court's ruling means electors do not have this responsibility.

### **What do you think of the Electoral College?**

I think the Electoral College is the way that wise minds can act as a final barrier to an inappropriate person becoming president of the United States.

That is what I and the other electors attempted to do when we wrote in General Colin Powell instead of Hillary Clinton in December 2016.

We hoped that Republican electors would follow our lead; they did not. I think the idea of an Electoral College is good, but given the Supreme Court's ruling on our case, I think it should be abolished.

### **What did you think of the recent Supreme Court ruling on the two cases on "faithless electors"?**

I think the Supreme Court ruling on our cases was fair, in that we did not cause any Republicans to join us. I think, however, that the Electoral College should be abolished.

It has been wrested from its original purpose, which was to act as a barrier to an inappropriate candidate becoming the president of the United States.

### **Would you encourage other Quakers to also become faithless electors should the opportunity arise?**

I would encourage Quakers to think very carefully about becoming an elector. The Supreme Court has not reinforced our belief that the Electoral College should be a barrier to the inappropriate candidate.

Therefore, should a similar situation arise, Quakers must know that they will likely not be backed up when their case goes to the nation's highest court.

### **What should Quakers do in the 2020 elections?**

Quakers should think carefully about for whom they vote in 2020. They should think about who will most closely bring forth our Quaker values of simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality and stewardship.

*Esther Little Dove John is an educator, a musician, and community organizer. She attends the North Seattle Friends Church. Photo by Matthew Martyr.* 

