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Growing, Deepening Our Lobbying Around the Country

By Jim Cason

FCNL constituents visited local congressional offices across the country this summer while Congress was home for the August recess. Working with staff from our Washington office, volunteers organized more than 129 lobby visits or in some cases just dropped by congressional offices.

They lobbied on the most pressing legislation that will come to a vote in the fall, including ending forever wars, requiring background checks for gun purchases, and supporting a price on carbon to address the climate emergency.

More than one-third of the people who lobbied this summer had never visited a congressional office as part of the FCNL community. FCNL volunteer lobbyists made three times as many lobby visits as the average for the previous three years.

The big lobbying push this summer is part of our work as a community to accomplish the ambitious goals set out in FCNL's Five-Year Forward Plan. The plan sets goals for doubling the number of grass-roots advocates we bring into congressional offices. It also aims to develop the structures and tools to deepen our individual relationships with members of Congress and their staff.

We do this work not to add numbers on paper but to increase the power of our Quaker-grounded advocacy in Congress. The Forward Plan notes, "FCNL's relentless advocacy on Capitol Hill and in congressional districts throughout the country will strengthen constituent voices and offer a compelling narrative for peace and social justice, empowering civil dialogue for policy change by Congress."

Judging from the stories of advocates, FCNL's approach works.

This year, Rep. Barbara Lee's (CA-13) bill to repeal legislation that has been used by three presidents to justify expanding military action around the world garnered more cosponsors than in any previous sessions of Congress largely due to the work of FCNL.

Through last spring, congressional staff repeatedly notified FCNL Advocacy Team members that their representative was cosponsoring the bill to repeal the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF)—even before it was officially recorded. At this writing, H.R. 1274 has 77 cosponsors, thanks largely to the 110 active FCNL Advocacy Teams around the country.

One key to FCNL's advocacy is persistence, especially in building relationships with members of

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Advocacy Team member Sara Avery with Rep. Joe Neguse (CO-02) at a local town hall in March 22, 2019.

Viewpoint

With Grassroots Voices, Change Can Happen in Congress

By Hassan El-Tayyab

I got my first in-depth education on the Yemen crises at a panel featuring Shireen Al-Adiemi, a Yemeni activist and contributor to the magazine *In These Times*. Beyond the humanitarian catastrophe and the complex history of the Yemen war, Shireen's description of Saudi Arabia's use of Al-Qaeda fighters and Sudanese child soldiers in their war against the Houthi army really disturbed me.

This felt personal, in large part because my cousin, Muath al-Kasasbeh, was murdered by ISIS in 2015 after his F-16 crashed in Syria. My cousin was a pilot for the Royal Jordanian Air Force.

After Shireen's panel discussion, I concentrated much of my activism on ending U.S. support for the Yemen war. I led constituent lobby visits in and around Chicago, put on more talks, and engaged as many people in my community as I could.

In September 2018, I took a job lobbying full time in Washington, D.C. I worked with activists across the country to get Congress to reassert its constitutional war authority and end our involvement in an illegal war that has claimed the lives of over 85,000 children under the age of five. About 14 million people in Yemen now live on the edge of famine.

I was elated when Congress made history in April 2019 by passing SJ Res 7, the Yemen War Powers Resolution to end unauthorized U.S. military involvement in the Saudi-UAE war on Yemen. This was the first resolution to pass Congress since the original passage of the War Powers Act in 1973.

By invoking the War Powers Act over Yemen, Congress pressured the Trump administration to stop mid-air refueling of Saudi and UAE warplanes. It helped get all sides fighting in the Yemen war to agree to discuss a realistic peace process. On the same day the Senate passed the Yemen War Powers Resolution, UN Special Envoy to Yemen Martin Griffiths secured a ceasefire agreement in Hodeida.

This is significant because Hodeida is Yemen's largest port and the country's main supply line for aid to



millions of people. While the ceasefire in Hodeida is fragile, and suffering in Yemen remains catastrophic, the passage of the War Powers Resolution created room for peace talks and is saving lives. It could lead to an end of the war.

We would not have been able to get to this point, if it were not for passionate dedication of advocates and coalition partners working together for peace. The passage of the Yemen War Powers Resolution showed us that when grassroots peace activists make their voices heard—and when Republicans and Democrats set aside their differences and work together toward shared values—real change is possible.

Each time Congress was forced to vote on Yemen, more constituents met with their members, pressuring them to come out against the war. For example, Representative Dutch Ruppersburger III (MD-02) went from being one of the five Democrats who killed the Yemen War Powers Resolution in 2018, to a champion who included virtually identical language to this year's defense appropriations bill.

Despite Trump's veto of SJ Res 7 in April, Congress has another historic opportunity to end the war in Yemen. In the coming weeks, we expect House and Senate leaders to decide what Yemen-related amendments will stay in Fiscal Year 2020 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). We are urging Congress to keep the Khanna-Smith-Schiff-Jayapal amendment in the final version of the NDAA, in order to finish what we started with the Yemen War Powers Resolution.

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Ten Young Fellows Join FCNL for FY 2019-2020

Ten new college graduates recently joined FCNL staff as the 2019-2020 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 are:

- » Alex Frandsen, *Communications*
- » Alicia Cannon, *Sustainable Energy & Environment*
- » Bobby Trice, *Quaker Outreach*
- » Don Chen, *Militarism & Human Rights*
- » Joe D'Antonio, *Criminal Justice & Election Integrity*
- » Karla Molinar-Arviso, *Immigration & Refugee Policy*
- » Monica Montgomery, *Nuclear Disarmament & Pentagon Spending*
- » Parissa Joukar, *Middle East Policy*
- » Rachel Stromsta, *Peacebuilding*
- » Sergio Mata-Cisneros, *Young Adult Outreach*

"I'm constantly learning from FCNL experts how to lobby effectively and grounded in principles I believe," said Karla Molinar-Arviso, who works on immigration and refugee policy. "I hope other young people have the opportunity to be developed in the same way I have through FCNL."

This year's Young Fellows come from eight states. They graduated with majors in political theology, media policy, journalism, peace studies, political science, international studies, and social work.

The fellows bring experience gained through various internships and jobs in college. This includes establishing the New Mexico Dream Team, working as a correspondent for *The Boston Globe*, teaching in Taiwan with a Fulbright grant, establishing a campus radio station, and interning for Republican and Democratic members of Congress.

"The Young Fellows program is a key component of our commitment to learn from and train the next generation of advocates," said Diane Randall, FCNL executive secretary. "They are our emerging leaders as we continue to seek a world of peace, justice, and a sustainable planet."

The fellows will travel to selected parts of the country to recruit participants to Spring Lobby Weekend and new applicants for the Young Fellows program.

The Young Fellows is one of the four Young Adult programs at FCNL. The others are the Advocacy Corps, summer internships, and Spring Lobby Weekend. These programs started as internships in 1970 to help young Quakers frustrated with the Vietnam War.

More than 300 young adults have been trained through these programs and more will be trained as part of FCNL's five-year Forward Plan. [F](#)



From left to right, front: Karla Molinar-Arviso, Don Chen, Monica Montgomery, Sergio Mata-Cisneros, Parissa Joukar
Back: Alicia Cannon, Alex Frandsen, Rachel Stromsta, Bobby Trice, Joe D'Antonio. Photo Credit: Emily Sajewski.



The 2019-2020 Advocacy Corps Organizers meet with activist Peter Murchison, member of Wilton Quaker Meeting, during their summer intensive training. Photo Credit: Jim Cason.

2019-2020 Advocacy Corps

Cultivating Young Social Justice Advocates

Returning from the 10-day Washington Summer Intensive, FCNL's 20 Advocacy Corps organizers knew they would be faced with the difficult task of advocating for legislation to end gun violence. But they didn't know that within days the issue would tragically return to the front pages after a terrible round of mass shootings in El Paso and Dayton.

At Jackson State University in Jacksonville, Alabama, organizer Natalie Walls was interviewed on her local radio station. In a half hour, she kept returning to the theme that addressing gun violence is not a partisan issue.

Speaking with the *Conway Daily Sun* in New Hampshire, Fiona Davis-Walsh made the point that while mass shootings make headlines, in the U.S. they account for only about five percent of total gun deaths. "The vast majority of deaths by guns are by suicide, interpersonal violence, and domestic violence," she said.

Walls and Davis-Walsh, along with 18 Advocacy Corps members, spent a week at the FCNL's Quaker Welcome Center in Washington meeting with lobbyists, congressional staff, and experts. Highlights of the week included briefings from March for Our Lives, the Community Justice Action Fund, and emergency room nurse Tanvi Avasthi.

Avasthi pointed out that communities of color are especially affected by gun violence. Rep. Lucy McBath (GA-06), whose son was killed in a shooting, and Sen. Chris Murphy (CT) recorded special video briefings for the organizers.

The ten-month long Advocacy Corps program is a key part of FCNL's program to tap the energy, innovation, and experience of young people to change federal policy. FCNL's Five-Year Forward Plan specifically calls on our community to cultivate a new generation of social justice advocates who can affect change in Congress.

This year, FCNL recruited Advocacy Corps organizers from states such as Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Texas, and Florida where gun violence can be a polarizing issue. However, persistence is the key.

In her first month back home, organizer Lauren-Elaine Brown was having trouble scheduling meetings with her local representative in Dallas. So she just dropped by his office with other constituents.

After several visits she successfully organized a lobby visit and is now organizing a group of high school students to work on this issue.

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Minute of Concern

Hoping to Heal a Wounded Nation

Minutes are faithfully discerned messages that powerfully communicate concerns weighing heavily on the hearts and minds within the Meeting. Minutes can also help Friends convert faith into action with members of Congress. We encourage Friends to consider forwarding Meeting Minutes as advocacy tools, as we lift concerns for peace and justice. For more information, please visit fcnl.org/minutes. North Carolina Fellowship of Friends offers this prayer, read aloud during their August 10, 2019, gathering in Quaker Haven Camp, NC.

"The North Carolina Fellowship of Friends (Quakers) is troubled, as all Christians and non-Christians must be, by the escalating belligerence and divisiveness in our nation. Based on our historic Christian witness for peace and equality, we feel compelled to offer the following prayer for our president and for the members of Congress in the hope of healing a wounded nation.

"Dear heavenly Father, Lord, God who has dominion and rule over all nations (Psalm 22:28), we bow before you and humbly ask that you hear our prayer for our nation and its leaders. We offer this prayer, Lord, not audaciously but in modest response to your directive to 'Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute . . . the poor and needy' (Proverb 31:8-9).

"Lord we ask that you give our leaders the courage to turn from political expediency to humanitarian virtue.

"Teach us to welcome the stranger warmly, to offer an abundance of clean water to the thirsty, to care for the sick with proper medical attention (Matthew 25). We implore you to intercede to stop the cruel rending of families who are fleeing persecution. Remind those of our leaders who profess to be Christian of Christ's words, 'Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me' (Luke 9:48).


"Nullify the maliciousness of those who use racial intolerance and misogynistic contempt to gain fleeting political advantage. Open their eyes to see that we are a nation of your servants created equal in

your image, divided not by color, ethnicity, gender, or even religious dogma but only by those who ignore justice and hate kindness (Micah 6:6).

"Loving God, our leaders have it within their power to quell the flames of hatred that are consuming our nation. Show them that there is no patriotism in political pettiness, no salvation in small-mindedness, no honor in paying homage to divisive political slogans.

"Finally, we fervently pray for the alleviation of suffering of those innocent victims subjected to national policies specifically designed to be cruel and intimidating.

"Through this prayer we bring these problems to the attention of our leaders. May their hearts and minds be open to the leading of your Holy Spirit.

"We, the 80 members of the North Carolina Fellowship of Friends, gathered here this 10th day of August 2019, united in prayer, submit this in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen." 




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Directors Agree to New Management of William Penn House

For more than 50 years, FCNL and William Penn House have worked to advance Quaker witness on Capitol Hill. After several months of discernment and worship, the boards of directors of both organizations agreed that the FCNL Education Fund would assume governance and management of William Penn House effective Sept. 1, 2019.


The FCNL Education Fund will strive to carry on the mission of the William Penn House—to provide friendly hospitality and support for activism and education that builds peace, justice, and equality—in alignment with FCNL's mission of living a prophetic Quaker vision for a peaceful, just, and healthy planet through education, lobbying, and grassroots advocacy.

William Penn House will remain a separate non-profit entity. It will be closed for several months for repairs and program planning. The house was built in 1917. In 1966, it was purchased by Friends Meeting in Washington and became William Penn House. 

Advocacy Corps (from p. 4)


After Clare Carter returned home from the Washington Summer Intensive, she organized a lobby training using FCNL's materials and brought six people into the Knoxville office of Sen. Marsha Blackburn (TN). Organizer Juan Avila, whose family is originally from Mexico, is using a Spanish version of FCNL's legislative "leave behinds" to train his friends and family in New Mexico to advocate on gun violence. Avila has already recorded a video interview with the biggest newspaper in New Mexico, the *Albuquerque Journal*.

Next steps for all Advocacy Corps organizers are to bring more people into congressional offices to press for commonsense legislation to expand background checks and take guns out of the hands of individuals who could hurt themselves or others. Advocacy Corps coordinator Larissa Gil Sanhueza said that while this will be hard, she is confident that the 20 organizers have the training and energy to make this happen.

"I'm really interested in holding open, honest conversations with folks of all different perspectives on this," said Davis-Walsh in the *Conway Sun*. "There should be an aggressive federal response that includes rigorous and universal background checks on gun purchases and an assault weapons ban... It doesn't have to be this way, and we must not accept this as normal. We owe it to every victim of gun violence." 

Grassroot Voices (from p. 2)

Through the NDAA and defense appropriations, Congress can end U.S. complicity in war crimes in Yemen. It also sends a clear signal to the executive branch that unconstitutional U.S. participation in the Saudi-UAE coalition's war in Yemen must end.

Hassan El-Tayyab is FCNL's new legislative representative for Middle East policy. He played a major role in the passage of the War Powers Resolution to end U.S. military aid supporting the coalition of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in the Yemen War. 



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The Rogue Valley Advocacy Team after lobbying Senator Ron Wyden (OR) in September 2019.

Growing our Lobbying (from p. 1)

Congress, including those that we don't agree with on many issues. In a conservative West Virginia district, the FCNL Advocacy Team perceived that their representative was hopeless on this issue.

"He's frankly somebody who we don't often agree with. In fact, we're frequently frustrated by his positions and his communication style," says Advocacy Team member Meg Kinghorne. But we told her, "No. There is that of God in everyone. We must try. We must do our part."

Gradually, her team built relationships with their congressman's office. They met with staff in district, then in Washington, and then met a senior staff person at a local Chamber of Commerce gathering. While they acknowledged that Rep. Lee is one of the most progressive members of Congress, they also noted that H.R. 1274 also was cosponsored by several conservative representatives.


The team also published letters to the editor almost every month in the local newspaper. Once, when the congressman voted to end the war in Syria, they praised him in a letter to the editor. A few months later, the Advocacy Team's member of Congress cosponsored the bill to repeal the 2001 AUMF.

"We can't take full credit," said Kinghorne. "Our work helped show that there is support within the state. And we learned an important lesson: Just go in

with a good faith effort, assume the same from the representative, and expect a good turnout, which we got, which we're very happy about."

In another case, our staff lobbyist let Advocacy Teams know that a certain member of Congress would be a critical vote for winning House approval of legislation to repeal the 2002 Authorization for the Use of Military Force that authorized the invasion of Iraq. We did not have an Advocacy Team in this member's district, but the Concord, New Hampshire Advocacy Team reached out to Quakers at a neighboring Friends meeting. They agreed to visit the member of Congress together. In the end, the member of Congress voted in favor of an amendment attached to a military policy bill that would repeal the 2002 AUMF.

Building relationships in this manner takes time. In some cases it takes our local Advocacy Teams years to get a face-to-face meeting with a member of Congress. But after hundreds of hundreds of lobby visits and thousands of people in congressional offices, we're seeing positive results.

"I've learned so much since I joined our team several years ago, not only about the focus of the year but also about how our government works," explains Mimi Edgar, who is part of the Santa Cruz Advocacy Team. "Thanks for all your hard work." 

Question & Answer with DeAnne Butterfield

End This New Arms Race

How did you spend your time as a Friend in Washington?

I came to better understand how the decision-makers in Washington view the nuclear weapons program. In my first week I was stunned to hear distinguished scholars and military officers talk with pride and urgency about the uses and expansion of the nuclear weapons program. I learned about the real possibilities and past examples of miscommunication, technical malfunction, and government arrogance regarding nuclear arms. I was also able to hear from the smart and organized advocates working with FCNL to end the arms race.

What is needed is a clear, compelling narrative about nuclear weapons with which the general public can align and advocate. Congress is not hearing about this issue from their constituents and it is urgent to begin this dialogue.

How long have you lobbied against nuclear arms?

I was in middle school during the 1962 Cuba Missile Crisis. Just as children today are practicing active shooter drills, we were practicing “duck and cover” moves in the event of nuclear attack. As a Quaker, I was active in the Nuclear Freeze Movement of the 1980s that brought 1 million people to witness at the U.N. and led President Ronald Reagan to change his mind about the value of nuclear weapons.

In Colorado, I live 15 miles from the former Rocky Flats weapons plant that made plutonium triggers. I saw firsthand the dangers and environmental contamination from the production of nuclear weapons. War is not the answer, and a nuclear war can never be “won” and should never be fought.

How many nuclear bombs do we have?

At the height of the Cold War, countries possessed 70,000 nuclear warheads. Through treaties that reduced the arsenals of the U.S. and Russia, each

now has about 4,000 weapons. This is 90 percent of the world’s stockpile. The U.S. arsenal carries the explosive power equivalent to 80,000 15-kiloton Hiroshima bombs. The rationale of war planners to prevent nuclear war is through deterrence, and more threats mean greater deterrence.

How important is it to educate the public about nuclear weapons?

The military and its contractors keep designing new capabilities, delivery vehicles, and other nuclear weapons. The Trump administration has begun a new arms race by withdrawing from international treaties and supporting upgrades to the nuclear arsenal that will cost \$1.7 trillion over 30 years.

Educating the public about nuclear weapons is the only way to stop the dangerous, expensive, ineffective, and immoral military plans for their expansion and use carried out in our name.

As Quakers and people of faith, what should we do?

Quakers have been engaged in preventing nuclear war for decades. We cannot leave these decisions to the so-called experts: We all must speak out to our communities and elected officials to end this new arms race and call for the elimination of nuclear weapons as proposed in the 2017 Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty.

The goal of preventing war is better achieved not through threatening global catastrophe, but through diplomacy, threat reduction, robust verification, and a commitment to never start a nuclear war.



DeAnne Butterfield spent this summer as a Friend in Washington, a program where seasoned Friends share their experience. She is a member of FCNL’s General Committee and the Intermountain Yearly Meeting. [f](#)