

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON PEACE & SOCIAL JUSTICE

VIRGINIA BEACH FRIENDS MEETING

First Day, First Month 14, 2018



Questions and Answers about Setting FCNL's Priorities

Why is it important for meetings and churches to give input on FCNL's priorities?

FCNL relies on that input to find out what Quakers in our wider communities think about federal policy and what FCNL should be doing to impact that policy. The participation of as many meetings, churches, and other Quaker organizations as possible is very important.

What happens with the input that the Policy Committee receives from Quakers around the country?

What goes into preparing the short list of priorities that is presented to the General Committee for approval in November 2016?

Policy Committee considers all the input we receive from meetings, churches, and Quaker organizations through an extended process. That leads us to discern a draft priority statement that we bring to the General Committee in November.

We read every single response that we receive. We take those responses and synthesize them, and then in our meetings together as a committee we discern prayerfully to figure out where the priorities of the wider Quaker community are. We meet in person in June and September and will be focusing on this discernment at both meetings.

Some of the discussion is about how many groups raise a particular issue. But really more importantly if considering how deeply felt the responses are. We can feel the discernment that has gone into each individual response as we sit in our own worshipful consideration in the room to develop our draft priorities.

What advice would you give a Quaker in Meetings or Church who are contributing to FCNL's Legislative priorities?

If you've never participated in the priorities process before, you should just jump right in. You don't have to know anything about policy. You don't have to know anything about the way FCNL works. All you need to know is that you have a concern about something—usually something related to national policy but really just an opinion about politics. You can bring that to your meeting, bring that to your local Quaker organization. Have a discussion with them. Worship on it. Do a careful discernment process. Talk to other Quakers and think about what should be happening in the world. And then share the results of that careful conversation with us.

How do you respond to Friends who feel they've provided input to Policy Committee but their responses didn't result in a change in priorities for FCNL?

There's just no way with the limited budget and the limited staff and the limited resources that FCNL has to work on everything Quakers are interested in. The Policy Committee tries to focus FCNL's staff expertise by discerning what the most important priorities are for FCNL to work on, based on the communication that we have with meetings, churches and Quaker organizations throughout this entire process.

That's not to say that if something you care deeply about isn't ultimately on the priorities list that FCNL doesn't support that work. If it's reflected in the Policy Statement, FCNL certainly does. If you're interested in communicating with FCNL on that work you absolutely should; FCNL's lobbying tools and training can support you in pursuing your issue. And one of the great things about FCNL is that they're there to support you in your local community in doing that work with things like lobby training and skills-building workshops, so that you can learn and understand how to do that work yourself.

What do you find most powerful about the work of the FCNL Policy Committee?

It's exciting to help guide the policy focus of the organization. It's powerful, important work to be able to commune and communicate with the Quaker community in the United States. It's valuable to be able to understand how Quakers view federal legislative policy in the country, and to help FCNL understand how they can help the Quaker community focus on that policy and see their views reflected in the congressional discourse.

Videos for discussion at the January 21 Meeting for Eating:

- “FCNL, 75 Years for Peace and Justice” **7.39 minutes**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NdlY8ZG5dck&feature=youtu.be>
- Diane Randall, FCNL Executive Secretary, Annual Report to the FCNL General Committee, November 2017, 35.30 minutes <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RtXjdBN6Kq4>
- Amelia Kegan, FCNL Legislative Director, Domestic Policy, “An Unskippable Moment” from FCNL Annual meeting, November 2017 10.03 minutes
https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=51&v=yCUcn4VMpgQ

Our Committee’s plans for January 2018:

1. Encourage attendance at VICPP “Day for All People” in Richmond – leave Meeting House at 5:30 am, return late afternoon
2. Offer FCNL videos and discussion for the Jan 21 Meeting for Eating
3. Lead the priority discernment process for our Meeting in Jan - March
4. Continue the work of establishing an FCNL Advocacy Team
5. Invite FCNL Executive Secretary Diane Randall to visit us, along with staff person for Advocacy Teams
6. Continue discussion about how to communicate our intentions and actions regarding Peace & Social Justice (the Mandala)

TB will continue working as one of the FCNL Visiting Friends and as member of the FCNL General Committee and Field Committees. Upcoming commitments this month:

- NC Fellowship of Friends at Somerton Meeting, January 20;
- Help Christine Ashley host national conference call on the Priority Process Jan 25;
- Meeting of FCNL Field Committee in DC on Jan 25-28