

Friends Committee on National Legislation: 80 Years and Counting
Report to SAYMA

FCNL continues its steadfast work for peace and justice sustained by faith and hope. Fiscal Year 2023 by the numbers reveals its commitment in deeply divided times.

771 lobby visits by 3,226 constituents.

336 young adults went on 135 lobby visits to address the harmful legacy of the Indian Boarding School era during Spring Lobby Weekend.

1,090,350 page views at fcnl.org.

119,889 people were subscribed to FCNL emails.

Friends Place hosted 94 groups and 1,758 guests, including 465 migrants bused from the southern border.

Advocacy Teams (2,011 people) made 312 lobby visits and were able to protect peacebuilding funding in the FY2024 Appropriations Bill

Through innovative planning, FCNL expanded its young adult programs this fiscal year. They also began to network various local Advocacy Teams in 47 states to combine their power and impact. FCNL grew its digital community and began bringing its information technology infrastructure up to current industry standards.

At Annual Meeting, the General Committee approved a strategic plan for 2024-2028 — a strategic commitment to the future. The building blocks of the plan include:

- Strengthening FCNL’s nonpartisan influence to build democracy and advance policies
- Making our advocacy network more powerful, diverse, strategic, and intergenerational
- Advancing policy changes through prophetic narratives using strategic communications
- Fostering beloved community by integrating anti-racism, anti-bias, justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (AJEDI) in all our efforts
- Restructuring and boldly resourcing FCNL to support current needs and future capacities.

You can explore the key strategies for each part of the plan at www.fcnl.org/about/staff-governance/governance/2024-2028-strategic-plan

This year the policy committee reports a high volume of responses to the call for legislative priorities. They anticipate having online listening sessions around the priorities again this year.

Stand by for the announcement of the theme for 2024’s Annual Meeting and Quaker Public Policy Institute. SAVE THE DATE: NOVEMBER 13-17, 2024

Respectfully submitted by Jane Hiles and Susan Penn, SAYMA Reps to FCNL 6/7/2024

2024 Report to Yearly Meetings

Dear Friends,

Our Quaker faith and practice call us to bring into being the world we seek. Since 1943, the Friends Committee on National Legislation has carried on this witness of the Spirit through national advocacy. Your engagement, financial contributions, and spiritual support make this work possible.

Pursuing Peace with Justice in an Uncertain World

FCNL seeks peace, justice, and an earth restored by advocating for federal policy change in the areas identified by Friends through our bi-annual priorities setting process. Priorities for the 118th Congress are at fcnl.org/priorities. Updates on these, and other issues are at fcnl.org/issues.

Ceasefire Now in Israel and Palestine. FCNL has been advocating for a ceasefire since the October 7, 2023, Hamas attacks, condemning both Hamas's violence and Israel's indiscriminate response. Working in concert with more than 80 other organizations, our network has taken more than 500,000 actions to lobby, demonstrate, and minute their concerns. A February 2024 New York Times article highlighted FCNL's efforts to counter political spending with "people power" to support a ceasefire, de-escalation, and humanitarian aid in Gaza.

Help Millions of Children Escape Poverty. At the height of the pandemic, Congress expanded the Child Tax Credit, reducing child poverty by more than 40 percent. Since that legislation expired, child poverty in the U.S. has rebounded to high levels. FCNL is integral to lobbying efforts to revive the expanded Child Tax Credit, with the potential to help 16 million children. The Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act (H.R. 7024) passed the House in early 2024 and moves to the Senate, where our advocacy continues.

Heal the Harms of Nuclear Testing. FCNL has partnered with communities most affected by U.S. nuclear testing to advocate for an extended and expanded Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA). Congress needs to act before the RECA program expires in 2024.

Support Truth and Healing on Indian Boarding Schools. FCNL is supporting the formation of a formal commission to investigate the horrific past and impact of the 367 federally sponsored institutions run by religious groups that existed until the 1960s. At our 2024 Spring Lobby Weekend, more than 300 young adults lobbied for passage of the Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act.



▲ A Spring Lobby Weekend participant poses with her hand-drawn poster, made during the Art and Advocacy workshop, taught by staff from Friends Place. Photo by DAGFOTO/FCNL.



◀ West Wing's Bradley Whitford, center, joined FCNL's Bridget Moix and Odeliya Mater on the Hill, lobbying the offices of Senator Van Hollen and Murphy for a ceasefire in Gaza and to resume funding of UNRWA. Photo by Eric Bond/FCNL.

Nationwide Advocacy & Radical Hospitality

Our conviction that there is that of God in every person leads us to advance this work through a focus on relationship: among advocates, Friends, and FCNL staff and with decision-makers. We foster a community that can engage amid conflict, uplift each other, and find creative ways to make change in the face of the many crises in our world.

The knowledgeable, passionate advocates in our network live in all corners of the country. We now have more than 130 **Advocacy Teams** across 47 states. Our 2023 campaign focused on investing in conflict and atrocities prevention programs. The Teams' efforts culminated at November's Quaker Public Policy Institute, where participants logged more than 120 lobby visits in two days. In 2024, Teams are lobbying for reductions in Pentagon spending. See fcnl.org/teams.

Friends Place on Capitol Hill. This guest house and hospitality center on Capitol Hill hosted 94 groups, totaling 1,758 guests, between July 2022 and June 2023. This total includes more than 400 migrants bussed from the southern border, whom FCNL hosted as a partner of the Migrant Solidarity Mutual Aid Network. Friends Place also anchors FCNL's engagement with the D.C. community and offers advocacy programming. More at friendsplacedc.org.

Charting a Course Toward the World We Seek

Creating the world we seek begins with our own transformation. As FCNL builds its influence on national policy, we also focus on the patterns and practices of our own community. Our new **strategic plan** for 2024–2028 focuses on both areas. It calls on FCNL to strengthen its nonpartisan influence as a leading faith advocacy organization, foster beloved community, engage new people in advocacy work, and become better equipped to meet the challenges ahead. More at fcnl.org/strategicplan.

A key part of this plan is the continued **integration of anti-racism, anti-bias, justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion** (AJEDI) into our work. We are building skills and structures for listening, clearness, and restorative practices to embed these principles throughout FCNL. This work allows us to better align the experience of people in our community with the values we hold.

These efforts are, as always, guided by Spirit and by the leadings of you and others who give of their time, resources, and talent. The spiritual depth of this work was evident in the year-long process of developing new policy guidance around reproductive health care and abortion (see fcnl.org/ReproductiveHealthPolicy).

Abortion had been named as a “challenge” to Friends that FCNL took no position on. More than 300 Friends meetings, churches, and other groups gave input, representing many perspectives. The revised statement names differences among Quakers, supports individual choice and equitable access for healthcare decisions, recognizes the sanctity of human life, and opposes the criminalization of abortion services.

Thank you, Friends, for all the ways that you participate in this work to build a better world.

In peace,

Michael Fuson

Clerk, FCNL General Committee
Granville Friends Meeting
Lake Erie Yearly Meeting