

**Report from FCNL Representative to PFYM 2017 Annual Sessions/PFF Annual Meeting**  
Exploring Collective Policy Advocacy

Opportunities to discuss policy and legislative advocacy will be available on Saturday, March 11, at the retreat. FCNL will have a literature table and Kavita Hardy, an Advocacy Fellow from FCNL, will be available to share with Friends FCNL advocacy resources. There will be continuing conversations during lunch for those interested in more information. In addition, there will be an “FCNL and Other Advocacy Share and Show” workshop from 3:30 – 4:30 pm. The workshop will 1) share what advocacy efforts Friends are doing in their meetings and communities; and 2) offer strategies for strengthening our capacity for collective advocacy on peace and social justice concerns.

Friends Committee on National Legislation Conference Report  
Spirit-Led Action Annual Meeting November 2016  
Submitted by Jan Schmidt

Introduction: The meeting was held in Washington, DC, November 10 – 13, 2016. Being held two days after the unexpected election results, it was healing to be Friends from across the country. The banner in the meeting room was “Love Thy Neighbor, (No Exceptions).” It was a constant reminder of what our Quaker faith expects of us . . . but it is challenging! We had many times, both scheduled meetings for worship and informally during business discernment, to worship together and share our spirit and Light.

Policy: The conference provided many opportunities to discuss the policy focus for the next two years as well as the work of staff on specific policy issues. After the discernment of meetings across the country, and of the policy committee and staff, the policy committee presented a one page list of policy priorities and a booklet that further defines the policies. After much discussion, few changes were made. A minute on sexism was approved as well. Looking inward at our own corporate and individual behavior was integral to the policy decision-making process.

FCNL and Meeting: The FCNL General Committee had the opportunity to learn more about the work of other committees and activities during two workshop sessions. One of the workshops focused on “Ways to Bring FCNL to Your Meeting”. There were five points that were discussed: 1) Throw a monthly letter-writing party; 2) Invite a Visiting Friends to your meeting and/or become a Visiting Friend; 3) Hold a study group or potluck to discuss policy issues; 4) Host an Advocacy Workshop and lobby in-district; 5) Start an FCNL Advocacy Team. In addition, FCNL requests both corporate and individual donations to support its enormous agenda, both policy and a safe place for people with opposite agendas to come together.

Finance: A second workshop focused on the work of the Finance Committee. FCNL, the lobbying arm, and the FCNL Education Fund, a nonprofit charitable research organization, have separate budgets and boards, but overlapping staff and some shared board members. The budget process is complicated and forward thinking. The organizations appear to be financially stable for the coming years. The Capital Campaign to raise \$15 million dollars is close to reaching its goal. It will fund new programs and the renovation of the new building adjacent to the FCNL office building.

NC Delegation: The thirteen people attending the Conference from North Carolina met together as a team twice and also lobbied together with staff from both Senator Burr and Senator Tillis' offices. In addition, people from the team had appointments with the staff of their congressional representative. Each state group lobbied their elected officials. In all there were about 180 lobby visits in just a few hours.

Advocacy Team: The Advocacy Team Leadership Workshop provided opportunity to learn what other advocacy teams across the country found effective in successful collaboration among team members and strategies in influencing legislators.

Conclusion: FCNL is the largest and oldest faith-based lobby organization in Washington DC. Our FCNL Vision is "We seek a world free of war and the threat of war; We seek a society with equity and justice for all; We seek a community where every person's potential may be fulfilled; and We seek an earth restored." FCNL has 73 years of successes in bringing Quaker faith, values, testimonies and discernment to the legislative process. FCNL successes come from its integrity, persistence, effectiveness and grassroots advocacy. Many of the people who attended the conference having been dedicated to the organizations for years. They provide history and strength to the mission and successes of the organization.