

Report on Friends Committee on National Legislation

For Subcommittee on Benevolences, CHFM. May, 2021.

Submitted by Nancy Milio, Member, General Comm, FCNL

The Friends Committee on National Legislation [FCNL] is a nonprofit Quaker lobbying organization [501c4, donations not tax deductible]. The FCNL Education Fund [FCNLEF] is a nonprofit educational organization [501c3, donations tax deductible]. The annual revenues of about \$6mil are donated 2/3s to FCNLEF, 1/3 to FCNL. This ratio is increasing and poses a financial strain on the lobbying effort of FCNL, which therefore asks donors to contribute whenever possible to FCNL rather than to the tax deductible FCNLEF.

Finances have been maintained despite COVID19 retrenchment in the economy. Precise FTEs are not available, but are about 36.

Like virtually all organizations during the pandemic, FCNL has had to reconfigure itself to carry on its work. Accordingly, it has:

- Used Zoom to conduct its lobbying, during which staff work from home primarily. This more digital approach to lobbying has added to the move toward developing more fully the online content and usability of its website. It now has a very extensive, deep resource to allow informed contact with members of Congress, their staffs, their policy expertise, legislative content, talking points, and more.
- FCNL Advocacy Teams have likewise continued lobbying with their delegations via Zoom. Since the shutdown began in March, 2020, more than 3600 advocates made about 1000 virtual lobby visits in the succeeding 12 months. The first quarter of 2021 showed the highest number of constituent visits and individuals ever.

In response to the stark awakening by the country to racial injustice during the summer, FCNL ramped up its internal efforts toward inclusion by contracting with a Black woman led consultancy [Freedom Road] to establish a year long Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion program at FCNL. This involved monthly Zoom meetings of the General Committee led by the consults on DEI, leading up to the Annual Meeting in November, which for the first time was held on Zoom. Zoom allowed the largest attendance ever, at over 700.

FCNL awarded its Justice honor to Rep. Deb Haaland, before she was nominated as the first indigenous Secretary of Interior, which includes the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Bureau of Land Management. This was an especially momentous timing for FCNL since it has been the only non-indigenous organization in partnership with Indian groups advocating for Native American rights and interests for more than 75 years.

FCNL won 11 DeRose-Hinkhouse Awards for 2020 from the Religion Communicators Council, which recognizes excellence in religious communications public relations.

FCNL now has four properties under its management, including its LEED awarded [highest environmentally-friendly] headquarters. Namely, the Welcome Center, used for Congressional briefings as well as weekly worship; an adjacent apartment building, which was a bequest renovated for the Friend in Washington program housing shortterm "weighty" Quakers and staff offices; and the former William Penn House, a kind of Quaker hostel, now remodeled as a training center for use by FCNL and other non-profits. It is newly named Friends Place on Capitol Hill, a 501c3, managed by FCNLEF. The name change resulted from acknowledgment of William Penn as an enslaver. The underlying aim of Friends Place is to reveal and deal with white supremacy/racism within Quakerism and the nation.

A major staff change will occur beginning July 1. The General Secretary, Diane Randall, will leave FCNL. A search committee has been formed and will announce its selection at the next Annual Meeting in Nov. 2021. In addition, the lobbyist for Nuclear Disarmament & Pentagon Spending, Anthony Wier, left to take a new position as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for International Security and Non-proliferation.