

Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting
Sixth Annual Sessions, Fourth Month 2021

Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) Report

Submitted by Lizzie Biddle to PFYM annual sessions, April 10, 2021

FCNL's most recent event was its annual Spring Lobby weekend, March 20-22, held for young adults. More than 500 advocates joined virtually learning and engaging with each other and powerful speakers about this year's policy ask: passing meaningful reforms including the [George Floyd Justice in Policing Act \(H.R. 1280\)](#). Check-out highlights, including the opening key-note from Sen. Cory Booker and more information [here](#). Join Spring Lobby weekends in advocating for the passage of this critical legislation by [sending an email](#) to your Senators right now.

FCNL's largest annual session is known as - Annual Meeting - was held November, 13-17, 2020. Over 800 Friends and friends of Friends, the largest number of attendees ever, gathered simultaneously, on devices all over the country.

As an attendee, like other FCNL Annual Meetings, I found this year's session fruitful, inspiring, and spiritually renewing. The theme *Fierce Love*, felt particularly relevant after a year of reckoning on a variety of fronts including the collective facing of long-standing racial injustice, the spotlight on our crumbling health infrastructure and broken economic system, and the deeply divided electorate leading up to an incredibly contentious election.

During the business sessions, the General Committee approved powerful, prophetic Legislative Priorities for the 117th Congress ([read them here](#)), committee reports, and updates to the FCNL by-laws. As a reminder, the year-long process of discerning and developing the Legislative Priorities involves engaging Friends meetings & churches all over the country to submit their top priorities for FCNL's collective advocacy efforts. Over 200 Friends' communities participated. FCNL's Policy Committee made up of individuals from across the spectrum of Quakers, then, worshipfully and diligently compile the responses into the two-page document. The final priorities come before the General Committee for approval at the annual sessions. You can read the full, longer policy statement, [here](#), last updated in 2019.

Over the last several years, FCNL has taken a multi-pronged approach to address issues on diversity, equity, and inclusion. FCNL staff, Executive Committee & General Committee members have engaged with [Freedom Road](#), a faith-based consulting group committed to helping organizations perform justice work more justly. Freedom Road, Founder and Director, Rev. Lisa Sharon Harper presented at the Nov. annual sessions (watch her presentation [here](#)). Additionally, Annual Meeting attendees committed to a [community agreement](#) developed by FCNL Executive Committee to guide our time together.

The Quaker Public Policy Institute followed the Annual Meeting sessions. The advocacy focus was on the [George Floyd Justice in Policing Act](#) (H.R.7120/S.3912). Roughly seventeen North Carolinians joined two phone calls with the legislative staff of Senators Burr & Tillis. Smaller groups engaged in conversations with congressional representatives and their staff. While both

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Senators and many of our congressional representatives have unilaterally supported a Republican counterpart the JUSTICE Act, staffers were respectful and open to hearing concerns that the JUSTICE Act does not go far enough.

A benefit to having the entire weekend be virtual is the speeches were recorded and are available for anyone to watch! The full list of videos and additional highlights are [here](#) - on FCNL's website: <https://www.fcnl.org/updates/fierce-love-annual-meeting-2020-27>

Ways to get involved with FCNL and engage your community:

- Friends are encouraged to continue to call and lobby our two Senators, Burr & Tillis and get with other Friends and friends of Friends to engage your representative - FCNL's website has a host of supports - [you too can lobby!](#)
- Join (or start) a local [Advocacy Team](#)
- Participate in FCNL's [Thursday With Friends](#) series, a brief, monthly conversation engaging Friends on our faith and issues of justice
- [Sign-up](#) for FCNL's well-crafted, timely emails including a weekly digest of the happenings in Washington, D.C.
- Make a [financial gift](#) to support FCNL's work toward a more just and equitable world.

In peace & light,

Lizzie Biddle
March, 26, 2021