



Friends Committee
on National Legislation
Lobbying with Quakers

FY 2018—2022 FORWARD PLAN

Years of
Resilient
Growth

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FY 2018–2022 FORWARD PLAN

Years of Resilient Growth

"... we boldly venture forth, rooted in God's love, grounded in Quaker faith and practice, and guided in Light."

— Diane E. Randall, fourth FCNL general secretary (2011-2021)

Introduction

In approving the FY 2018-2022 Forward Plan, the FCNL General Committee laid out its strategic direction:

“Over the next five years, FCNL will take bold steps to transform national policy discourse and decision-making. FCNL will build political will for legislation and public policy change that reflects FCNL’s legislative priorities. FCNL’s relentless advocacy on Capitol Hill and in congressional districts throughout the country will strengthen constituent voices and offer a compelling narrative for peace and social justice, empowering civil dialogue for policy change by Congress. This strategic direction will require a bigger presence for FCNL—in the media, on Capitol Hill, and in congressional districts across the country. It will require the vital support of Quakers and all people who share our vision and mission.”

This report highlights the significant activities that FCNL undertook to follow this strategic direction and its progress in implementing the organizational priorities in the FY 2018-2022 Forward Plan.

Context

In reporting our progress during the Forward Plan, it is essential to highlight the external political and social environments we operated under:

- There were two presidents during this period: Donald J. Trump (Republican) and Joseph R. Biden (Democrat).
- There were three sessions of Congress during this period: the 115th (2017–2018), the 116th (2019–2020), and the 117th (2021–2022).
- Republicans controlled Congress and the White House during the 115th Congress. The White House and the Senate were controlled by Republicans, and the House of Representatives was controlled by Democrats in the 116th Congress. During the 117th Congress, Democrats held the White House, and the House of Representatives and the Senate was split 50-50.
- Although partisanship has been a constant in United States politics, the Trump administration further polarized the country. It emboldened extremist white nationalist movements, leading to the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the US Capitol.
- Ongoing threats to elections, a bedrock of our democracy, further weakened our democratic system of government.
- George Floyd’s killing in 2020 further elevated the Black Lives Matter Movement and increased public awareness of systemic racism and the influence of white supremacy on society and US policies.
- The COVID-19 pandemic killed millions, wreaked havoc on the economy, and laid bare the realities of economic inequality in our country and world.
- U.S. militarism persisted, fueling endless wars, while terrorism and authoritarianism continued to rise globally.
- Social media and communications technology’s influence continued to expand and were used as tools to spread disinformation and promote instability, as well as positive messages.
- Nonviolent people-power movements continued to challenge oppression, war, and injustice around the globe, sharing techniques and resources internationally.
- The impacts of climate change continued to worsen and were felt more widely worldwide, giving rise to more youth-led climate movements.

The Five Priorities of the Forward Plan

- **Change Public Policies.**
Advance policies for the public good effectively through federal legislation.
- **Strengthen FCNL's Strategic Advocacy Network.**
Persistent grassroots advocates gain the attention of members of Congress; they open doors for FCNL lobbyists on Capitol Hill.
- **Expand Media, Marketing, and Communications.**
Effective communications are key to changing civil discourse, shaping the public narrative, and advancing national policies for the public good.
- **Build Relationships between FCNL and the Religious Society of Friends.**
FCNL is committed to Friends' faith and practice, encouraging full participation in FCNL by Quakers across the United States.
- **Ensure Organizational Sustainability.**
FCNL's long-term viability requires a fiscally healthy organization grounded in the present as it plans for the future.

Overall Assessment

The FY 2018-FY 2022 Forward Plan transformed the Friends Committee on National Legislation into a bigger, more resilient, and effective lobbying organization that continually innovates to meet challenges while remaining grounded in Quaker faith and practice.

Initially, the Forward Plan did not lay out benchmarks to measure our progress. We had to rely on external data (like email open rates) to measure our performance. Today, we have enough critical internal benchmarks to compare our progress annually.

FCNL was often referred to as Capitol Hill's best-kept lobbying secret, but that is no longer true today. While we are not yet a household name, journalists now call our lobbyists for analysis and comments on our issues. Faith groups rely on our ability to harness our grassroots network. Partners, including those from conservative circles, seek us out for our ability to talk to both sides of the aisle. Publishers now recognize the importance of FCNL's advocacy work and have requested chapters for inclusion in Quaker textbooks.

The following sections highlight FCNL's achievements based on the five priorities that the General Committee approved in 2017.

Priority: Change Public Policies

- Despite political gridlock in Congress, FCNL and its partners successfully lobbied for at least 18 bills that were signed into law by either President Trump or President Biden.
- FCNL was more successful in lobbying the House of Representatives to pass bills we supported than in the Senate. For this period, the House passed 35 bills we lobbied for.
- Many of these bills were first introduced in earlier sessions of Congress but did not pass until several sessions later, such as the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act (P.L. 115-441). Three bills that impacted Native American women and girls were also passed: Savanna’s Act (P.L. 116-165), the Not Invisible Act (P.L. 116-166), and the Violence Against Women Act with strong tribal provisions, which passed as part of the 2022 Consolidated Appropriations Act (P.L. 117-103).
- The period also marked the first time Congress passed a War Powers Resolution (S.J. 68) requiring the removal of U.S. troops from a conflict (in this case, Yemen), but President Trump vetoed it.
- FCNL supported all the COVID-19-related bills Congress passed in response to the pandemic, which included an increase in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, enhanced unemployment insurance, and emergency paid family leave. These were critical temporary benefits.
- FCNL also supported the American Rescue Plan (P.L. 117-2), which temporarily expanded the Child Tax Credit and the Earned Income Tax Credit. While they expired at the end of 2021, these tax credits benefited millions of working families and dramatically cut child poverty.
- The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (P.L. 117-58) allocated \$11 billion for Indian Country, the largest single investment tribal nations have seen in US history, including \$2 billion to expand broadband access on tribal lands. It also gave \$39 billion for public transit, the most significant such investment by the government, and billions of dollars towards environmental justice.
- Congress passed, and President Trump signed the FIRST STEP Act (P.L. 115-391) in December 2018. This legislation included key sentencing reform provisions that were the focus of the 2016 Advocacy Teams and our 2016 Annual Meeting/QPPI ask.
- Although it was not passed until one month after the Forward Plan ended, FCNL lobbied to pass the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 (P.L. 117-169). Its climate and energy provisions, worth \$369 billion, are the most significant government investment in addressing the climate change crisis.

Bills Signed into Law

- Eli Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act (P.L. 115-441)
- First Step Act of 2018 (P.L. 115-391)
- Juvenile Justice Reform Act (P.L. 115-385)
- Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (P.L. 115-334)
- Additional Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Act, 2019 (P.L. 116-20)
- Global Fragility Act (P.L. 116-94)
- Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act (P.L. 116-123)
- Families First Coronavirus Response Act (P.L. 116-127)
- Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (P.L. 116-136)
- Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act (P.L. 116-139)
- Savanna's Act (P.L. 116-165)
- Not Invisible Act (P.L. 116-166)
- 2021 Consolidated Appropriations Act (P.L. 116-260) with a SNAP benefit increase
- American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (P.L. 117-2)
- Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (P.L. 117-58)
- 2022 Consolidated Appropriations Act (P.L. 117-103) with VAWA reauthorization
- Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA) (P.L. 117-139)
- Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 (P.L. 117-169)

Priority: Strengthen FCNL’s Strategic Advocacy Network

- Constituents conducted 4,372 lobby visits from FY 2018 to FY 2022, an average of 874 lobby visits annually. There were more Senate visits (2,241) compared to House visits (2131).
- There was an average of 3,303 constituents participating annually in lobby visits to their members of Congress for these five years—whether in the U.S. Capitol, their state, or district offices.
- In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, the constituent network quickly and effectively pivoted to lobbying virtually. The most constituents lobbying on record (3,803) occurred during FY 2021.
- FCNL became a leader in organizing and successfully running virtual “fly-in” lobby days, empowering more than 1,600 people to participate in more than 700 virtual lobby visits during Spring Lobby Weekend and Quaker Public Policy Institute events in 2020 and 2021.
- Staff also conducted lobby visits, but the number of visits to Democrats was well ahead of visits to Republican members of Congress. This trend is similar to the constituents’ lobby visits.
- 163 Advocacy Teams, or groups of Friends and like-minded local activists, were organized in 44 states. Teams in 20 states, such as Pennsylvania and California, are starting to coordinate their work in the state and reach more members of Congress.
- These grassroots advocates engaged their community and members of Congress by writing letters to the editor in their local papers. During the Forward Plan period, 609 letters to their editor (excluding guest articles) were published in local newspapers.

- Online actions (phone calls, emails, or letters to legislators) totaled 308,582 during this period. These actions come from 97,917 online constituents. For perspective, FY 2018 saw 8,577 constituents participate in 15,450 online actions, and this rose to 21,348 constituents participating in 91,145 online actions in FY 2022.
- In 2020, FCNL shifted from the antiquated CapWiz system to Quorum, a more robust platform to reach out to Congress. Quorum also enables FCNL's lobbyists to access constituent lobby reports, strengthening their overall advocacy.
- Of the five Spring Lobby Weekend training conducted, three topics focused on immigration issues, one on climate change and another on police reform. A total of 1,937 young adults, most still in college, participated in Spring Lobby Weekend. The participants are often very diverse. During the 2022 Spring Lobby Weekend, 57% of the participants were people of color.
- There were five cohorts of Advocacy Corps organizers, totaling 98 college students or recent graduates. They organized their local communities on such issues as police militarization, ending gun violence, reforming immigration laws, and environmental justice.
- There were 25 summer interns during this period; no summer interns were accepted in 2020 due to the pandemic. There were 45 participants in the Program Assistants Program (formerly the Young Fellows Program).

Priority: Expand Media, Marketing, and Communications

- Media impressions grew from 63,649,946 in 2018 to 73,751,420 in 2022. There were large increases over the years, but ongoing media consolidation has affected this growth.
- Religion News Service, the only agency of its kind, agreed to publish a monthly column by the FCNL general secretary.
- Beginning in 2018, FCNL carried out multiple radio media tours (RMT) each year. During this time, we have reached more than 172,371,300 listeners in all 50 states across countless radio stations. The advertising equivalent of this exposure is in excess of \$1,340,925 while costing FCNL less than \$25,000 annually.
- During this period, FCNL released 14 radio public service announcements (PSAs), which were aired by 13,776 radio stations and reached an estimated 96,000,000 listeners. The advertising equivalent of this exposure is \$695,475. The total cost of the PSAs is \$63,700.
- FCNL placed at least two advertisements in each issue of the major Quaker magazines: Friends Journal and Western Friends.
- The FCNL Brand Standards guide was revised in 2020, and in 2021, it was again changed to include Friends Place. This ensures that FCNL has a unified look, feel, and visual language in all its print and digital platforms.
- The frequency of the Washington Newsletter was stabilized at six times annually (it had been fluctuating in previous years). Circulation per issue grew from 25,000 in 2018 to 30,000 in 2022. It is now printed using vegetable ink on either recycled or Forest Stewardship Council-certified paper in facilities that use renewable energy.
- At least six digital newsletters were published either monthly or weekly during this period. This included This Week in the World and the monthlies, Inside the Greenhouse, the Native American Legislative Update, Quaker Contacts Newsletter, and the Advocacy Teams Newsletter. Their circulations grew organically, and their open rates were higher than industry standards.
- Six books were published: *Prophetic, Persistent, Powerful: Working for the World We Seek 1943-2018*, *The World We Seek: A Statement of Legislative Policy*, *A Theological Perspective on Quaker Lobbying* (Marge Abbott), *Quakers: A Quick Guide* (Carl Abbott), *Friends Place: Promoting Civic Engagement* (Carl Abbot), and *Leading with Faith, Hope, and Love*.

- In order to be in regular contact with donors and supporters during the COVID-19 pandemic, we launched the biweekly Thursdays with Friends on Zoom. It ran for 39 episodes.
- Chapters on FCNL's work were published in two major books: *The Future of Quaker Peacemaking* (Friends Association for Higher Education) and *The Quaker World* (Routledge).
- The FCNL.org website was redesigned by 2020, and a new website for Friends Place on Capitol Hill was launched in 2021. FCNL.org had 3,643,502 unique page views over five years. Unique page views jumped to 705,405 in 2020 with the redesigned site, and by the end of FY 2022, there were 923,925 unique page views.
- The new website resulted in a Google grant that gives FCNL \$10,000 monthly for online search ads if FCNL meets its benchmarks.
- Email remains the major communications platform for FCNL, and its use has continued to grow in the last five years. There were 2,740 unique mailings (excluding recurring emails like a welcome series), and 16,865,670 emails were sent. A third (32%) of these emails consisted of action alerts, and 15% were fundraising emails.
- After cleaning up the email list and testing various platforms to acquire new emails, FCNL started a new program of email acquisitions in FY 2021. In three campaigns alone that year, we acquired 35,582 new email addresses through email partners or Facebook. Each address costs us \$1.61 to acquire, which is much cheaper than initially estimated (\$2.50 per name).
- For the first time, a major assessment of FCNL's social media work was conducted in 2020. By the end of FY 2022, followers and likes had grown to 15,732 on Twitter, 15,962 on Facebook, and 2,942 on Instagram. A new position was also created to handle FCNL's social media work.
- We installed land acknowledgment plaques in all the FCNL buildings, on the website, and in all major publications. They honor the Nacotchtank tribe on whose lands FCNL's buildings stand.
- The quality of FCNL's communications work was recognized externally through the annual DeRose-Hinkhouse Awards by the Religion Communicators Council. Since 2019, FCNL has won 36 DeRose-Hinkhouse Awards in recognition of the excellence of its communications and public relations work.

Priority: Build Relationships between FCNL and the Religious Society of Friends

- The number of active Quakers (constituents who identified as Quakers and have advocated, donated, volunteered, or participated in an FCNL event in the last three years) in the FCNL database grew from 5,350 in 2018 to 6,801 in mid-2022.
- Quaker meetings and churches continue to be deeply involved in setting FCNL’s legislative priorities. There were 279 submissions in 2018, 208 in 2020, and 263 in 2022 (229 from groups and 34 from individuals).
- There were 11 Friends in Washington Program participants during this period. Volunteers live in the newly renovated Friend in Washington apartment and share their experiences and expertise. The program was interrupted by the pandemic.
- Virtual and in-person visits to Yearly meetings reached 129 in the last five years, and FCNL was featured in 17 of their plenaries. Similar visits to monthly meetings totaled 188 in the same period.
- During the pandemic, FCNL started a virtual Quaker Changemaker series. It averaged 85 participants in each event.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Quaker Welcome Center, inaugurated in November 2017, moved its weekly silent reflection every Wednesday to online via Zoom. The shift from an in-person to a virtual silent reflection enabled FCNL to reach out to more Quakers.

Priority: Ensure Organizational Sustainability

- FCNL continued to evolve institutionally. In addition to the existing Associate General Secretaries Team (AGST), a Senior Leadership Team (SLT) was created in 2020. Several functions of the AGST were transferred to the SLT.
- Toward the end of the Forward Plan, several departments were consolidated into two: Policy and Advocacy (Domestic Policy + Foreign Policy + Strategic Advocacy) and Community & Culture (Quaker Leadership + Friends Place + Young Adults).
- FCNL grew from 47 staff positions in FY 2018 to 67 in FY 2022. The staff has slowly become more diverse. Based on a 2022 survey, 62% of FCNL staff identified as white, 23% as African American, 6% as Hispanic, and 4% each as Asian, Native American, or Middle Eastern.
- Annual fund income (foundation, individual donors, meetings, and churches) grew by 45% from \$4,707,990 in 2018 to \$6,824,650 in 2022. This growth represents a 15% increase in individual donors for the five-year period, which translates into a 55.6% revenue growth. Major gifts grew 72%, from \$2,475,551 in FY 2018 to \$4,259,237 in FY 2022.
- With a new in-house foundation relations program, FCNL and FCNL Education Fund have averaged \$878,054 annually in foundation income, compared to the FY 2013–2017 annual average of \$446,629.
- We have added more than \$16 million in new planned gifts (life income gifts and bequest intentions) to the planned giving pipeline to support the future of FCNL, bringing the total in expected future planned gifts to just over \$35 million.
- The combined expenses of FCNL and FCNL Education Fund grew from \$7,021,829 in FY 2018 to \$9,150,329 in FY 2022. While operating revenues also increased, the organization dipped into its reserves to fund the investments in staff and program expansions and the repairs to Friends Place. Reserves have remained healthy in the last five years and well above the 25% base established by the General Committee.
- The endowment balances of FCNL Education Fund, a 501c(3) organization, grew from \$6,060,042 in FY 2018 to \$10,245,726 in FY 2021. (FY 2022 data was not available as of press time). The endowment balances of FCNL, a 501c(4) organization, also grew from \$925,003 in FY 2018 to \$1,410,571 in FY 2021.
- The FCNL building on 245 2nd Street was granted Platinum LEED Status in 2020, the highest award by the United States Green Building Council’s Leadership in Energy and Environment Design (LEED) certification program. Previously, it was granted Silver LEED, making it the first such building on Capitol Hill.
- In 2019, FCNL installed 27 solar panels on top of the Quaker Welcome Center. By 2020, it generated 8.9-megawatt hours annually or the equivalent of providing electricity to power 8,000 homes for one hour.
- FCNL Education Fund assumed management and governance of William Penn House, now renamed Friends Place on Capitol Hill, in September 2019. The same green building principles used in renovating the FCNL building and the Quaker Welcome Center were also used in Friends Place. Most repairs were done during the COVID-19 pandemic, and Friends Place opened for business in January 2022.

Internal Changes

While strategic plans can never anticipate all events that would impact it, there were several internal changes that FCNL successfully handled during the Forward Plan.

In 2019, FCNL was handed a gift when the board of directors of William Penn House asked the FCNL Education Fund to assume management and control over the house. FCNL Education Fund decided to operate it as a separate 501c(3) nonprofit but renamed it Friends Place on Capitol Hill (www.friendsplacedc.org). FCNL spent nearly \$2 million for major repairs to the century-old building and began work to integrate it with its programs.

Just before the pandemic hit, and motivated by increased public awareness of systemic racism, FCNL hired a consultant to help it better address race issues. FCNL rewrote its diversity statement, now called Statement on Anti-Racism, Anti-Bias, Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, and reiterated its commitment to being an anti-racist organization.

Towards the end of the Forward Plan, Diane Randall retired and was replaced by Bridget Moix as the FCNL general secretary in early 2022.

It is to the credit of the governors and staff that FCNL was able to absorb these major changes into its regular program of work. However, it also highlighted the lack of a decision process in the Forward Plan that would make it more resilient in adjusting to major internal and external changes. However, the prudent management of the investments that donors and supporters have made to the Forward Plan enabled FCNL to achieve its strategic goals—and more—in the last five years.

As FCNL maps out its journey in the next five years, the FY 2024–2028 FCNL Strategic Plan stands on the shoulders of significant accomplishments and lessons achieved during the FY 2018-2022 Forward Plan. The last five years have transformed the Friends Committee on National Legislation into a bigger, more resilient, and effective lobbying organization that continually innovates to meet challenges while remaining grounded in Quaker faith and practice.

“We ought to be willing to work for causes which will not be won now, but cannot be won in the future unless the goals are staked out now and worked for energetically over a period of time.”

— E. Raymond Wilson
First FCNL general secretary
(1943-1961)



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