



WASHINGTON NEWSLETTER

FRIENDS COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL LEGISLATION

DECEMBER 2016

NO. 778

A New Political Paradigm

The 2016 election manifested the deep political and social divisions in our country, revealing stark differences in voters' hopes for the future. We see anger, fear, despair, resignation, sadness, and indifference across the political spectrum. Some people are jubilant at the results of the election, looking for a return to a "law and order" leader. Many others are frightened of how the president-elect's words and decisions will affect them. People across the world wonder how Mr. Trump's policies will affect the global challenges of climate change, nuclear disarmament, peace, and human security. And far too many of our fellow citizens have given up believing that elected leaders or government can make the world better.

We will continue to be powerful, persistent, and prophetic truth-tellers in the halls of power.

Mr. Trump is an untested political leader whose business operations raise ethical dilemmas. Many of his campaign statements counter FCNL values and priorities. He has appointed advisors and named nominees whose public records demonstrate religious intolerance, racial discrimination, and white nationalism. Whether the authoritarian, xenophobic rallying of his political campaign will translate into governance will be determined in part by how the president-elect and his cabinet lead. But our country's next steps will also be influenced by Congress and the active engagement of those people who do not want to turn back time on the progress we have made for peace and civil rights.

We also have a new Congress whose leadership is pushing forward an agenda that would threaten health care for 22 million people, cut the programs

that currently keep tens of millions out of poverty, and expand the budget for war. FCNL's lobbyists in Washington and in our network across the country have strong relationships with lawmakers in both parties who are willing to push back against this agenda. It will require remaining focused and engaged, and we will need your help.

Amidst these political seismic shifts, FCNL's grounding as a Quaker lobby and our presence on Capitol Hill as a nonpartisan voice for peace and justice are needed now more than ever.

In the weeks and months ahead, we will continue to be powerful, persistent, and prophetic truth-tellers in the halls of power, working to advance the world we seek. We will uphold and move forward the priorities our governing General Committee set for us when they met in November (see pg. 6). We will recognize and affirm the many ways that people may be called to act for change — while remaining focused on our mission to work within our democratic system to influence national legislation.

We are under no illusions about the challenges ahead. The threats are real: to health care access, to protection from discrimination and violence, to our planet's well-being, and to programs that build peace in our communities and around the world.

And yet, we must be open to the opportunities that could come in this changing political landscape. New champions for peace and justice will emerge, and we must be attuned to recognize and support them. The voices of those elected officials who will work cooperatively will be essential. Although Congress can move very slowly, it is not stagnant. With FCNL's decades of experience in lobbying Congress, we are prepared to

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use all the approaches at our disposal to block bad policies and move good ones forward.

Strengthening Our Lobbying

As we look to the challenges ahead, three areas in particular will be important for us to draw on and continue to build in the coming months and years.

1) Effective lobbying by FCNL staff

How can we convince 51 senators to prevent repeal of the Affordable Care Act? Who are the champions who can stop a registry of Muslims in the United States from becoming a reality?

Our lobbyists work to ask and answer these kinds of questions. They are in congressional offices, learning about members' plans and concerns, strengthening existing relationships and building new ones. And they are developing strategies — internally and in partnership with the many coalitions we work with or lead — that give us the best chance of moving our priorities ahead. We will continue to build on our long history of successfully weighing in on congressional decisions.

2) Persistent advocacy by people across the country

Two days after the election, more than 300 FCNL constituents were in Washington, DC to urge

FCNL Advocacy Corps organizers are working in their communities to influence Congress on immigration reform. From left: Sitara Nath, Helen Montjoy-Venning, Gabriel Maupome-Ramirez, Brenda Luna Bravo.

Congress to act on sentencing reform. Just this month, more than 150 people lobbied with us in state and district offices to set the stage for action in 2017.

The 18 young adults in FCNL's Advocacy Corps brought 33 additional people into congressional offices in November alone, sharing stories and advocating for immigration reform. Their letters to the editor recently appeared in papers in Lafayette, LA; Corpus Christi, TX; Rome, GA; and Oklahoma City, OK.

In 34 communities, FCNL Advocacy Teams are supporting each other to work with their congressional delegations. Their efforts have led to at least 13 new cosponsors to criminal justice reform legislation this year, and the teams have built durable connections with their members of Congress through this persistent advocacy.

Our dedicated grassroots activists, trained and supported by FCNL staff, ensure that congressional offices regularly hear the voices of their constituents. Those voices will become even more critical in the months ahead. We encourage you to join us in advocacy. Find out how: fcnl.org/advocacy.

3) *Cultivating relationships for the long-term*

At a time where people are building walls, literal and metaphorical, FCNL's advocacy takes a different approach. We see each encounter with a member of Congress or their staff as a relationship-building opportunity – a chance to find points of connection that can encourage mutual respect, understanding, and openings for further conversation.

This kind of advocacy advances our policy goals, enabling FCNL lobbyists and advocates to meet with members of Congress that refuse to speak with our more partisan colleagues. This approach has helped us cultivate Republican champions committed to working on climate change. In Miami, FL, a constituent who had resisted meeting her representative because they couldn't possibly agree discovered a personal connection through their adult children – and she helped convince her representative to act.

This determination to speak with every member of Congress, regardless of party affiliation or position, is the essence of who we are as a Quaker lobby. We may disagree with a person's positions or actions, but we still recognize the spark of something divine in them. When we are able to, as the banner on FCNL's building says, “#LoveThyNeighbor (No Exceptions),” we find unexpected openings and opportunities both to advance our priorities and live our values.

Working for peace and justice in this new political paradigm requires determination and

engagement. “Success” may simply mean preventing the worst proposals from passing. We accept — some days more gracefully than others — that we can't control every step of the movement towards change.


As Executive Secretary Emeritus Ed Snyder wrote in 1993, “Cause and effect on matters of major national or international significance are nearly impossible to identify. Who can factor in mystery? synchronicity? amazing coincidence? the power of a cloud of witnesses? the moving of the Holy Spirit?”

And yet, we persevere, using the power endowed in our minds and hearts and bodies to act in a way that feels right in the depth of our being. We trust in that feeling, even if it doesn't line up neatly with our strategies. Ed goes on to say, “Friends have been in the middle of some of the major issues of our time, following the Light that is given us.” Even as we lay plans and schedule lobby visits, we also heed the prophetic aspects of our work.

More than two centuries after our country's founding, we are still figuring out how to live together with equality for all, not just some, and how to welcome those “yearning to be free.”

As his country stood on the brink of civil war, 150 years ago, President Abraham Lincoln spoke these words in his first inaugural address: “We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory will swell when again touched, as surely

they will be, by the better angels of our nature.”

The perspective of our history and these words speak to us across the years and give us strength for what's ahead. Today, we will work with every fiber of our beings to oppose violent and hateful ideas and actions. We will stand with those who are vulnerable and advocate tirelessly for policies that promote peace and justice. We will stay firmly grounded in our faith and in our common humanity and be touched by the better angels of our nature. 

The Washington Newsletter is a publication of the Friends Committee on National Legislation, a nonpartisan Quaker lobby in the public interest.



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—
Reprinting: Encouraged with credit
Cost: Free upon request
Frequency: Five to six newsletters per year

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When the Impossible Becomes Possible

When Legislative Director for Domestic Policy Amelia Kegan spoke to those gathered for FCNL's Annual Meeting in November, she offered hope and perspective on election results less than a week old. The following is an abridged version of her remarks. Read her speech and listen to a recording: fcnl.org/impossible-possible.

Washington is not an easy place to be right now. And that is why it makes sense for FCNL to be here. FCNL's work is a calling, and its magnetic pull cuts through pessimism, disillusionment, and partisanship. Our faith is not one of despair. It is of hope.

This past August, I sailed across the Atlantic Ocean. One night, unable to sleep, I walked the ship's deck. As I stood at 3 a.m. admiring the enormity of God's creation, the stars across the endless night sky, I couldn't help but feel small and insignificant.

My mind went to that passage in Mark, chapter 4 where Jesus and the disciples cross the Sea of Galilee in the midst of a giant storm. The wind and waves are overpowering their boat. Even these expert fishermen are afraid.

Through it all, Jesus lies asleep. The disciples, filled with anxiety and fear, wake him up, shouting "Teacher! Do you not care that we are perishing?" They believe they are dying, and the one with the power to save them doesn't seem to notice. Jesus wakes up, rebukes the wind, calms the seas, and says "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?"

We know that God can work through us to light up the path and the possibilities before us.

At its core, this has been a "disciples in the boat" election. We are facing killer storms, while those in power appear asleep.

I see older workers whose manufacturing jobs have disappeared. Instead of looking forward to retirement, many are relying on their kids to help pay the bills. They are crying out: "My sense of purpose and dignity is dying here, and you don't even seem to care. Is my life not valuable to you?"



I see immigrants whose children are locked away in detention centers, their families torn apart under an administration known as "deporter in chief": "Politicians talk about our broken immigration system but they aren't doing anything about it. We're dying here, and you don't even seem to care. Is my life not valuable to you?"

I see men and women of color whose communities are over-policed, over-incarcerated, and under-employed, crying out: "It doesn't matter if I put my hands up or my face down on the ground, cops keep shooting us, and you don't even seem to care. Is my life not valuable to you?"

In this moment, who better to help this country move forward in hope and healing than people who can affirm that there is that of God in everyone?

I want to return to the story of Jesus and the disciples in the boat for a moment, though. Because this election season hasn't just been about the disciples. It's also about Jesus in the boat. As constituents and voters, we have power together to rebuke the winds of structural oppression and the waves of systemic injustice. We have to take some responsibility for the ways that institutionalized racism, discrimination, and privilege seep into the oxygen of society, blighting our world and choking off our movement towards justice.

Walking away alive from a traffic stop should not be a privilege. Contesting wage theft without risking deportation should not be a privilege. These things should be cloaked in the invisibility of ordinariness.



WE'RE READY.

WE HAVE A LOT OF WORK TO DO IN 2017. SUPPORT OUR WORK IN THE NEW YEAR AT FCNL.ORG/READY

We are called to transform these privileges into universal norms. We are boldly stepping before our members of Congress and demanding action.

I don't deny that we have a tough road ahead of us. But I did not come to FCNL looking for easy roads and superficial wins. We are not lulled into that deceptive comfort of managed expectations. We know that God can work through us to light up the path and the possibilities before us.

One of my great passions in life is running long distances. My favorite distance is the 100 mile race. Every time I walk up to that start line, I question its feasibility. I've run 100 miles before. I know what it feels like, but still I can't wrap my head around it.

Sometimes, when I think about all the war and hate and suffering in this world and then think about that vision of the world we seek, I feel that same way.

Yet, who better than people of faith to boldly pursue a vision unseen but not unreal? Who better to demand and inspire our elected leaders to bring peace, to bring opportunity and justice, to restore our earth, than people of faith?

But this I can see. I can see getting to that next tree or the next mile. I can see another cosponsor on the Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act and signer to the Gibson climate resolution. But we won't stop there.

I can see Congress passing a first real step in criminal justice reform, finally marking some

acknowledgement that failed drug policies and racist attitudes have been buttressing up a mass incarceration system that dismantles families, damages communities, and destroys futures. But we won't stop there.

It may not be in the next four years, but in the distance, I can see Congress finally passing comprehensive, compassionate immigration reform. But we won't stop there.

I can see people throughout the country waking up their members of Congress, effectively sounding the alarm about the environmental crisis we're facing. I can see elected officials answering the growing outrage over our country's out-of-control influence of money in politics.

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Work Ahead in the 115th Congress

Meeting in Washington, DC just a few days after the election, FCNL's governing General Committee approved legislative priorities to guide our community's advocacy in the coming two years. These priorities are the result of widening circles of discernment that included input from hundreds of meetings and churches across the country, discernment by FCNL's Policy Committee, and consideration by the General Committee. Available online at fcnl.org/priorities.

Legislative Priorities

Approved by the FCNL General Committee November 13, 2016

The Friends Committee on National Legislation seeks to bring spiritual values and Friends' testimonies to bear on public policy decisions. FCNL solicited the views and concerns of Quaker meetings, churches, and organizations around the country to help discern the following priorities for our lobbying and public education work during the 115th Congress (2017-2018).

- » Promote peacebuilding, diplomacy, and the peaceful prevention and resolution of violent conflict with an emphasis on the Middle East.
- » Reduce military spending and armed interventions.
- » Promote nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.
- » Advance equitable criminal justice systems that eliminate mass incarceration. Support law-enforcement that is community-oriented and demilitarized.
- » Pursue policies that promote and respect the rights, safety, and dignity of all immigrants, refugees, and migrants.
- » Promote equitable access for all citizens to participation in the political process.
- » Promote policies that reduce economic inequality and poverty. Encourage fair compensation for workers and health care for all.
- » Work to end gun violence.
- » Witness and advocate on Native American concerns.
- » Advocate for sustainable solutions to climate disruption and its consequences.

In each priority FCNL and Friends are called on to identify, expose and work to eliminate institutional racism in order to promote genuine equality of opportunity and communities in which everyone can safely live, learn, work, worship, and love.

FCNL seeks to collaborate across the political spectrum to advance these priorities. FCNL's work will be based on legislative opportunities, specific expertise, leadings, and available resources. In addition, The World We Seek (FCNL's Policy Statement, fcnl.org/theworldweseek) gives FCNL the flexibility to respond to crises and to other important legislative opportunities, as Way opens.


Who better than people of faith to boldly pursue a vision unseen but not unreal?

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This is the path set before us. This is the road to the world we seek.

You are a part of this moment. You are a part of this history. Running 100 miles always tests my body and my spirit. There are inevitably moments I don't think I can go on. I'm nauseous, exhausted, and every step brings wrenching pain. My insecurities flame up, my doubts grow. Friends have seen me in these moments, and they ask me, why do you keep running these races?

My response is simple. It's who I am. Running is when I experience my greatest joys and deepest prayers. It's in those dark moments that I'm forced to lean on a power bigger than myself to get through, a God who can transform those moments of suffering into a renewed hope, a renewed life. And by continuing to put one foot in front of the other, sometimes, I get to witness the impossible become possible, and arrive at that 100 mile finish line.

FCNL's prophetic witness and faithful advocacy is also a part of who we are. And despite moments of pain and challenge, this is a calling, and we can't help but feel that pull back to the start line again and again. Because we know, reaching that finish line is possible and absolutely worth crossing. 



#LOVETHYNEIGHBOR (NO EXCEPTIONS)

As our country struggles with deep divisions, it becomes even more urgent to highlight the value we place in one another. Join the #LoveThyNeighbor campaign and shift the narrative.

Order your own banner or yard sign, print signs to share, and spread a message of love. Find out how: fcnl.org/lovethyneighbor



Staying Engaged in 2017

We have our work cut out for us to advance peace and justice. That's why your advocacy with FCNL is so important. For almost all of the issues we care about, Congress and the president have the power to dramatically change the landscape. They could solve problems — or create new ones.

What they do depends on what *we* do. Working with Congress can feel like a difficult way to make change. It's slow, there are lots of moving parts, and it can take many people's engagement to move policies. But, when Congress acts, even small changes can have huge effects.

1. Sign up for action alerts

Every week, FCNL considers the most important way you can use your voice as a constituent to shape policy. We send out action alerts when key votes are coming up, or when your member of Congress is particularly important on an issue. We'll provide you with a sample message you can send to Congress, or with a script you can use to make a phone call.

Subscribe to FCNL's email lists: fcnl.org/signup

2. Write letters to the editor

Publishing a letter to the editor that mentions your member of Congress by name is one of the best ways to get their attention from home. Here's your RAFT for writing letters to the editor:

- » Reference recent news.
- » Ask for action from your members of Congress.
- » Find facts that support your point of view.
- » Tie in your community.

Get tips on writing letters to the editor: fcnl.org/lte

3. Meet with your members of Congress

Of all congressional advocacy, face-to-face meetings are the most influential. Often, you'll meet with staff members several times before meeting directly with the member of Congress. That's great — staffers advise their bosses on sound policy and good politics, and they're often experts on a particular set of issues.

Get started with lobbying: fcnl.org/lobbying101

4. Join (or start) an Advocacy Team

Advocacy Teams make a long-term commitment to meet with their members of Congress, advocate through the media, and work with their communities for policy change. These groups of four to 40 people get advanced trainings and work closely with FCNL on strategies in their state and district.

Find out more: fcnl.org/advocacyteams

The New FCNL.org

Swing by our new website!



Standing with Standing Rock

Royce Gay of the Oglala Lakota Sioux Tribe (center left) met with Abby Schanfield (left) in Rep. Keith Ellison's (MN) office just days before the Obama administration halted the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Royce traveled from Standing Rock, ND to speak with legislators about sacred lands and protecting the waters. Linze Southwick (center right) from Fairfield Meeting (IN) accompanied Royce, and FCNL staff scheduled lobby visits to ensure members heard his perspective. Right: Sue Marcos, Baltimore Yearly Meeting Indian Affairs Committee.



First 100 Days *from page 12*

expect proposals to fund Medicaid and SNAP through block grants to the states rather than direct payment from the government for those who are eligible. As with welfare reform in the 1990s, this shift likely will make coverage less flexible to expand during economic downturns and cause assistance to vary widely from state to state.

We need to convince 51 senators to oppose these budget reconciliation bills. We need a majority of senators to stand up and clearly oppose any efforts to repeal the ACA without a concrete and responsible plan to replace it. And we need them to speak up in support of programs that provide low-income families access to a basic level of support and dignity.

Civil liberties and religious freedom

The demonization and dismissal of the entire Muslim religion goes against not only the policies

FCNL seeks to advance but the very essence of who we are as a community and as Quakers. Yet people under discussion for appointments in the Trump White House, including Steve Bannon and Michael Flynn, have expressed just such opinions.

We will speak out against any proposals that treat Muslims as an enemy group and continue to lead efforts for legislation, such as Rep. Don Beyer's Religious Freedom Act, that prohibit denying admission to the United States based on an individual's religion.

We are particularly concerned about efforts to cut off or restrict immigration from countries with majority Muslim populations and any attempt to create a list or registry of Muslims in the United States. We believe we have the votes to reject these proposals, but members of Congress need to hear — strongly and repeatedly — that we expect them to vigorously oppose religious tests and Islamophobia.

Immigration

Following President-elect Trump's campaign promises to crack down on immigration enforcement, we anticipate proposals in early 2017 that will adversely affect immigrants, including a push to further militarize border communities and to widen the criteria for who will be eligible for immediate detention and deportation.

Our work will be to keep attention on the need for comprehensive, compassionate reform even as we work to block the worst proposals put forward. Our 18 Advocacy Corps members will bring community stakeholders into congressional offices to demonstrate welcoming communities. Early and often, legislators need to be encouraged to speak out against detrimental proposals or initiatives that seek to divide us.

Already since the election, we are working to support a bipartisan proposal that would continue

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protection for undocumented young adults who have lived most of their lives in this country. We will continue to lift up and advocate for these kinds of compassionate immigration policies that can gain support from people of many ideologies.

Climate change

In the Trump administration, we expect to see proposals to reverse environmental regulations, such as the EPA's Clean Power Plan; to pull the U.S. out of the Paris climate agreement, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, and other international agreements; and allow the building of the Keystone XL pipeline.

Even recognizing that much of our work in the next two years will be defensive, we also see opportunities to advance positive legislation to encourage Congress to act on climate change. FCNL has developed strong relationships with House Republicans

who are committed to addressing climate change, and our lobbyists are working with bipartisan caucuses in both chambers of Congress who are looking for a way forward on these issues.

Pentagon spending

The incoming administration and congressional leaders have already announced plans to increase Pentagon spending beyond the \$600 billion that has been provided for the last few years. The FCNL community has worked hard to cut Pentagon spending, efforts that will be even more important in the future because any growth in military spending will effectively leave less money to invest in programs such as Head Start, low-income housing, and nutrition assistance for infants and pregnant women.

The good news is that several of President-elect Trump's potential nominees and appointees have been skeptical of the need for more money for the Pentagon. Coming on the heels of a

Washington Post report that the Pentagon covered up \$125 billion in documented waste, appetites for increasing spending could wane. In addition, the bipartisan coalitions we've helped to build to resist increases in Pentagon spending remain in place. In the Senate, it will take just 40 votes to block legislation to increase Pentagon spending — and that's where we will need your help to convince as many lawmakers as possible to oppose siphoning money from vital services for vulnerable communities into the Pentagon.

Diplomacy & peacebuilding

The new Congress and administration will determine whether U.S. foreign policy encompasses all the tools at its disposal, or if it relies primarily on military force. President-elect Trump inherits a range of structures and programs, including the Atrocities Prevention Board and the Complex Crises Fund, with a proven ability to prevent violence and build peace. There's broad agreement that this apparatus should be supported and strengthened, not eliminated.

The bipartisan experts panel that FCNL gathered this year outlined an action plan to help the U.S. continue to lead in preventing violence and atrocities. (See the report: fcnl.org/a-necessary-good). We will be advocating for these recommendations to enable the U.S. to have the structures and funding to prevent future violence rather than just respond to current crises.

We will also be working with all of you to block efforts by new

THE world WE seek

FCNL's Capitol Campaign, The World We See: Now is the Time, will be on the road in 2017! RSVP and learn more: fcnl.org/nowisthetime

January 2017:

Tampa, FL (January 22)
Austin, TX (January 28)

February 2017:

San Francisco, CA

May 2017:

Albuquerque, NM

April 2017:

Chicago, IL
New York, NY

May 2017:

Boston, MA
Providence, RI



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futureadvocate.org

SPRING LOBBY WEEKEND

March 18-21, 2017 | Washington, DC

Following the recent election, many people have been wondering what they can do to advocate for policies that create a more just society. As the 115th Congress begins, your elected officials need to hear from you now more than ever. Register today! fncf.org/slw

YOUNG FELLOWS

Application Deadline:
February 13, 2017

Program:
August 2017-July 2018

ADVOCACY CORPS

Application Deadline:
April 10, 2017

Program:
August 2017-July 2018

SUMMER INTERNS

Application Deadline:
March 6, 2017

Program:
June-July 2017

administration and Congress to undermine the successful international diplomatic agreement that has kept Iran from developing nuclear weapons. As in other areas, this work will take careful coordination with members of Congress where 40 votes are all we need in the Senate to preserve one of the most important diplomatic successes of this last decade.

Criminal justice

Our advocacy has played a key role in building a diverse, bipartisan coalition in favor of fixing our country's broken criminal justice system. Although the 114th Congress ended without passing the sentencing reform legislation that was at the center of our efforts, we are already seeing strong calls from across the political spectrum for Congress to take up these issues again.

Our lobbyists do not see much potential for action on criminal justice reform in the first few months of the new Congress, but behind the scenes members are already discussing legislation that would address recidivism, restore public benefits for returning citizens who want to reintegrate into society, and begin to deal with ways that racism is embedded in our society. 



Friends Committee on National Legislation

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- *Climate change*
- *Pentagon spending*
- *Diplomacy & peacebuilding*
- *Criminal justice*

Get more updates and
take action:

fcnl.org/100days

Washington Newsletter No. 778, December 2016

President Trump's First 100 Days: What to Expect

A new Congress and administration means recalibrating what progress looks like, but it doesn't change what we are striving to uphold and advance.

Whatever the president proposes, most major policy changes still have to go through Congress. Together, our advocacy can shape what Congress does. FCNL has nearly 75 years of experience in congressional advocacy and an ever-growing network of committed grassroots advocates working in communities across the country. We aren't going to let up now.

To face the challenges ahead, we need to work with focus and persistence, starting now, to make what gains we can and to prevent the threats we see coming to our government's ability to protect the most vulnerable and promote peace and justice. We need to have the strategy to plan for change and the flexibility to act quickly when opportunities arise.

Here's what we see coming in the first part of the year (see pg. 5 for a full list of priorities). For updates, sample letters to Congress, and more action suggestions, see fcnl.org/100days.

Health Care Access

The incoming administration's stated goal to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA) could take away access to affordable health care for 22 million people. These changes are coming fast.

Using a procedural tool called budget reconciliation, Congress could repeal the ACA shortly after the new president takes office with just a majority vote in the House and Senate, without opportunity to filibuster, delay, or amend the legislation. Supporters will likely present this legislation as the first step in a two-part plan to "repeal and replace." But it's unacceptable to deny health insurance to millions with only the promise of a future, better health care proposal "in the works."

Even more concerning, a second budget reconciliation bill in 2017 could fundamentally alter the Medicaid and food stamp (SNAP) programs, which since 1965 has ensured that people living on very low incomes have access to medical care and food on the table. We

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