

Friends Committee on North Carolina Legislation 2020 Legislative Priorities

The Friends Committee on North Carolina Legislation (FCNCL) approved the following priorities for the 2020 state legislative session. Approved by the Executive Committee in November 2019, these priorities will guide our deliberations through October 2020, when they will be recommended for approval by the General Committee for use through 2021.

Within each of the priorities and across all the work that we do, we are guided by a shared commitment to “promote genuine equality of opportunity and communities in which everyone can safely live, learn, work, worship, and love. In each priority we will identify, expose, and work to eliminate institutional racism, institutional sexism, and other forms of systemic discrimination.” (from Friends Committee on National Legislation [FCNL] statement “The World We Seek” section II.4.1) We are mindful of the long history of slavery, race-based discrimination, and oppression in the state of North Carolina, and we are called to redress the consequences of this shameful history in the work that we do.

FCNCL is non-partisan and will collaborate across the political spectrum. Our work will remain rooted in our leadings as people of faith, and we will engage with legislative opportunities, specific expertise and other resources as we advance our core priorities and urgent policy issues that may arise.

1. We support electoral reform, led by the Religious Society of Friends’ (Quaker) testimonies of Equality and Integrity and in support of our FCNCL minute on anti-racism.

North Carolina is at a critical juncture in undoing gerrymandering of legislative districts, and we support an independent commission in re-drawing fair maps. We also support legislation that ensures fair and free elections through the maintenance of voting rights. We further support measures to promote strong government ethics so these threats to our democracy cannot happen again.

2. We call for access to quality healthcare, led by the Quaker testimony of Equality.

Our primary areas of concern for 2020 are Medicaid Expansion and reproductive rights.

3. We urge greater attention to environmental protection measures, led by the Quaker testimonies of Stewardship and Equality/Social Justice and in support of the PFYM Minute on Climate Change and our FCNCL Minute on Anti-racism.

We see this work falling into three primary areas: conservation of natural areas and preservation of air and water quality; promoting environmental justice and cleaning up polluted waterways (e.g. coal ash clean-up, concentrated animal feeding operations [CAFOs]); and mitigating the climate crisis through promotion of clean energy and opposing environmental rollbacks.

4. We promote criminal justice reform, led by the Quaker testimonies of Peace and Equality and in support of our FCNCL Minute on Anti-racism.

In particular, we seek bail reform, an end to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids, and the elimination of the death penalty.

During our first year, we have chosen a smaller number of priority areas so that we may develop policy tools (ex: queries for candidate forums; a letter of introduction to use with legislators; a link to connect Friends to the NC Legislative website) and sponsor advocacy activities (ex: FCNL advocacy training hosted locally; a field trip to/legislative action day in Raleigh). In addition to the four core priority areas, we wish to affirm our commitment to immigration reform, civil rights, and education, specifically teacher pay, and reducing gun violence. These priorities are meant to guide our collective work but not limit it. FCNCL will maintain the flexibility to address policy issues that align with our testimonies as opportunities and urgencies arise.