



# The World We Seek:

*Statement of Legislative Policy*



Friends Committee on  
National Legislation

A Quaker Lobby in the Public Interest

The Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) is a nonpartisan Quaker lobby in the public interest founded in 1943 by members of the Religious Society of Friends. FCNL seeks to bring the concerns, experiences, and testimonies of Friends (called Quakers) to bear on policy decisions in the nation's capital. FCNL speaks for itself and others of like mind, and people of many religious backgrounds participate in this work. FCNL does not claim to speak on behalf of the entire Religious Society of Friends.

FCNL's staff and volunteers work with a nationwide network of thousands of people to advocate social and economic justice, peace, care for the earth, and good government. The FCNL Education Fund is a 501(c)3 organization that exists in parallel with FCNL to support the research, analysis, and education for which FCNL is known and respected. Tens of thousands of individuals and organizations rely on the FCNL Education Fund's resource materials for background information on policy issues and legislative details.



**Friends Committee on  
National Legislation**

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*Cover photo by Joseph Molieri for FCNL*



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# The World We Seek

**We seek a world**

*free of war and the threat of war*

**We seek a society**

*with equity and justice for all*

**We seek a community**

*where every person's potential may be fulfilled*

**We seek an earth restored**

**FCNL Annual Meeting 2019 Minute:**

The members of the FCNL General Committee approved the Policy Statement as revised and documented during our Annual Meeting 2019.

# The World We Seek:

## *Statement of Legislative Policy*

### **Contents**

Preamble .....	1
Part I: We Seek a World Free of War and the Threat of War .....	5
Part II: We Seek a Society with Equity and Justice for All .....	15
Part III: We Seek a Community where Every Person's Potential May be Fulfilled .....	27
Part IV: We Seek an Earth Restored .....	37



# Preamble

**P.1.** Since the early days of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), God’s spirit has led Friends to take action in the world. This Spirit has called Friends to recognize the equality of all people, challenge hereditary privilege, help end legal slavery, struggle against oppression, and reduce suffering inflicted by violent conflict. Since 1943, the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) has carried on this witness of the Spirit through action on Capitol Hill. Governed by members of the Religious Society of Friends, FCNL acts in faith to create a world free from war, a society with equity and justice for all, a community where every person’s potential may be fulfilled, and an earth restored.

**P.2.** Our legislative policy rises out of our conviction that there is that of God in every person and that all creation has worth and dignity. Acknowledging and honoring a spectrum of religious and ethical traditions, we try to be open to the will of God and to embody Jesus’ teachings in our personal, national, and global relationships. Facing profound global challenges and great opportunity, we speak from our faith for a new

vision of how the world community can live together more peacefully and justly, and with greater care for each other and our shared world.

**P.3.** FCNL supports and influences legislation and government action by engagement with others, and by urging leaders in government to embrace specific policies and actions. We educate and empower Friends and those who share our concerns to participate in the political process as voters, advocates, and elected officials. Our faith informs not only the policies we advocate but, as importantly, how we advocate. We value listening to others, including those who do not agree with us. We are nonpartisan and work to build mutually respectful relationships with all in the search for common good.

**P.4.** This statement of policy embodies our convictions and provides the foundation for our work.<sup>1</sup> It derives from careful discernment by Friends throughout the nation who have identified the fundamental vision that underlies our legislative actions. As with our past policy statements, the issues we strive to address and the values and testimonies that inspire our actions are presented in a simple, straightforward manner. Neither the order in which the issues are presented nor the frequency with which specific concerns are identified is intended to reflect any assessment on our part regarding their comparative importance. All of the issues addressed are of vital importance, and all are inextricably linked to each other. Our focus throughout is to understand and address the root causes and long-term consequences

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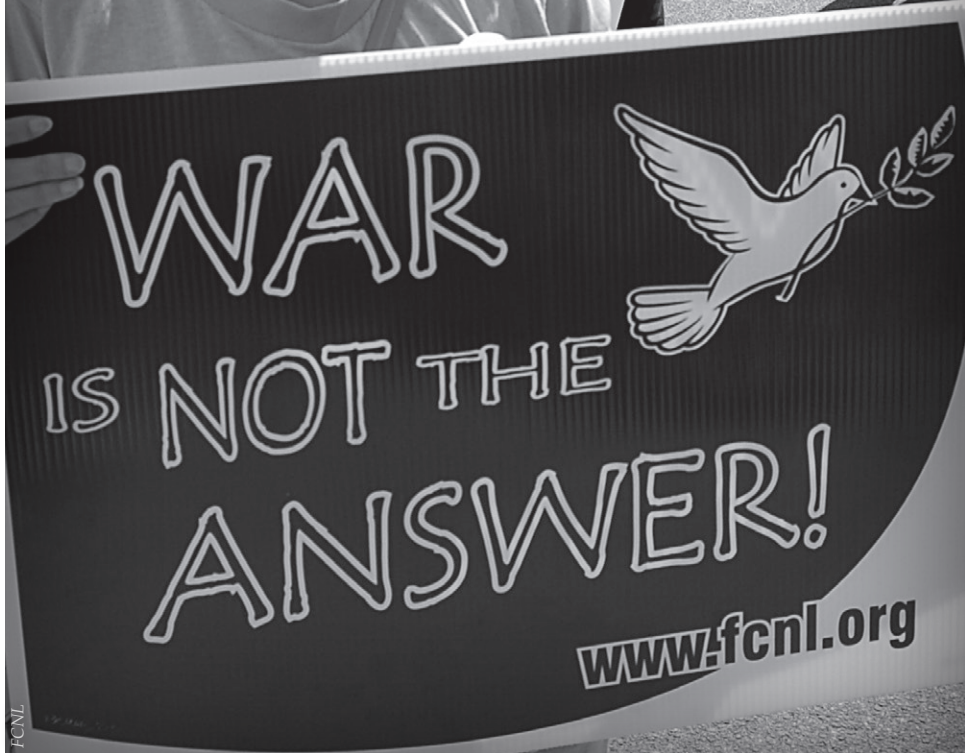
<sup>1</sup> Minute: The members of the FCNL General Committee approved the Policy Statement as revised and documented during our Annual Meeting 2019.



of injustice, inequality, economic disparity, forced migration, environmental degradation, disproportionate power, and violence.

**P.5.** A better future is possible through dedicated effort, creative cooperation, right relationships, and well-directed resources. Change will require personal and material costs that we are prepared to share. We are convinced by our faith and experience to continue building the peaceful, just, equitable, and sustainable global community we seek.

**P.6.** Above all, we seek to remain open to where God's spirit leads us.



Part I:

# We seek a world free of war and the threat of war.

*Seek peace and pursue it. (Psalm 34:14<sup>2</sup>)*

**I.Intro.1.** Friends have long found inspiration in George Fox’s invitation to live “in the virtue of that life and power that [takes] away the occasion of all wars.”<sup>3</sup> We are convinced that peace throughout the world is God’s will and is attainable. True security results from a culture of peace, including a healthy environment, a fair and sustainable economic life, democratic participation, an educated population, personal well-being, and healthy families. Peace and security can be achieved only by peaceful means.

**I.Intro.2.** As we seek to remove violence from our lives, we recall the words of John Woolman: “May we look upon our treasures, and the furniture of our houses,

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2 This and subsequent Biblical passages are from the King James Version.

3 *Journal of George Fox*, 8ed. Friends’ Tract Association, 1891, vol. 1, p. 11.

and [our] garment[s]...and try whether the seeds of war have any nourishment in these our possessions.”<sup>4</sup> To prevent violence, we seek to address the roots of conflict, particularly political and economic structures that work against social justice, human dignity, and ecological integrity. We support efforts to address the suffering caused by past injustices, by repressive regimes, and by ethnic and other oppression.

### *Section 1. Building the Framework for Peace*

**I.1.1.** Friends are called to help build a foundation for world peace. This great undertaking depends on a global framework of law, justice, human rights, and nonviolent social change. International cooperation requires strong global and regional institutions, with fair representation of all concerned parties. We recognize the importance of treaties and covenants among nations as instruments of world order. While acknowledging the role of official dialogue and the efforts of regional bodies, we also call for inclusion of the institutions and organizations of civil society and community-based groups in peacemaking initiatives. FCNL supports efforts to integrate and strengthen peace-building capacities throughout the U.S. government.

**I.1.2.** We support the United Nations (U.N.) and its role in pursuing world peace and justice. We urge the United States to participate fully and in good faith in the work of the U.N., as well as its programs and agencies, and to demonstrate respect for international law and the

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4 John Woolman, *The Journal of John Woolman and A Plea for the Poor* (1774).

Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We advocate for the equitable sharing of power within the U.N.

## *Section 2. Reducing Militarization and Armaments*

**I.2.1.** Militarization has permeated our society, skewing our national budget toward support for the military and its attendant industries and forcing our local economies increasingly to depend on them. Although national security is widely perceived to depend on military strength, more weapons do not provide more security. A larger military provokes fear, resentment, and potential retaliation. Threats tend to increase the hostility and distrust that lead to war. The current high levels of military spending displace needed spending on human needs.

**I.2.2.** We oppose the militarization of U.S. foreign and domestic policy, including the training of and funding for foreign military and paramilitary personnel and the use of U.S. military personnel in domestic policing and immigration enforcement. We affirm our opposition to military conscription and Selective Service registration and our support of legal accommodations for conscientious objection to military service and military taxation.

**I.2.3.** We urge the elimination of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, and we call for our federal government to dispose safely of these weapons and related materials in the United States and abroad. In order for arms control to succeed, it is imperative to stem the

proliferation of weapons-usable nuclear material. Control of nuclear, chemical, and biological proliferation should come through international diplomacy, not through threats of military force.

**I.2.4.** The use of drones, cyberattacks, autonomous systems, space weapons, and other new technologies to inflict harm is rapidly increasing. FCNL opposes using any technology for coercion, violence, or lethal attacks. We call upon the United States to fully consider the moral and legal issues raised while establishing clear oversight and accountability for these new means of warfare and supporting international efforts to curb them. We also call for restrictions on the production, transfer, marketing, and sale of conventional weapons — including small arms and anti-personnel weapons.

**I.2.5.** Nations must move toward comprehensive disarmament. We advocate converting military industries to the production of environmentally sound national infrastructure, civilian goods, and public services, and retraining personnel toward that end. We advocate that the United States take unilateral steps toward disarmament, believing that other nations will respond affirmatively to this example. The risks of disarmament are far smaller than the risks involved in the current course of weapons development, proliferation, and stockpiling.

### ***Section 3. Preventing and Resolving Violent Conflicts***

**I.3.1.** We seek federal policies and practices that avoid violence and embrace peaceful forms of managing and

resolving conflict. The cycles of violence perpetuated by acts of terror and the armed overthrow of governments serve as warnings against the use of force, while the examples of nonviolent movements for change provide concrete alternatives. No war is justified. We call for our country to renounce doctrines of first-strike war, whether preemptive or preventive. The United States should commit to not interfering in or attempting to overthrow or to engineer the overthrow of other governments, either overtly or covertly.

**I.3.2.** We call on our government to provide an accurate public accounting of the full human, social, and financial costs of war, including the lifelong impact on veterans, their families and communities, and increased interest costs on the national debt. The human, social, and financial costs to other countries resulting from wars supported by the United States should be assessed as well.

**I.3.3.** Diplomacy, responsible development, the rule of law, and international cooperation are the most effective and principled means of global conflict prevention and resolution. We urge the United States to give its full support to post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation, especially where the United States has waged war. U.S. diplomacy will become more successful as it includes reaching out to non-state actors and opening talks without preconditions. Funds should be redirected from the military budget to support nonviolent methods of conflict resolution. The United States should participate in and comply with international treaties and tribunals,

including the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice.

**I.3.4.** The full Constitutional authority of Congress to declare and initiate war should be restored, as it has been eroded by overly broad authorizations for the President to initiate acts of war. This is especially important when the use of nuclear weapons is possible. Employing force to overthrow foreign governments and using drones and other means of lethal force to inflict harm constitute acts of war, which should also require Congressional deliberation and authorization.

**I.3.5.** We envision a United States with a stronger capacity for prompt and flexible nonmilitary responses to ongoing conflicts that may escalate into mass atrocities. This will require the development of policies, strategies, skills, procedures, and flexible funds to respond to early warning signs and take effective, peaceful early action. The United States should invest far greater resources in developing a robust capacity to prevent the outbreak of violence and protect civilian lives without resorting to the use of force.

**I.3.6.** It is right and important for the United States to assist in emergency relief and refugee assistance efforts outside its boundaries, adhering to international human rights and refugee law and consistent with humanitarian principles and standards. The United States should develop and support nonmilitary assistance programs in partnership with appropriate international and independent non-governmental organizations. We



support the development of professionally trained international civilian police under U.N. auspices to restore civil order, protect civilians, prevent exploitation, and ensure access to relief supplies and basic services. In situations where the military is called on to provide such assistance, its participation must be limited to short-term logistical support.

**I.3.7.** Where genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, or ethnic cleansing are underway and the host nation is unable or unwilling to protect the victims, the U.N. has recognized that the international community has the responsibility to protect vulnerable populations. In these and all situations, FCNL supports constructive, nonviolent responses that are consistent with Quaker values and testimonies.

**I.3.8.** In some circumstances, sanctions can be constructive tools for furthering negotiations, changing governmental behavior, or challenging injustice or aggression. Any official sanctions by government must be carefully considered, both for their potential to achieve the intended results and for their likely impact on innocent civilians. Precautions must be taken to minimize impacts on the daily lives of civilians. The objectives of sanctions must be clear, consistent with international law, and proportional to their objective, and the program must be monitored by a neutral international body.

#### ***Section 4. Building Mutual Understanding and Trust***

**I.4.1.** Peace within and among nations depends in part on replacing ignorance and unjustified fears with

mutual understanding and trust. Educational, cultural, scientific, and commercial exchanges among nations and peoples build such mutual understanding. We support civilian programs that promote peace through personal experience with national and international humanitarian organizations.

**I.4.2.** We call for compassionate solutions to the root causes of hunger, deprivation, and conflict, with increasing attention to the damaging effects of climate change and of U.S. policies and actions abroad. Such policies will include greater support for participatory and sustainable development programs, equitable trade, debt relief, and fiscal and monetary policies that improve the fair distribution of resources. By relieving extreme economic inequality and enabling self-reliant efforts to satisfy basic human needs, we can increase both national and global security.

**I.4.3.** We recognize that women and children carry a disproportionate share of the burdens imposed by poverty and war, including as victims of sexual violence used as a means to instill terror. We support agreements to eliminate slavery, trafficking in persons, the use of child soldiers, and the exploitation of child labor worldwide. For a better world community, more attention is necessary to the human rights and economic security of women and of children, including adequate nutrition, education, health care, and voluntary family planning. Women should be fully included and meaningfully represented at all levels of governmental and community decision making.

**I.4.4.** Veterans of military conflict experience unique barriers to health, mental well-being, and employment. We support programs that address the physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual needs of veterans and active-duty military personnel and their families.



Joseph Molinari for FCNI

Part II:

# We seek a society with equity and justice for all.

*What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God? (Micah 6:8)*

**II.Intro.1.** Friends' witness calls for right relationships among people and between individuals and God. At the center of the Quaker witness is an unwavering belief in and commitment to "the fundamental equality of all members of the human race."<sup>5</sup> In our time, governments are instituted, in part, to promote and protect basic human rights. These are rights, not mere privileges subject to easy denial. Friends acknowledge the indispensable role of government in safeguarding the integrity of our society and the essential dignity of every human being. Citizens have the responsibility to participate vigorously in making government more responsive, open, and accountable.

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<sup>5</sup> *Quaker Faith and Practice, 3rd Edition* (Britain Yearly Meeting of Friends, 2005) Para. 23.36.

## ***Section 1. Governmental Institutions***

**II.1.1. *Electoral Processes.*** Active and informed citizen participation in the political and electoral process is essential to the proper functioning of government. The people of the United States deserve government and media policies that shift the emphasis in political campaigns from image-making to an in-depth understanding of a wide range of perspectives on the issues, as well as on candidates' qualifications.

**II.1.2.** Our democracy can live up to its potential only if the government ensures open access to public office and electoral processes; curbs the influence of money and corporate power; safeguards the integrity of the voting process without raising unnecessary barriers; provides full participation for disenfranchised people, including those currently and formerly incarcerated; and protects and secures electoral and voting procedures from foreign and domestic interference. Observing that district lines are too often drawn for partisan advantage, we encourage the establishment of nonpartisan processes for redistricting. We also believe that the Electoral College has outlived its original purpose and has come to distort democratic expression.

**II.1.3.** The reemergence in our society of extreme concentrations of personal and corporate wealth with unlimited opportunities to shape elections is deeply threatening to the egalitarian premises underlying democracy. Publicly traded companies should be required to disclose their political contributions and lobbying efforts to their stakeholders. Transparency regarding the

sources of political contributions to super PACs and other independent campaign groups is essential. Ways should be sought to reverse the impact of the Citizens United Supreme Court decision, which treats corporations as persons with civil and political rights.

**II.1.4. *U.S. Districts and Territories.*** All citizens of the United States residing in non-state territories, including the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and other lands under the control of the federal government, are entitled to the same rights and privileges as all other citizens, including equal voting representation in Congress. This includes the option of statehood.

**II.1.5. *Government Accountability and Transparency.*** We seek a government that rises above partisanship and that creates a climate of truth-telling, good faith, and civil discourse. We hold our government institutions and officials to rigorous ethical standards of fairness, honesty, openness, and avoidance of even the appearance of conflicts of interest. We expect our government officials to abide by the U.S. Constitution, national and international law, and international treaties. The system of checks and balances among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches is central to our form of government and must be strengthened.

**II.1.6.** Legislative processes should further mutual respect and timely action on substantive issues. The Senate should act on presidential nominees promptly and with meaningful deliberation. Congressional rules should support bipartisan deliberation and sufficient opportunities for hearings.

**II.1.7.** Democracy does not work properly if the public does not know what its government is doing. Secrecy erodes the government's accountability to the people. Strong protections are necessary for whistleblowers, journalists, and confidential sources who expose government misconduct. Timely and free access to accurate information enables the constitutional process of checks and balances to function well and allows informed participation by individuals in government activities. Candidates for public office and positions that are subject to Senate confirmation should be required to disclose their personal federal and state tax returns.

**II.1.8.** *An Independent Media.* A strong, diverse, and independent media is a pillar of democracy. We call on our government to honor the independence of the press, promote diversity of media ownership, and protect the privacy and freedom of electronic communications. The explosive growth of social media has had a dramatic impact on political life, necessitating steps for increased accountability to address inflammatory speech and manifestly false assertions of "fact."

**II.1.9.** *Criminal Justice.* We call for a transformation of our current system of criminal justice, which today is used principally as an instrument of retribution — a policy contrary to our Quaker belief in the possibility of redemption — and which leads to mass incarceration. We advocate for crime prevention that recognizes the complex and pervasive causes of crime, which often are rooted in social and economic injustice. We support a system that is not biased by race, gender, or immigration status and that treats juveniles as children, not as adults.



**II.1.10.** We acknowledge the role of well-trained law enforcement to protect community safety. However, our legitimate needs for safety and security can never excuse such excesses as racial profiling and the undue use of force. Instead, we support community-oriented law enforcement practices, emphasizing de-escalation techniques, which can lead to policing that serves all community members equitably.

**II.1.11.** Our communities and families will be strengthened by a system that embraces restorative justice, reduces incarceration, and seeks to return rehabilitated offenders to society with their full rights and obligations. Incarceration of violent and destructive individuals is sometimes necessary for safety, but community-based alternatives to incarceration are often better responses to nonviolent crimes. A well-functioning system will include equitable and prompt adjudication; adequate representation; the end of detention based solely on the ability to pay fees, fines, or bail; education, training, and treatment for those convicted of criminal behavior; and fair restitution for the victims of crime.

**II.1.12.** Many crimes are prompted by conditions that can best be addressed outside the criminal justice system. Violent acts that stem from using, selling, or transferring drugs or obtaining money to use them should be prosecuted — however, substance abuse itself is fundamentally a health issue requiring prevention, education, treatment, and rehabilitation. Mental health problems deserve treatment rather than criminalization.

**II.1.13.** Government must ensure that detention facilities

provide humane conditions and basic rights. We stand against the abusive use of solitary confinement. Profit-making has no legitimate place in the criminal justice or immigration systems; we oppose privatized detention facilities.

**II.1.14.** We seek the abolition of the death penalty because it denies the sacredness of human life, forecloses the opportunity for redemption, and should not be a part of a criminal justice system afflicted with bias and error.

### *Section 2. Civil Liberties and Civil Rights*

**II.2.1.** We believe in the paramount need to protect and promote human rights, civil liberties, and civil rights. Friends seek a society free from discrimination, whether due to race, creed, gender, ethnic or national heritage, age, sexual orientation, disability, medical condition, genetic background, or gender identification or expression.

**II.2.2.** We uphold the separation of church and state. We defend guarantees for the free exercise of religion and oppose favoring particular religious beliefs or groups. Freedom from arbitrary or undue governmental intrusion and the equal treatment of all people by the state are inherent to a free society.

**II.2.3.** Unbridled surveillance of U.S. and foreign citizens undermines civil liberties and erodes trust among nations. Domestic and foreign surveillance programs must be limited, constitutional, and monitored within a transparent system of checks and balances. The need for security does not excuse the targeting of free speech and nonviolent protest for surveillance and interference nor

does it call for the militarization of domestic policing.

**II.2.4.** We expect our government to uphold the rights and liberties of each person regardless of citizenship status, as set forth in the Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Our government must also comply with the Geneva Conventions and protocols, as well as customary international law, in its conduct of war. During undeclared wars and in its responses to terrorism, the government must comply with international human rights law. We urge the United States to ratify and participate fully in international treaties protecting civil and human rights. We oppose torture and indefinite detention in all circumstances. We call on law enforcers to adhere to the highest standards of civil liberties and due process.

**II.2.5.** Boycotts and divestment can be important tools for addressing injustice. These actions should be protected as an exercise of free speech.

### *Section 3. Communities Free of Violence*

**II.3.1.** Friends seek peaceful and nonviolent solutions to personal and societal problems at all levels. The seeds of war are sown when communities tolerate verbal and physical violence in its many forms or the disrespect of ethnic, gender, racial, religious, sexual orientation, and other differences. We advocate policies that encourage community mediation, conflict resolution, and other programs to promote mutual respect.

**II.3.2.** The huge number of guns in the United States negatively impacts most of the priorities we seek for our

world and harms people in myriad ways. The presence of a gun in situations where there is domestic abuse, where a person is considering suicide or has shown a tendency to violence, or where extreme racism is present can easily lead to tragedy. Friends believe that through the Spirit there is always a chance for reconciliation, rehabilitation, and personal transformation. Too often, the presence of guns at critical times cuts short potential opportunities for redirection and renewal, resulting in tragic consequences. We support efforts to reduce gun violence by such measures as regulating gun ownership, possession, and use through the implementation of universal background checks, bans on military-style weapons, and public health-oriented research and education.

#### *Section 4. Repairing Historical and Ongoing Oppression*

**II.4.1.** Friends are called to promote genuine equality of opportunity and communities in which everyone can safely live, learn, work, worship, and love. However, our country's history of oppression of African-Americans, Native peoples, other peoples of color, and women has left a heritage of inequalities and institutionalized discrimination. Throughout its lobbying, FCNL seeks to identify, expose, and work to eliminate institutional racism, institutional sexism, and other forms of discrimination.

**II.4.2.** *A Society Free of Racism.* The people of the United States continue to live with the legacy of slavery, white supremacy, institutional racism, and oppression. Many groups experience ongoing discrimination and hate based on race, religion, or ethnicity. We must continue to

seek reconciliation and remediation. While individuals must examine their own unintended, unrecognized personal racism, the federal government has a special responsibility to establish policies that acknowledge our history and create genuine equality of opportunity. This should include measures to assure voting rights and political voice; to transform our criminal justice system and its pipeline to prison for people of color; to protect civil rights; to promote educational, economic, and employment opportunities; to end segregated housing and change programs that further racial segregation; to explore reparations; and to free communities from violence and economic exploitation.

**II.4.3. *Relationships with Native Americans.*** Native American communities were decimated by disease, genocidal episodes, and deprivation of lands on which their subsistence depended. The impacts of cultural genocide, structural racism, discrimination, and oppression continue. Federal policies and laws must conform to the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and recognize that Native Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Alaska Natives retain aboriginal rights. Treaties and trust agreements contain solemn and binding promises that must be honored. The sanctity of land, water, air, and all forms of tribal lands should be respected. Tribal police and courts should have primary authority over all criminal activity on reservation lands.

**II.4.4. *Sexism.*** We strive for a society where every individual is respected, valued, and celebrated equally, regardless of their sex or gender identity. Discrimination against women is overtly present in policy and also

embedded in apparently neutral practices which have subtle negative impacts upon women. Equality of rights under law should not be denied or abridged, and no one should experience harassment or violence on the basis of sex or gender identity.

### *Section 5. Immigration and Refugees*

**II.5.1.** The United States derives much of its strength and character from the many peoples who have built it and reside here. The immigration policies we envision will allow people to migrate to the United States regardless of their wealth, health, or skill levels; to preserve their families' unity; to change their places of employment; to be free to stay with their families and communities as they await a status decision or removal; and to apply for lawful permanent status and eventual citizenship. With the right policies in place, work-related entry to the United States can meet the legitimate needs of the economy without undercutting job opportunities, pay, or working conditions for workers already in the United States. Fair labor laws and workplace health and safety standards should be firmly enforced regardless of workers' immigration status. Those who arrived in the United States as children should be provided with an expeditious path to citizenship.

**II.5.2.** We support openness to refugees, including those displaced by climate extremes or severe economic conditions, victims of violence and human trafficking, populations made vulnerable by U.S. political or military interventions, and others seeking political asylum.

**II.5.3.** Immigration is a civil issue, not a criminal one. All persons, regardless of immigration status, deserve due process, including the opportunity to challenge effectively their detention or removal. A fair immigration enforcement system will fully utilize alternatives to detention. For as long as immigrants are detained, detention facilities should meet at least the standards required for criminal detention, uphold the human and civil rights of the detainees, and be separate from criminal detention.

**II.5.4.** Immigration laws should be enforced by federal authorities, not by local law enforcement. We oppose the militarization of our borders and the excessive use of force in immigration enforcement. Border communities, including tribal governments, must be directly involved in the decision-making processes regarding border enforcement policies.



Joseph Moteri for FCNL

Spring Lobby  
Weekend 2019  
Joseph Moteri  
FCNL

Spring Lobby  
Weekend 2019  
Shandraya Rogers  
South Texas Community College  
my pronouns are  
she-her



Part III:

# We seek a community where every person's potential may be fulfilled.

*In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these...ye have done it unto me. (Matthew 25:40)*

**III.Intro.1.** More than 350 years have passed since George Fox, a Quaker founder, encouraged Friends to live in such a way that they would “walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone.”<sup>6</sup> We continue to act according to the conviction that God dwells in each human soul. Each person has the right to live a life of dignity with access to basic necessities in a safe and sustainable environment. People should have equal opportunity to fulfill their own potential and to contribute to their communities. This challenging vision can be achieved if it is embraced by all: the public, the government, and the private sector.

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6 Statement of 1656, from *The Works of George Fox* (1831).

### *Section 1. Fostering Economic Justice*

**III.1.1.** We seek to eliminate poverty at home and abroad through economic policies that expand opportunities for all people to have adequate resources to maintain health, dignity, and economic security. Equitable economies are more productive, sustainable, efficient, and fair. To achieve these goals, we call for policies to reduce economic disparities, including income and wealth inequality, and to address the structural impediments to providing fair employment opportunities and economic security for all people.

**III.1.2.** Concentrated corporate wealth exerts excessive control over society, both directly and by influencing federal and local government policy. We seek policies that ensure corporate responsibility, independent and accountable boards of directors, and balanced emphases on long-term investment and profits. Effective policies will strengthen job creation, long-term investment, and social and environmental responsibility rather than encourage short-term gain. We support cooperative enterprises. A key role of the federal government is to strengthen and enforce antitrust, fraud, and securities oversight laws.

**III.1.3.** The financial sector requires substantial reform and oversight, both to avoid financial crises and to promote the broader economic goals of equity and sustainability. We support strong regulation of the financial industry to curb excessive risk-taking, strengthen stewardship of resources used in investing, separate commercial banking from investment

banking, increase transparency and accountability, and protect consumers.

**III.1.4.** We strive to create an economic system that is equitable and that preserves and enhances resources for future generations. Our measures of economic prosperity must take into account the true costs and benefits of all market and non-market activities. In place of the Gross Domestic Product and other traditional indicators that focus on consumer spending and perpetual economic growth, we support the use of more people-centered economic indicators that measure health, longevity, education, quality of life, income inequality, and other more relevant measures of the impact of economic activity and growth on the environment and human well-being.

**III.1.5.** *Domestic Economic Life.* Government policy directly affects our communities and establishes the framework for many economic decisions. We urge that the federal budget allow for spending to meet the actual needs of the nation, including assistance to individuals, communities, and states. Resources should be refocused from military spending to human needs and environmental stewardship.

**III.1.6.** Growing income and wealth inequality are major factors in every problem our society faces. We support tax justice and progressive taxation so that tax burdens are related to financial resources and ability to pay. Corporations that do business in the United States must pay their fair share of taxes. Federal policy should oppose compensation mechanisms that are not transparent and that hurt shareholders and the public.

**III.1.7.** In general, ongoing federal programs and activities should be paid for with current revenues. However,

government borrowing can be appropriate for countering economic recessions and making long-term investments in research, education, health, environmental protections, and public infrastructure.

**III.1.8.** We affirm the right and responsibility of all to contribute to society through paid and unpaid work within their capabilities. It is a public responsibility to ensure that each person has the opportunity to develop skills, to work under non-exploitive conditions, and to earn a living wage with adequate benefits. We recognize the roles of both the government and private sector in creating jobs, promoting job training, and encouraging sustainable economic development. Employers, educators, and government should partner to provide training and connect job seekers to employment needs in the community. We believe in strengthening laws that guarantee all workers, regardless of immigration status, the right to organize unions and to bargain collectively. Public assistance programs are best when they enhance human dignity and personal well-being and provide support when people have difficulty providing for themselves.

**III.1.9.** *Global Economic Interdependence.* Due to the size and impact of its economy, the United States has a critical responsibility to conduct its affairs to contribute to the economic security, environmental stability, and social well-being of all the world's peoples. The concentration of wealth in a few countries, corporations, groups, or individuals is a destabilizing force on society and its institutions. U.S. policies regarding globalization must not adversely affect the right sharing of world resources.

**III.1.10.** As global economic interdependence continues to increase, the terms of international agreements assume greater importance. In addition to pursuing the national interest in trade negotiations, we urge the U.S. government to implement trade policies that promote sustainable development, maintain and strengthen existing regulatory standards, and are ever mindful of the impact of trade instruments on workers, consumers, and vulnerable populations, both in our own country and in the countries with whom we negotiate. To assure widely shared benefits from such agreements, negotiations must provide for transparent and democratic participation by the full range of parties affected. Trade policy will serve the world community best by adhering to rigorous environmental and labor standards while being mindful of cultural and socio-economic practices.

### ***Section 2. Supporting People and Building Viable Economies***

**III.2.1.** Safe, thriving, diverse, and sustainable communities with healthy, informed people and a broad, resilient economic base must be a major objective of government policy. Education, housing, health care, recreational facilities, and access to functioning infrastructure are public goods to which all have a right, including individuals who cannot afford to pay for them. We call for a national commitment to help states and local communities meet the needs of each person. Local residents, businesses, and tribal governments must be involved in the design and implementation of community development programs.

**III.2.2. *Education.*** Education that provides sound basic knowledge and skills and fosters critical and creative thinking establishes a foundation for individual development, good health, satisfying employment, and responsible participation in democratic society. In an environment of increased globalization and advancing technology, our education system must prepare all individuals to be innovative, creative, adaptable, collaborative, and analytical. A strong public education system depends on substantial resources, equitably distributed. The federal government has an important role to play in addressing the educational needs of economically disadvantaged populations, people with disabilities, and other underserved individuals and groups.

**III.2.3.** We support lifelong access to high-quality, affordable education for all, including early childhood programs, public universities and community colleges, skilled trade apprenticeships, and opportunities for paid community service. We encourage the development and expansion of high-quality educational and vocational programs that are accessible without burdensome debt. We support programs that promote civic engagement, peace, conflict resolution, and global awareness. We oppose military recruitment in schools and military training of minors.

**III.2.4. *Food and Water.*** No person should go hungry or experience food insecurity. Full and equitable access to safe, affordable, nutritious food and clean water is essential and can be enhanced by education and information. Agricultural policies must be designed to support adequate supplies of healthy and diverse foods,

not to provide disproportionate profits or degrade the environment. We discourage the diversion of food crops away from nutritional purposes, if such diversion has an impact on the availability of basic food.

**III.2.5. *Housing.*** A home that is affordable, accessible, and safe is essential for the well-being of every person. Housing that is affordable, energy-efficient, and located in healthy and diverse neighborhoods, coupled with supportive services for those who need them, is the right of all. We oppose all housing discrimination on the basis of race or ethnicity, religion, nationality, immigration status, age, physical or emotional disability, family status, sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

**III.2.6. *Health Care.*** Universal access to affordable, effective, comprehensive health care is a right and is necessary to allow all people to fulfill their potential. Comprehensive health care includes primary, acute, and long-term care, including prescription drugs, as well as mental health and substance abuse treatment. To ensure access, health services should be provided where an individual's needs can best be met. Our country can only maintain and improve the physical and mental health of its population with affordable health care that covers the entire life span, from prenatal to end-of-life care. Public health services, which protect us all, require robust federal support.

**III.2.7. NOTE:** Members of the Society of Friends are not in unity on abortion issues. Therefore, FCNL takes no position and does not act either for or against abortion legislation. On occasion, FCNL may appeal to lawmakers not to use the abortion debate to paralyze action on other legislation.

**III.2.8. *Healthy Families.*** All children have the right to adequate food, housing, health care, and an environment free from violence, poverty, incarceration, and other health hazards. Well-designed tax policies, social support programs, and flexible employment policies are critical to assuring adequate care for children. We must pursue an expansion of high-quality, affordable, safe childcare and early childhood education. We encourage increased funding for programs to prevent and address all forms of abuse.

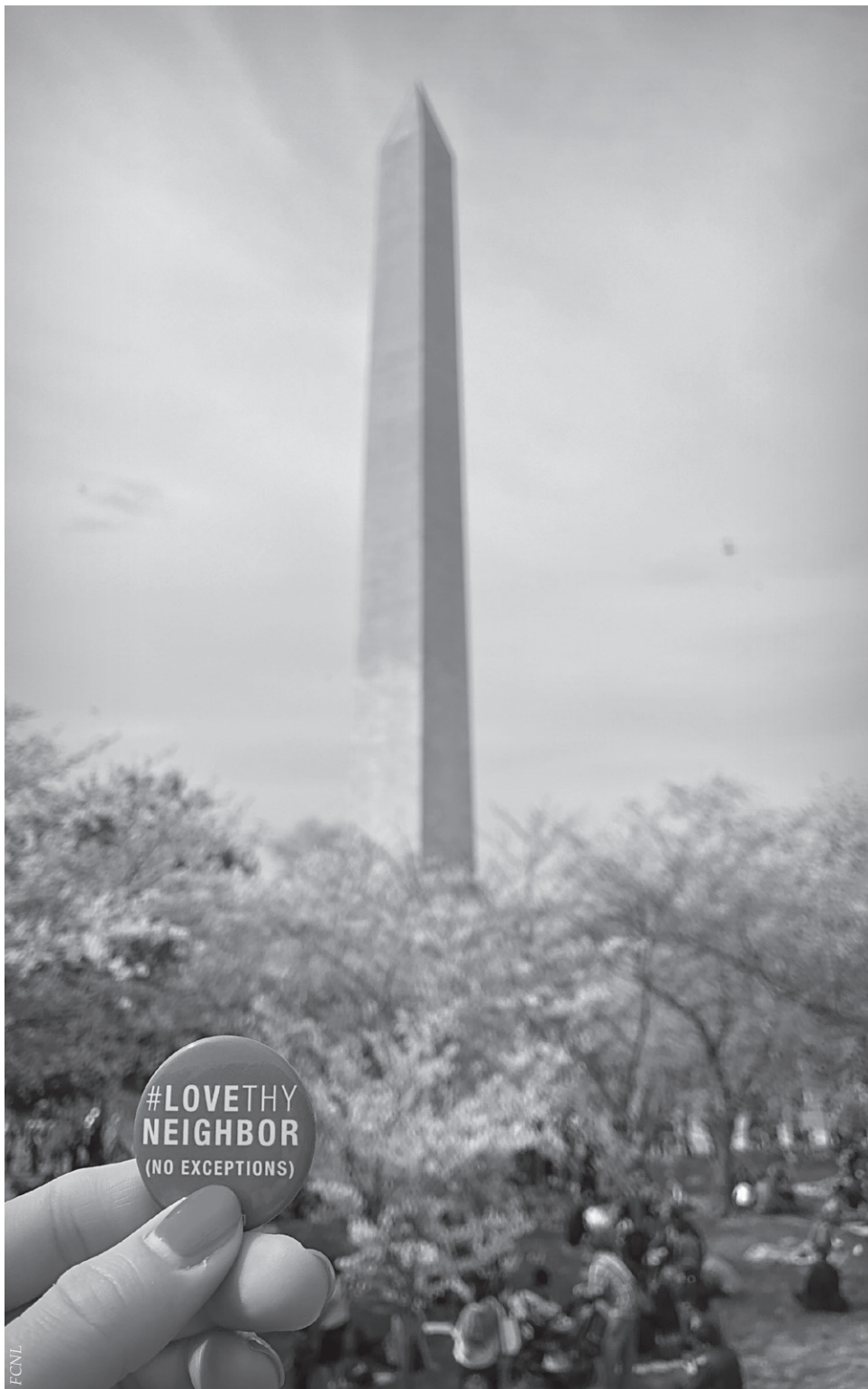
**III.2.9.** The rapidly expanding population of older people in the United States has resulted in increasing problems and challenges both for seniors themselves and for those responsible for their care. We believe that older people in our society have the right to live full, secure, and productive lives. Medicare, Social Security, pension and retirement plans, and other programs that provide older people with access to affordable housing, health care, and other vital services should be maintained and strengthened, along with programs and policies that protect older people from neglect, abuse, exploitation, and age-based discrimination. We also recognize the need for programs and policies that provide physical, emotional, and financial support to family members and other caregivers of older people.

**III.2.10. *Transportation.*** The transportation infrastructure in the United States is grossly inadequate for the needs of its people, with dramatic decreases in the availability of public transportation services and the progressive deterioration of the roads, bridges, and railways which connect us to one another. We believe that affordable, reliable, and accessible transportation



is an essential feature of an open, cooperative, and productive society. To build viable communities and regions, more energy-efficient public transit services are needed, requiring federal funds and compatible land use policies. We support policies that address the specific transportation needs of all U.S. communities, including urban, suburban, and rural; that provide service sites that are near and easily accessible to the communities that use and rely on public transportation; and that encourage a range of ecologically sustainable forms of transportation, such as walking, bicycling, car-pooling, and rail, as well as energy-efficient vehicles.

**III.2.11. *Communication.*** As Quakers, we advocate the practice of plainness, simplicity, and truthfulness in our speech and communications with others. While social media has contributed to positive change in many social movements, its rapid and largely unregulated growth has had an alarming impact on the quality and content of public discourse in our society. Hateful and inflammatory speech, misleading information, and manifestly false assertions are now a common occurrence. While we continue to support the development and maintenance of a communication infrastructure that is readily accessible to all, we also recognize the need for steps that would increase the transparency, accountability, and reliability of publicly available information; protect the privacy rights of individual users; and mitigate the impact of hateful and incendiary speech. We also support programs and policies that expand the capacities of digital media users in rural, low-income, and other underserved communities.



## Part IV:

# We seek an earth restored.

*The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell within.* (Psalm 24:1)

**IV.Intro.1.** We declare that humankind must respect the ecological integrity and sacredness of the natural world. Our commitment to the health and well-being of the earth is based on the conviction that there is that of God in all of creation, not just the earth's human inhabitants. As William Penn observed more than three centuries ago: "It would go a long way to caution and direct people in their use of the world, that they were better studied and knowing the Creation of it. For how could [they] find the confidence to abuse it, while they should see the great Creator stare them in the face, in all and every part of it?"<sup>7</sup>

**IV.Intro.2.** More than ever, as we face these crises unfolding around us, we are coming to understand, as many indigenous people have long understood, the

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<sup>7</sup> William Penn, *Some Fruits of Solitude* (1682).

mutuality and interdependence between human beings and all forms of life. Human beings are an integral part of nature and not separate from it, and we cannot expect to do harm to the environment and not experience the consequences of our acts. How we care or do not care for the earth impacts the ability of humankind to survive, and the ability of thousands of other species and ecosystems to survive as well. As 20<sup>th</sup>-century Quaker Elizabeth Watson observed: “Only when we see that we are a part of the totality of the planet, not a superior part with special privileges, can we work effectively to bring about an earth restored to wholeness.”<sup>8</sup>

**IV.Intro.3.** Climate change and the depletion of the earth’s ecosystems have already begun to have a devastating impact on all of the earth’s inhabitants, both human and non-human. For human beings around the world, natural disasters, environmental degradation, and the scarcity and inequitable distribution of resources are underlying causes of large-scale famine, poverty, disease, violence, war, displacement, and migration. Climate disruption has also resulted in untold suffering and endangerment for the earth’s non-human inhabitants, with tens of thousands of animal and plant species currently threatened with extinction. Addressing both the causes and the destructive impact of climate change is an urgent responsibility requiring all humankind to act globally, nationally, locally, and individually. Strongly mindful of our interdependence with all of creation, and understanding that the biosphere is finite, we commit

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8 Elizabeth Watson, *Your God Is Too Small* (1996).

ourselves to being wise and responsible stewards of the earth, protecting, caring for, nurturing, and regenerating the precious and irreplaceable natural environment of which we are a part.

### *Section 1. Global Climate Change and Energy Policy*

**IV.1.1.** Responsible use and right sharing of the world's natural resources are crucial to human survival and welfare. Climate change, which results primarily from human-caused emissions of greenhouse gases, is real and is already having a destructive effect on our natural environment. Increasingly frequent extreme weather events, melting ice caps, and mass species extinction warn us that our ecosystems are undergoing profound changes that threaten our civilization and ultimately the survival of humanity and other living things.

**IV.1.2.** Current land, energy, and military policies and practices are inextricably linked to greenhouse gas generation and climate change. All people need equitable access to sources of energy for personal and community needs. Future policies and practices should meet global humanitarian and environmental needs and must favor long-term sustainability over narrow and short-term interests.

**IV.1.3.** The global community can and must develop fair and effective policies to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases, promote energy conservation, reduce fuel consumption, and increase efficiency in the consumption of all energy sources. The great risks posed by the use of fossil fuels demand a shift to safe, clean, and

renewable energy sources. Pricing and policy decisions for all forms of energy extraction, production, and use should reflect their true economic, environmental, and social costs.

**IV.1.4.** There is a growing need for research, development, and deployment of science-based sustainable energy technologies. Incentives for the production and use of renewable energy and support for renewable onsite power generation, storage, and distribution are urgent strategies to pursue. We recognize the role that adaptive technologies and practices may play in the short term, but we continue to focus on policies that emphasize prevention and mitigation of climate change and its effects.

**IV.1.5.** We urge an explicit moratorium on the construction of nuclear fission power plants until methods for safe disposal have been demonstrated and adopted. The safest possible methods for transportation and storage should be developed and implemented promptly.

## *Section 2. Caring for the Earth*

**IV.2.1.** Wise stewardship reflects inherent respect, care, and gratitude for the natural gifts bestowed by God for the well-being of human beings and all living creatures. It is our collective responsibility to meet the needs of present and future generations without doing violence to the rest of creation.

**IV.2.2.** We call for an end to the degradation of the earth's land, water, and atmosphere, the decline in biodiversity,

the wasteful depletion of nonrenewable resources, and practices that lead to deforestation and desertification. The death to ocean life currently being wrought by acidification and the proliferation of microplastic waste must be addressed. We therefore urge the U.S. government to adopt laws, agreements, policies, and programs to protect and restore natural ecosystems, farmlands, and air and water resources. Both domestic and international partnerships will be necessary for success. Cooperation over shared natural resources is an effective instrument of peace.

**IV.2.3.** The biosphere is finite, and therefore international, national, and local bodies must implement environmentally sustainable economic policies. Such policies need to protect open spaces, air and water resources, oceans, wilderness areas, and productive farmlands from suburban sprawl while supporting the development of sustainable, environmentally friendly communities. We advocate strong and consistently enforced laws, regulations, treaties, and agreements to protect and restore ecosystem biodiversity and to ensure clean air and water for all.

**IV.2.4.** We unite with policies and actions that seek pollution prevention over pollution capture. The federal government must expand research, development, and implementation of appropriate technologies and strategies to eliminate waste. We call for fair and equitable geographic distribution of waste treatment, storage, and disposal facilities, which are now disproportionately located in poor and minority

communities. We urge the broad application of analytical methods that make explicit the true environmental impact — from the extraction of raw materials to final product disposal or repurposing — of manufacturing and purchasing decisions.

**IV.2.5.** Adequate funding for domestic and international environmental protection efforts is essential. Private and public enterprises must obey the same environmental laws and regulations.

**IV.2.6.** An increasing dependence on industrial agriculture has contributed to climate change and the depletion of the natural environment, both through its use of fossil-fuel-based production systems and through its reliance on monocultures that are less resistant to the effects of epidemics and climate change than diversified crops. The world needs a sound agricultural and aquacultural base to ensure the availability of safe and affordable food and other essential agricultural and forest products. We support policies and practices that encourage the use of regenerative agriculture methods as they promote carbon sequestering, soil fertility, and biodiversity. These practices, in turn, support thriving local communities.

**IV.2.7.** We advocate the prohibition of brutal and inhumane treatment of animals in food production and animal testing. We support the careful evaluation, regulation, monitoring, and product labeling of foods, synthetic chemicals, and genetically modified organisms and products.



### *Section 3. Population and Consumption*

**IV.3.1.** Population pressure and unsustainable consumption threaten the finite planet that living things share. We support government policies that address both the impacts of global population growth and the consequences of inequitable resource consumption and distribution on poor and vulnerable humans and other species. We call for greater empowerment of women and girls, including enhanced access to effective, universally available health care, education, and safe, non-coercive family planning resources.

**IV.3.2.** Truthful measures of economic health will incorporate the nonmaterial factors of our quality of life. Our culture promotes unsustainable, unhealthy, and inequitable levels of material consumption that not only threaten the global environment but also sow the seeds of war and reduces the resources available to meet the rest of the world's needs. As individuals and as a society, we must examine our habits and values and act to ensure right sharing of resources by all.


### *Section 4. Environmental Restoration and Regeneration*

**IV.4.1.** Justice for future generations requires not only that we refrain from impoverishing the earth but also that we work to protect and restore it. Environmental restoration and regeneration must include healing the damage caused by the release of nuclear and other toxic substances, extractive practices like mining, widespread deforestation, desertification, and the depletion of ocean fish stocks.

**IV.4.2.** It is wrong for the consequences of pollution, waste disposal, resource depletion, and the disruptive effects of climate change to fall disproportionately on the poor, communities of color, and other marginalized peoples. These dangers must be fully disclosed and addressed in consultation with the communities they affect. Cleanup and restoration should not be delayed by litigation over who pays, and the cost must ultimately be borne by the responsible parties.

**IV.4.3.** In many parts of the world, drought, rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and other destructive effects of climate disruption have created uninhabitable conditions. Millions of refugees have been forced to leave their homes because of sudden or gradual changes to their natural environment. As a major contributor to global climate change, the United States should provide resources and support for climate refugees.

**IV.4.4.** The use and protection of the earth's resources are global issues that require mutual respect and cooperation among all people and communities on earth. Many peoples, governments, and organizations are already meeting environmental challenges using the knowledge and capabilities we have today. We have faith that we can continue to build on these efforts.

**IV.4.5.** The earth is sacred; it is home. Inspired by Friends' testimonies and our love for the earth, we seek an earth restored. 

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