

Peace and Social Concerns Report 2019

Quakers abhor all war. Congress needs to reclaim from the Executive branch its power to declare war. Representative Barbara Lee successfully offered and passed an amendment to the Defense Appropriations Act that would repeal the 2001 AUMF (Authorization to Use Military Force). Designed to take effect after eight months, the Congress would need to pass a new AUMF or the Administration would need to remove American military personnel from current wars and conflicts during that timeframe. We thank the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) and their Advocacy Teams for their work on this issue. We recognize that Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative) exists in the United States' wider secular world, where transformation into a peaceful, harmonious society without violence is unlikely to occur in the near future. We acknowledge the ongoing creative tension between working to end the occasion of all war and working to reduce harm through meaningful, achievable goals.

To this day we have not come to grips with fundamental injustices our country was built on, the cultural genocide and theft of land from Native Americans, the enslavement of African Americans and the legal justifications of bestowing rights and privileges on white land-owning men. The consequences of these injustices continue to plague our society today. And will continue to impact us until we do what is necessary to bring these injustices to light and find ways to heal these wounds.

Several Friends recently assisted Boulder Meeting Friend, Paula Palmer, to lead workshops and discussions as part of her ministry "toward right relationships with Native people." Part of the tragedy of the theft of Native land is that some Native people don't have the concept of land as property, belonging to a landowner. Rather they have a spiritual connection to Mother Earth, that the land is sacred and not something that can be claimed as property by anyone. Being forced to leave their land broke their spiritual bonds with the land.

Native people have asked us to begin work toward reconciliation and healing. The first step needed is truth telling, recognizing that injury or harm has taken place. One of the important parts of holding "right relationship" workshops is to determine which Native nations were on the land before white settlers arrived. The following Land Acknowledgement for Iowa was approved by the Meskwaki Nation. We encourage Friends to read this acknowledgement statement when meetings take place on the land called Iowa.

IOWA ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENT

We begin by acknowledging that the Land between Two Rivers, where we sit and stand today, has been the traditional homeland for many independent nations. These include the Ioway and the Otoe, who were here since before recorded time. The Omaha and the Ponca were here, moving to new lands before white settlers arrived. The Pawnee used this land for hunting grounds. The Sioux, Sauk and Meskwaki were here long before European settlers came. Members of many different Indigenous nations have lived on these plains. Let us remember that we occupy their homeland and that this land was taken by force. Today, only the Meskwaki Nation, the Red Earth People, maintain their sovereignty on their land in the state of Iowa. They persevered and refused to be dispossessed of their home. Place names all over our state recognize famous Meskwaki chiefs of the 1800s like Poweshiek, Wapello, Appanoose, and Taiomah

or Tama. We honor the Meskwaki Nation for their courage, and for maintaining their language, culture and spirituality. May our time together bring respectful new openings for right relationship to grow.

Part of the healing needed relates to the forced assimilation that was attempted, and often time occurred, by kidnapping Native children and taking them to Indian Boarding Schools. This was the topic of Paula's presentation at Scattergood Friends School and Farm. Some may question why this needs to be discussed today. The reason is for the truth telling, and to name how whiteness historically ignores the multigenerational trauma imposed upon indigenous people. Healing begins when truth telling begins. Multi-generational trauma affects Native people today. One Friend shared with a Native friend that he knew about the Quaker Indian Boarding Schools, and he was sorry for what happened. His friend then told about a phone call from his mother when he was at Standing Rock. She was very distraught because she recognized the rope used to tow a boat across a narrow channel of water, and it reminded her of the Indians using a similar boat and tow rope to help the Native children escape when white men came to take them to boarding schools.

Some Friends have been working to support the concept of an indigenous led Green New Deal. Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement (ICCI) is supporting the youth organization, the Sunrise Movement, that has been successful in moving toward a Green New Deal.

In dark times it is easy to feel discouraged and helpless. Sometimes it helps to step back to get a different perspective. The following statement was printed, but not approved, as a Minute in the 2006 Minutes of Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative).

There once was a frame of reference in this country that said, "Slavery is a reality. The best we can do is hope to regulate it and work for the just treatment of slaves." John Woolman stepped out of that frame of reference and said, "Slavery is wrong." His vision was to end slavery.

Today there is a frame of reference in this country that says, "Illegal immigration is a reality. The best we can do is regulate immigration. We step out of that frame of reference to say, "All are worthy of a decent life." Our vision is the recognition of migration as a human right." (We thank the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) for their years of work on behalf of migrant people.)

This statement provoked us to consider how we might express such visionary statements today. Some examples of how that might look follow.

There once was a frame of reference in this country that said:

- "Systemic racism is a reality. The best we can do is make people aware of this racism." We want to step out of that frame of reference and say, "Racism is wrong." We believe this vision will help create the Beloved Community Martin Luther King, Jr, spoke of. All of these visions contribute to that possibility.

- “Theft of Native land is a reality. The best we can do is help Native people, especially children, assimilate into white culture.” We want to step out of that frame of reference and say, “The theft of Native land and culture is wrong.” We believe this vision will lead to reconciliation, healing and lifting up Native culture.
- “War is a reality. The best we can do is limit conflict.” We want to step out of that frame of reference and say, “War is never the answer.” We believe this vision will lead to world peace.
- “Those who do wrong must be incarcerated.” We want to step out of that frame of reference and say, “Abolish prisons.” We believe this vision can rehabilitate prisoners so they can re-enter their communities.
- “Some people must die for their crimes.” We want to step out of that frame of reference and say, “No one should be put to death.” We believe this vision will end this inhumane practice.
- “Fossil fuel use is necessary for our economy and transportation”. We want to step out of that frame and say, “Use of fossil fuels must end now.” We believe this vision can temper the environmental catastrophe we are moving more deeply into.
- “Borders are a reality.” We want to step out of that frame of reference and say, “Borders are wrong.” We believe this vision will lead open borders which is becoming increasingly important as millions more become climate refugees.
- “Health, including mental health is available to those who can pay.” We want to step out of that frame of reference and say, “Health, including mental health, is a human right.” We believe this vision will heal us.
- “Violence against and sexual trafficking of women and children are a reality. The best we can do is incarcerate the perpetrators”. We want to step out of that frame of reference and say, “Women and children have a right to be free and safe, always and everywhere.” We believe this vision will help us all feel safe and protected.

We are joyful knowing the Spirit’s guidance will show us how to attain these visions.

“But the end is reconciliation; the end is redemption; the end is the creation of the beloved community. It is this type of spirit and this type of love that can transform opposers into friends. It is this type of understanding goodwill that will transform the deep gloom of the old age into the exuberant gladness of the new age. It is this love which will bring about miracles in the hearts of men.” Martin Luther King, Jr. from “Facing the Challenge of a New Age,” 1956

On behalf of the committee,

Jeff Kisling, clerk

Peace and Social concerns Budget 2019

Alternatives to Violence Project (split evenly between Iowa, Nebraska, & South Dakota)	\$150
AFSC Midwest Region (for immigration)	\$100
Frontera de Cristo (Migrant Resource Center)	\$50
Friends Peace Teams (Peacemaking en las Americas)	\$50
Nebraskans for Alternatives to the Death Penalty	\$50
Missourians for Alternatives fo the Death Penalty	\$50
Iowans Against the Death Penalty	\$50
Friends for a Nonviolent World	\$100
Monteverde Friends School	\$100
Seeding Sovereignty	\$50
Star Pac	\$50
Womens International League for Peace and Freedom	\$50
Poor Peoples Campaign	\$50
Bold Iowa	\$50
Lakota Peoples Law Project	\$50
Iowa Citizens fro Community Improvement (ICCI)	\$50
Quaker Voluntary Service	\$50
	\$1,100.00