

CHFM FCNCL Priority Priorities

Submitted by Pam Schwingl, Liaison for FCNCL for approval at the May 2022 Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business

FCNCL invited Chapel Hill Friends Meeting to engage in the bi-annual process of discerning our policy priorities for the 2023-2024 legislative session. We asked the meeting to suggest five priorities on which we might focus. On April 10, after an open period of waiting and listening worship, the gathering began with a brief description of FCNCL, the priorities process, and the purpose of the gathering. In worship-sharing, participants shared their concerns related to North Carolina state issues and policies. Based on this recorded discussion a list of five priorities was summarized by Pam Schwingl and Lori Khamala. We request that the list be approved for release to FCNCL.

1. **Public education.** There is a crisis in public education and it is being systematically weakened and attacked. Legislation is needed to strengthen public schools, provide equitable funding for schools across the state including support for high quality preschools for young children, support the Leandro recommendations and increase teacher pay. Legislation that promotes racial equity, LGBTQ+ rights in the schools, and In-state tuition for undocumented immigrants is important.
2. **Climate Change and Energy policy.** Legislation is needed to strengthen the movement towards renewables, as opposed to programs which reduce investment, for example, in rooftop solar. The hearts and minds of legislators need to be changed to support efforts to address climate change.
3. **Economic issues.** Legislation that supports living wage, and young families with children. Medicaid expansion would be included here as an economic issue.
4. **Criminal justice reform.** There is a need for more attention to criminal justice reform, including legislation that ends solitary confinement for prisoners with mental health issues, and allowing undocumented immigrants the ability to obtain drivers licenses to avoid criminal justice involvement.
5. **Voting rights.** Legislation that supports expanded voting rights, fairness in redistricting (e.g., independent redistricting commission); opposition to legislation that restricts voting rights (e.g., restricting early voting)