

**Working Group
January 11, 2025
Minutes**

Considering the new political environment we are faced with, during this meeting we took stock of where we are at and what actions we can take going forward. The challenges we will have to contend with are not only at the federal level. WA State is anticipating a budget shortfall pegged at between \$10 and \$12 billions through the next two budget cycles, and this at a time when demand for social services, healthcare, education and other publicly funded programs is up.

Areas of focused we discussed:

1. Immigration

President-elect Trump reaffirmed his campaign promise to deport millions of immigrants living in the United States illegally. WA State officials estimate that more than 300,000 undocumented immigrants live in Washington.

Pending changes to federal immigration policies call our attention to the following:

- During the 2019 Legislative Session Washington State passed a Law (RCW 43.17.425) that specifies that “no state agency, including law enforcement, may use agency funds, facilities, property, equipment, or personnel to investigate, enforce, cooperate with, or assist in the investigation or enforcement of any federal registration or surveillance programs or any other laws, rules, or policies that target Washington residents solely on the basis of race, religion, immigration, or citizenship status, or national or ethnic origin.” The same law applies to local governments, private organizations, public schools, employers, and healthcare facilities. Guidance documents on protecting the rights of all WA residents are available on the WA AG Office website.
- The National Immigration Law Center clarifies that whether or not one is a citizen, a resident in WA has rights under the U.S. Constitution. See attached a copy of these rights that is being distributed widely by the WA Immigrant Solidarity Network (WAISN).
- WAISN is organizing a group of volunteers who will serve as a ‘Rapid Response Team.’ A migrant can call this team for assistance when faced with ICE agents. Migrants have been told to memorize WAISN’s hotline number which is: 1-844-724-3737. Any WA resident observing an interaction between a federal immigration agency and a migrant may call that number as well, if deemed helpful to the migrant.
- FCNL’s statement of legislative policy points out that “Immigration is a civil issue, not a criminal one.” And that “All persons, regardless of immigration status, deserve due process.” (Section 11.5.3).

We committed to taking the following action steps:

- Reminding the schoolboards, legislative officials and healthcare personnel we are encountering of the fact that the WA immigration law restricts their cooperation with federal immigration enforcement agencies (ICE, TSA, Border Patrol).

- Be alert to situations that put a migrant at risk for deportation. Encourage the person to call the hotline number for assistance.
- Monitor the actions taken by FCNL and other Quaker organizations with the goal of mitigating abusive migration policies. Ensure assistance as requested and alignment with their direction.

2. Climate Change

- Phil reported that the Interfaith Climate Action group is very active. Information about future events will be forthcoming.
- Many cities and counties have taken the initiative to engage in climate change projects. The latter do not simply focus on protection of the environment but also on adaptation and mitigation efforts designed to solve problems in the long run.
- Climate action projects are potentially at risk because of changes in federal policies by the incoming Administration as well as the anticipated budget shortfall in WA.

We committed to taking the following action steps:

- Phil will keep us abreast of the upcoming events sponsored by IF-Climate Group
- Remind new legislators of the significance of the Inflation Reduction Act in supporting significant environmental changes.
- Monitor attempts made by legislators to limit environmental projects and stand in opposition.

3. Right Relations

- Kayleen reported that the Wild Fish Conservancy succeeded in banning fish farming.
- We notice that there are more salmon in our creeks, which highlights the fact that 'we can turn things around.' ☺
- Interfaith groups are coming together, committed to addressing the boarding school issue that caused much intergenerational trauma among indigenous communities.

We committed to taking the following action steps:

- Continue to support the work that tribal and environmental groups are doing.
- Take our concerns about the impact of Boarding Schools to the NPYearly Meeting, encouraging a statement of recognition for this historic wrong.

4. Public Education

- The new Administration ran on a campaign promise of dismantling the Dept of Education. Should that occur access to Title 1 funding for school districts serving students living in poverty, as well as funding for Special Education would be severely

reduced, if not eliminated. The Dept of Education also plays a vital role in protecting anti-discrimination/civil rights of students and in funding federal student loans.

We committed to taking the following action steps:

- Attend School Board meetings periodically to stay abreast of federal policy changes that would impact the school districts' ability to serve students.

5. Public Health

- We deplore the direction the new Administration is taken on not accepting scientific outcomes.
- Leni reminded us that immigrants, regardless of their legal status, are eligible for Apple Care.
- WA created a Universal Healthcare Commission to explore the possibility of offering a universal healthcare plan to WA residents.

We committed to taking the following action steps:

- Leni will share a pdf document that details the Universal Healthcare proposal.

6. Liaison functions

- Leni volunteered to serve as the APFM liaison with FCNL and Quaker Voice.

We committed to taking the following action steps:

- During the upcoming Worship with Attention to Business Meeting, Phil will call for volunteers to serve as liaisons with the Quarterly and Yearly Meeting

7. Contacting our legislators

- Emily Randall – US Representative - 6th Congressional District
- Drew Hansen – Senator 23rd Legislative District
- Tarra Simmons – Representative 23rd Legislative District
- Greg Nance – Representative 23rd Legislative District

We committed to taking the following action steps:

- We will attempt to meet with Emily Randall during the federal recess in February.
- We will look for opportunities to meet with our legislative district legislators during the Quaker Voice Lobby Day, and we will contact their respective legislative aids to schedule an introductory meeting.

We decided that the Working Group Meetings would benefit from adopting a regular meeting schedule. We agreed to hold such meetings on the second Saturday of each month, at 4 pm.

Our next meeting will be on February 8, 2025, 4 PM – via zoom