

Peace & Justice Committee

Report to Yearly Representative Meeting

Nov 22, 2025

In these strange and remarkable times SCYM's Peace & Justice Committee has continued to meet regularly holding the social concerns of Friends up in Light and power.

The Gaza tragedy has been heavy on all our hearts. In June the Committee was led to share educational information and calls to action with SCYM Meetings. Thank you to all Friends who responded to that call. Your sincere prayers and deep care add strength to all those struggling in hunger, fear and pain in that terrible situation.

The Committee is working to connect with all the clerks of peace & justice committees, or members and attenders who are drawn to this crucial work. If Meeting Clerks or other Friends could share names and contacts of those in their Meeting who might be willing to share Peace & Justice messages to your Meetings, we hope to weave stronger connections among Meetings on the issues we all care about. It's moving to hear the good work different Meetings are taking on in the face of challenges from all sides. We can all learn from each other.

We request that this invitation include Young and Young Adult Friends as Meeting contacts. These critical issues affect everyone, and it's important to include the leadership of youth as well as seasoned Friends in the work we do. Youth are also warmly invited to attend Peace & Justice zoom meetings or officially join the Committee, if they're interested.

Concern has been expressed that the escalating talk of war on many fronts and the growing reluctance of most civilians to take up military service may result in a new and more aggressive round of military recruitment. We ask ourselves if it's time to train this generation of young Friends about the importance of building a personal conscientious objector file? Statements, stories, essays, photos and other documents that demonstrate a young person's long-standing commitment to nonviolence over several years are the most impactful evidence to a future draft board that they are a committed conscientious objector not suitable for war. These files could be started in middle school and built over a lifetime.

Wayne Finnegan, Director of Quaker House of Fayetteville, NC, suggests Friends offer to join local Selection Service Boards. He has been told that Quaker presence is very helpful when a potential inductee seeks Conscientious Objection.

We'd like to reiterate the important work of Friend's Committee on National Legislation, especially at this fraught time. The Advocacy Team approach they're developing is proving to be effective either in person or by zoom. Friends have made significant strides in connecting with legislators through this method, whether they're sympathetic to our values or not. FCNL supports Advocacy Teams with contacts, training, informational materials, and mentoring to incorporate Friends into the work of pressing our embattled Congress into governing. This is a well-coordinated program where Friends feel they can make effective contribution. There is more information on the FCNL website, [fcnl.org](https://www.fcnl.org).

Here are examples of justice work from SCYM Meetings

Austin Meeting – Is planning for how to respond if ICE enters their Meeting. Plan includes elements such as “no weapons” signs on the doors. Setting the library as “private” where ICE is not allowed to enter. Assigning roles to different people to stand up and resist ICE demands. Having a plan is the important part. If ICE appears, what do you do? Austin is also writing holiday cards to all 175 people on Texas’ death row, and does a food pantry twice a month.

Coastal Bend Meeting – wrote and distributed a powerful minute on An End to Mass Deportations and Confinement in Concentration Camps.

Dallas Meeting - Paula Keeth did a panel on the Indigenous Boarding Schools. She is part of a research team searching for records on Quaker-run boarding schools in Oklahoma and other southern states. They now have an initial report that Paula was sharing.

Fayetteville Meeting – continue to support homeless work through advocacy, volunteering and donations. Food insecurity as Friends volunteer at a local food pantry and at a multi-faith aid organization. Participating in local democracy demonstrations and other advocacy.

Fort Worth Meeting – continues to collaborate with other faith groups to change accountability in the Tarrant County Jail, that has a terrible history of internal violence leading to regular prisoner deaths. 2 more have died recently. They’ve also sent cards on ending weapons sales to Israel to their legislators and handed out “red cards” {know your rights cards} for people who might be stopped by ICE or border patrol. The Meeting signed the Anti-Apatheid Pledge.

Houston Meeting – Among many other things, has been organizing an impactful outreach with other faith groups to approach legislators on the issue of mass arrests and deportations.

San Antonio Meeting – members are doing court observing in immigration court. They had an interesting experience of donating money to rebuild a Meetinghouse destroyed by hurricane Helene and having that Meeting donate back to them when floods destroyed parts of Texas Hill Country. They used it for cash cards to distribute to undocumented immigrant victims of the flood, who have been left virtually without recourse now.

We want to hear what Friends are doing. We can learn so much from each other! If your Meeting isn’t included in these stories we want to connect better, and include you next time. Please give us a contact to communicate with your Meeting as a key part of the great work of justice Friends everywhere are about. Send contacts to Peace & Justice Clerk Gladys Tiffany at gladystiffany@yahoo.com.