

BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING (BYM) –

PEACE & SOCIAL CONCERNS

2020 newsletter – Winter Issue

The proof that one truly believes is in action.

~ Bayard Rustin, 1912-1987

COVID-ALTERNATIVES FOR BYM'S NETWORKING DAY

Our 2020 BYM Networking Day was canceled this year, due to COVID concerns. But, in lieu of this, our BYM Peace & Social Concerns Committee has Zoom alternatives that follow in this e-newsletter!

Do you have suggestions for some other Zoom workshops or discussions on Quaker concerns? Please send your ideas via email to peace@bym-rsf.org.

Want to ZOOM for a better tomorrow? Here are 3 alternatives in chronological order:

1) QREC conscientious objector workshops

Now that Selective Service System (SSS) registration for the draft in most states is automatic when getting a state driver's license, Quaker youth and other youth of faith can easily miss the chance to claim status as a conscientious objector (CO). If the draft is reinstated, they could have as little as nine days to prepare a CO claim before having to go before a local draft board.

The Quaker Religious Education Collaborative will offer a four part workshop on how to consider their beliefs about the peace testimony and how to claim CO status, if led to do so.

- [December 27](#)
- [January 3](#)
- [January 10](#)
- [January 24](#)

Click [here](#) for info. and to register.

2) Learn to (virtually) lobby in 30 minutes with FCNL!

With a new President, new Congress and, possibly, changed Senate, 2021 may offer tremendous opportunities to re-start national policies as to: COVID, the environment, social justice, and even international peace.

But how and where can you start? On [Tuesday, January 5, 2021, at 6 p.m.](#), FCNL offers to teach us all, in 30 minutes, how best to lobby Congress under virtual, COVID conditions.

Click [here](#) for the webpage to register.

3) BYM workshop - Immigration & refugees: updates & actions

The BYM Peace and Social Concerns Committee will conduct a zoom workshop on [Saturday, February 13, 10:00 am to noon](#) on immigration and refugee issues and policies at the national and state level.

The workshop will be led by PSC Committee member Bette Hoover (Sandy Spring Meeting, Maryland) who has substantial experience working in these areas. She will be joined by other Friends and colleagues working in these fields as we review potential positive changes under consideration in our BYM states and nationally under the new administration.

To register and, later, receive a Zoom link and more information, please click [here](#).

Lobbying for changes to police use of force and accountability?

This new year is the time for action -- contacting our legislators on a local, state and federal level, as all three have the chance & the obligation to make a difference.

Virginia & Pennsylvania, at the state level, already have enacted significant reforms. Md.is next:

Here are [five points to ask from Baltimore's FCNL Advocacy Team](#) and [more reference info. from Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform](#).

West Virginia Friends concerned about police reform issues may find resources via their state's [ACLU](#) and the [W.V. Criminal Law Reform Coalition](#).

Quaker Voice of Maryland looks to 2021:

At BYM 2019 Interim Meeting, Friends agreed that our Peace & Social Concerns Committee should support a new working group to form a Friends Committee on STATE Legislation” for Maryland --not just limited to BYM, but inviting participation of Eastern Shore meetings that officially belong to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.

[Quaker Voice of Maryland \(QVM\) now has its own webpage](#) (click here!), thanks to young Friend Molly Finch, and is headed into a second Maryland General Assembly Session.

After a well-attended Maryland Friends’ Zoom meeting in June and a statewide survey this fall, QVM selected four main issue areas for 2021 action. These include:

- *Criminal Justice and Law Enforcement Reform*
- *Climate Justice*
- *Expanding Access to Health Care*
- *Gun Violence Prevention and Peace Building*

Please click above and sign up to receive a newsletter and action alerts for the Md. General Assembly Session which will begin on 1/13/21.

BYM Friends from D.C., Virginia, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania feeling left out? If you want support for similar organizing in your area, let your BYM Peace and Social Concerns Committee know by emailing: peace@bym-rsf.org.

FOOD BANKS AND HOMELESS SHELTERS NEED MORE SUPPORT THAN EVER IN THESE COVID TIMES

Some Friends Meetings have emptied the accounts that they have kept for social concerns, sending donations to local shelters and food banks.

Others have organized virtual fund-raising via Holiday Markets with online orders and drive-by pick-ups.

How has your Meeting responded to the increased pandemic needs -- of the unemployed and disadvantaged in our communities (hunger, homeless, children who can’t effectively learn in remote-schooling without functioning internet access)? Please send your ideas via email to peace@bym-rsf.org.

LOOKING AHEAD TO A LIKELY-VIRTUAL 2021 BYM ANNUAL SESSION -- AND DISCERNMENT ABOUT REPARATIONS

BYM’S Reparations Action Working Group (RAWG) has continued to meet faithfully through the pandemic months, offering “21-day Challenge” programs and workshops.

RAWG will invite local Meetings to begin their own discernment and possible leadings about reparations in relation to our U.S. history and present-day systems that leave African-American, Native-Americans and other nonwhite families with only a small fraction of the economic opportunities of white Americans.

If you have questions or suggestions you’d like that RAWG planning group to consider, they meet next on 1/27/21. Before then, please email: peace@bym-rsf.org!

SHARE PROGRAMS OR INFORMATION WITH OTHERS AROUND BALTIMORE YEARLY MEETING: Please email to pcaorum@gmail.com, &/or visit our Face Book page at <https://www.facebook.com/bym.psccl/>