

Horsham Friends Meeting Lobbying Minute
Minuted 19 May 2024 DRAFT

As described in Faith and Practice (<https://www.pym.org/faith-and-practice/faith-reflected-organization/friends-meetings/>), Horsham Friends Meeting believes:

- “Friends meetings are spiritual communities of people who gather for worship, business and friendship.”;
- “Friends ... meetings ... supports the spiritual, social, educational and material needs of its members.”; and
- “Friends meeting offers members a place to test leadings and convictions based on a shared appreciation of individual and corporate spiritual direction. A commitment to undertake action ... can result when Friends labor together to discern God’s way toward witness in the world.”

Horsham Friends Meeting also believes the following from “God’s Big Tent”

(<https://www.pym.org/quakerism/gods-big-tent/>):

- “The Religious Society of Friends is a religious organization, not a political one...”;
- “Individual Quakers may and often do disagree with various political and foreign policy positions taken by Quaker-related organizations, and with individuals who express their views in various Friends publications.”; and
- “Many Friends are politically involved and active which we believe is the right and duty of all of us living in a democracy.”

Horsham Friends Meeting also supports the finding from Legislative Policy Collaborative Report, 2023

(<https://www.pym.org/sessions/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2023/07/LPC-Report-2023.pdf>):

- “Although individual members of PYM may lobby under the umbrella of FCNL (as it maintains at 501(c)(4) tax status), any use of PYM’s data bases or means of communication (newsletters, announcements at monthly meetings, etc.) which encourages people to lobby for the particular outcome of legislation, can endanger PYM’s 501(c)(3) tax status.”

Based on discussions from the past Abington’s Quarterly meeting held at Horsham:

1. Horsham Friends believe the referenced passage above should be more definitive in meaning and direction. Horsham Friends, instead, recommends:
PYM acknowledges and encourages “individual Friends” to follow their leadings to lobby for particular legislative outcomes. However, to protect PYM’s 501(c)(3) tax status, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting and its “member Meetings” should not use their resources to promote a particular legislative outcome or encourage individual Friends to do so.
2. Horsham Friends believe meetings should support the spiritual and educational needs of their members and be a place to test leadings and convictions to discern God’s way toward witness in the world.
3. Horsham Friends believe it is the right and duty of all of us living in a democracy to be politically involved and active.
4. Horsham Friends value the diversity of views held in good faith by other Friends within PYM. Horsham Friends encourage the use of the Friends Council on National Legislation (FCNL) or other lobbying groups to advocate for individual Friends’ tested leading and convictions.

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References

Friends Meetings (<https://www.pym.org/faith-and-practice/faith-reflected-organization/friends-meetings/>) and Faith and Practice (Revised 2018) III Faith Reflected in Our Organization A. Friends Meetings Page 44

Friends meetings are spiritual communities of people who gather for worship, business and friendship. These meetings are the center of Quaker community life and also the foundation of the structure of the Religious Society of Friends. The Friends meeting holds meetings for worship weekly or more often and supports the spiritual, social, educational and material needs of its members. Through active engagement in their meeting, Friends find both a caring and safe environment and the challenge of spiritual growth. A Friends meeting offers members a place to test leadings and convictions based on a shared appreciation of individual and corporate spiritual direction. A commitment to undertake action, often expressed in a “minute of concern,” can result when Friends labor together to discern God’s way toward witness in the world.

The Friends meeting may own and manage property, engage in significant social action, and operate schools or other institutions. It has sole authority to enroll or release members and to oversee marriages. The meeting may undertake any action or assume any function consistent with the principles and practices of the Religious Society of Friends.

God’s Big Tent (<https://www.pym.org/quakerism/gods-big-tent/>)

We wish to affirm our belief that Quakerism is God’s “big tent,” politically. We welcome people with all sorts of political beliefs—Republicans, Democrats, conservatives, liberals, socialists, Libertarians, and Independents—to the Religious Society of Friends. The Religious Society of Friends is a religious organization, not a political one, though many Quakers join together in common political pursuits. Nor is the Society of Friends affiliated with any political party or position. Individual Quakers may and often do disagree with various political and foreign policy positions taken by Quaker-related organizations, and with individuals who express their views in various Friends publications.

Many Friends are politically involved and active which we believe is the right and duty of all of us living in a democracy. The Religious Society of Friends and our individual Friends meetings extend a warm welcome to all regardless of political interests and/or party affiliation.

Legislative Policy Collaborative Report, 2023 (<https://www.pym.org/sessions/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2023/07/LPC-Report-2023.pdf>)

“Although individual members of PYM may lobby under the umbrella of FCNL (as it maintains at 501(c)(4) tax status), any use of PYM’s data bases or means of communication (newsletters, announcements at monthly meetings, etc.) which encourages people to lobby for the particular outcome of legislation, can endanger PYM’s 501(c)(3) tax status.”