

The Friends Committee on Washington State Public Policy was organized in 1997 by the Pacific Northwest Quarterly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), including Friends Meetings and Worship Groups throughout Washington State affiliated with the North Pacific Yearly Meeting. The excerpt below describes the early history of Quaker Voice (up to 2001).

Friends Public Policy Work in Washington State

by **Daniel Clark** (*Excepted from Memoirs of an Activist, a work in progress, 2001.*)

Quakers have long been concerned with public policy issues, beginning with their early experience with questions of religious liberty, the conditions in prisons where they were often thrown, mental institutions, the institution and abolition of slavery, issues of war and peace, and social and economic justice. The concern of Quakers for the sanctity of all people has led to the establishment of a number of Quaker organizations whose central purpose has been to affect public policy or those with authority over it, including Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL); the Quaker Office at the United Nations (QUNO); in California, the Friends Committee on Legislation (FCL); and the Friends Committee on Maine Public Policy (FCMPP).

In 1996, Quakers involved in supporting a Friends worship group at the Washington State Reformatory at Monroe raised the need for such a public policy committee in Washington state, particularly in the area of prison and criminal justice policy. The idea was then presented to Pacific Northwest Quarterly Meeting of Friends covering Washington and Idaho which recognized the need for such a group and encouraged its creation. Later in the year, when Walla Walla Friends received a letter from those exploring the idea seeking support for it, we were excited at the prospect and responded positively but heard no more.

At North Pacific Yearly Meeting's annual session in July of 1997 in Spokane an interest group was scheduled to discuss the idea further, but when I arrived I was told that there hadn't been sufficient support to proceed, and

that the group had been cancelled. Not wanting to see a good idea fail, I urged those who had been working on it to meet over lunch, and as a result we formulated a plan to meet again in Olympia in early September and to bring a detailed proposal to the Fall Quarterly Meeting at Lazy F Ranch near Ellensburg on September 27. Those involved in one or both of these planning meetings were Olympia Friends Tammy Fellin, Mike Hubbart, Naki Stevens and Bob and Nancy First; Port Townsend Friends Bob Royce and Dave and Della Walker, and Steve Wilson of University Friends Meeting in Seattle. We were encouraged by the example of the Friends Committee on Maine Public Policy, which had been formed in 1992 under the leadership of retired FCNL executive director Ed Snyder, and which we used as a model for our proposal.

After the Olympia gathering, I drafted a Proposal for a Friends Committee on Washington State Public Policy (Quaker Voice), together with a proposed minute by the Quarterly Meeting approving the creation of Quaker Voice as an independent body composed of representatives of all interested Friends meetings and worship groups in the state affiliated with the Quarterly Meeting “for the purpose of informing Friends on public policy issues and providing timely opportunities for the expression of Friends’ concerns to public officials and others involved in the making of public policy.” These documents were approved by our organizing committee and by the Quarterly Meeting at Lazy F.

I had also drafted proposed articles of incorporation for Quaker Voice as a 501(c)(4) lobbying organization, a provisional nineteen-page policy statement based on the excellent statement developed by FCNL over the years, an ambitious timeline which would allow us to become operational by the start of the 1998 legislative session on January 12 as an alternative to waiting a year, and a draft letter to the Friends meetings and worship groups in the state. These, too, were approved by the organizing committee. As a result, as clerk of the organizing committee, the day after the Lazy F meetings ended I was able to send off a letter to Friends throughout the state announcing the formation of our new organization, inviting the appointment of representatives to serve on its steering committee and to attend an initial meeting to be held in Olympia

November 15 and 16, and thanks to the Walla Walla Friends Meeting, letting them know that we had already received a pledge of \$500 towards a first year budget of \$4000.

At our November meeting at Black Lake Bible Camp near Olympia, steering committee representatives and organizers signed articles of incorporation, revised bylaws I had drafted, adopted the comprehensive policy statement, developed a list of eight potential broad-area policy priorities to be sent out to Friends bodies around the state for individual and group rankings, named both an interim executive committee and lobbying team, set the organizational meeting of the Quaker Voice corporation at University Meeting for January 10, two days before the opening of the legislative session, considered a few other items, and heard a talk from State Senator Karen Fraser on issues for the upcoming session. All of this had come together very quickly, and with an unusual ease that said we were doing something right.

From there, we went through a period of extraordinary difficulty dealing with a key member who wanted to lobby for Quaker Voice but did not have the confidence of Friends. After a series of executive committee meetings by conference call dealing mostly with administrative details related to arranging and equipping shared office space in Olympia, the steering committee met on January 10 and approved working committees in each of the eight general policy areas, while establishing criminal justice, economic justice, and peacemaking as priorities. The other areas were education, health, the environment, civil rights, and civil society.

During the 1998 session, our lobbying team made up entirely of Friends living in Olympia met weekly to evaluate the legislative hearing schedules and calendars and sent out ten alerts to our network of meeting representatives, contacts and other interested Friends on a variety of issues across the policy spectrum. We also set up an office, created a website, established a communications network, testified at a couple of hearings, and gained experience as to the large volume of legislation introduced of potential interest to Friends.

In evaluating the experience immediately after the session, we noted that none of our three priority working groups had yet met. In preparing for the 1999 session, in place of the lobbying team we created a legislative committee with broader representation, which passed on alerts from the Washington Association of Churches and supplemented them with several of its own. We also wanted to focus on a single priority working group to move beyond our status as a group of generalists and develop an in-depth focus in order to gather and effectively apply the expertise of Washington Quakers to legislative and executive action in a particular policy area. Though we had created a useful structure, we lacked focus. To accomplish this, we issued an invitation to each of our priority groups to meet, define its policy focus, and assess its resources for affecting public policy in its particular area, and to then make a proposal for the selection of its work as the primary policy focus for Quaker Voice. Unfortunately, none responded.

Following the 1999 session, it was even more clear to me that what Quaker Voice needed was one or more people with passion for a particular policy area who would provide the leadership necessary to move us from a reactive stance to a proactive one. At our steering committee meeting in connection with the Spring Quarterly Meeting at Lazy F, I suggested that we lay down our theoretical priorities and instead invite Friends with a passion and a willingness to work on it to utilize Quaker Voice as a vehicle for realizing their goals, assuming they were within our broad policy parameters. I then challenged everyone there to ask themselves what the single most important policy goal is for them personally.

The Prison Reduction Campaign

When I issued that challenge to all of us, I had no idea of what my personal response would be. The next morning, I woke up at 4 a.m. and immediately knew what my personal policy passion was. It was to try to reduce the out-of-control growth in our prison populations.

From my experience with jails and prisons as an attorney, I've always felt that they weren't a good place for human beings. Though they need to exist to house some violent criminals, they should be used sparingly and for

relatively short terms in most cases. Since 1980 we have done just the opposite. The United States incarcerates five times as many people per capita as Canada and 7 times as many as most European democracies, while the number of U.S. citizens imprisoned has tripled since 1980. The direct economic cost of housing a prisoner for one year, not counting costs of construction, is \$22,000, more than the average cost of a year's education at a public university. The average prison bed costs \$100,000 to construct, with about another \$100,000 in financing costs. Imprisonment without treatment is not effective in protecting the public, since recidivism rates for released offenders are approximately 75%, considerably more than for offenders managed in the community. Public funds spent on community management of offenders, on crime prevention, and on risk reduction programs instead of on prison beds yield more public safety, help preserve family units, and contribute to improving our general quality of life.

As corrections costs continue to consume a larger part of our public budgets each year, leaving less for roads, schools and other public infrastructure, it's clear that our society can't afford the economic and social costs of the current overuse of imprisonment. Effective alternatives to imprisonment of offenders include electronically-monitored home detention, monitored work and rehabilitation program attendance, random drug testing, drug treatment, community service, financial restitution, victim-offender mediation, and family group conferencing, among others, as well as preventative programs such as community policing, community recreation, education, job training, and other means to lower the risks factors for community safety violations and to restore the capacity of victims and offenders as productive citizens. Believing that Washington State should adopt the reduction of its prison populations as a major goal toward achieving a safe and just society for all of its citizens, I proposed that the Friends Committee on Washington State Public Policy work with state corrections officials, the legislature, and other interested people and organizations toward achieving that goal and offered to lead a criminal justice working group for that purpose.

The Study Phase In order to move toward that goal, in May 1999 I proposed a six-part, one year work program. The program began with a period of

study to develop some additional expertise on the workings of the current criminal justice system as well as promising alternatives, to be followed by consultation with other organizations, state administrators, and key legislators, the drafting of specific proposals, legislative advocacy, a public education campaign, and the evaluation of what we had accomplished. During the study phase, I reviewed recent state legislation and the current sentencing structure, and read literally all of the research and statistical reports published over the past several years by the Washington State Department of Corrections, the Washington State Institute for Public Policy, and the Washington State Sentencing Guidelines Commission, the three primary state agencies working in this area, as well as information available through national centers such as the Sentencing Project.

Although I had hoped there would be a written overview of the criminal justice system in Washington state that I could pass onto the other members of our working group, I never found one, so I wrote a six-page overview myself. This document is currently available on our Quaker Voice website, www.quaker.org/fcwpp, and was ultimately sent to every legislator in the state as well as to the other officials, and received considerable praise. In addition to reviewing all of the changes made in state sentencing law over the past 15 years and how they have increased prison populations, as well as the growing costs of imprisonment, the paper outlines the various options for holding the line on further prison growth or returning to current capacity while maintaining or increasing public safety.

Consultation and Public Education By August, we were ready to begin our consultation phase. A key body involved in sentencing policy is the state's sentencing guidelines commission, composed of the Secretary of the Department of Corrections, the administrator of the Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration, two judges, two prosecutors, two defenders, two local officials, a representative of the Sheriffs and Police Chiefs Association, a victim advocate, a representative of the state Office of Financial Management, and two citizen members.

In August, the commission's executive director, Roger Goodman, was in Walla Walla on some prison business, and I was able to meet with him to discuss our project. I pointed out to Roger that the state's prisons were 50% over their design capacity, and that state law requires that the commission "recommend to the governor and the legislature revisions and modifications to the standard sentence ranges, state sentencing policy, prosecuting standards, and other standards," and that "if implementation of the revisions and modifications would result in exceeding the capacity of correctional facilities, then the commission shall accompany its recommendations with an additional list of standard sentence ranges which are consistent with correctional capacity." He was sympathetic with our purposes, but said that the commission was too timid and political to do that and that it would never happen. I talked by phone later on with one of the defense lawyers on the commission, who agreed with Roger, and suggested that the only way to accomplish this would be to try to get the legislature to specifically direct the commission to address the problem.

Part of our consultative strategy was to enlist a group of allies to work with us on these issues. In September, we invited potential allies to meet with us at Lazy F Ranch near Ellensburg for our Fall steering committee meeting. Several organizations expressed an interest in working with us on the issue, including the Washington Association of Churches (WAC), the Catholic Archdiocese of Seattle, the Washington Catholic Conference, the Washington Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, and the ACLU, among others. Lobbyists Sara Merten Fleming of WAC and Kevin Glackin-Coley of the Archdiocese came to Lazy F to meet with our criminal justice working group and to speak to the Quaker Voice steering committee, which had laid down its previous priorities and adopted the reduction of the prison population as a new priority. We were also fortunate that one of our working group members, Judy Brown, had invited criminologist Roger Lauen, an attender at Agate Passage worship group on Bainbridge Island who was the former director of community corrections for the state of Colorado. Roger had just written a second book published by the American Correctional Association, and became an important partner in our effort.

While consulting with allies, we also took the first step in our public education plan, which involved producing a basic letter on the general need to reduce prison populations to be sent by Friends to each major newspaper in the state as well as to their legislators. This letter or some form of it was published in a variety of newspapers, including the Seattle Times, the Tacoma News-Tribune, the Olympian, the Yakima Republic, the Tri-City Herald, and the Walla Walla Union-Bulletin. It also became the basic letter of our campaign, which ultimately went to all legislators, Sentencing Guidelines Commission members and others, also appears on our website. We also wanted to meet with editorial boards, and were in fact able to meet in November with a representative of the editorial board of the Seattle Post-Intelligencer, which published a favorable editorial during the legislative session.

Besides consulting with allied lobbyists, a critical element in our work plan was to consult with administration and corrections staff, as well as key legislators and legislative staff to learn their views on prison growth and to seek their advice on how best to proceed. As far as administrators, in addition to director of the Sentencing Guidelines Commission, we wanted to meet with the secretary of the Department of Corrections, the director of the Washington Institute for Public Policy, and the governor or at least the governor's criminal justice advisor, among others. In November, Roger Lauen and I scheduled a week of meetings in Seattle and Olympia with public officials and invited our allies to join us. As an introduction, we sent all of the officials we planned to meet our letter of general concern about prison populations and our overview paper, along with a draft legislative agenda we had prepared for discussion purposes.

Our first meeting was in Seattle with Al O'Brien, the Democratic co-chair of the House Criminal Justice and Corrections Committee and a retired policeman, for which Sara Merten Fleming, the lobbyist for the Washington Association of Churches joined us. I explained to Al that a Sentencing Guidelines Commission member had told me that a comprehensive review of state sentencing policy was needed after 16 years of piecemeal amendments to the Sentencing Reform Act, but that the commission wouldn't do such a review without specific legislative direction.

He was very sympathetic, and told us to draft a bill for his consideration as the prime sponsor. He also advised us that since the membership in the House was split 49-49 between Democrats and Republicans we should discuss the issue with his Republican co-chair Ida Ballasiotes, who I had talked with by phone along with other legislators but who wasn't able to meet with us.

Our next meeting was with Jeanne Kohl-Welles, a progressive Democratic senator from Seattle who served as a senate liaison to the Sentencing Guidelines Commission for which Eric Paige, a lobbyist for the Washington Catholic Conference joined us. Jeanne also indicated a willingness to sponsor a bill, and said she would ask Bernie Ryan, the senior counsel to the senate Democratic caucus, to help us with the process. In Olympia Roger and I had a good meeting with the Secretary of the Department of Corrections Joe Lehmann, the governor's criminal justice advisor Dick VanWagenan, and the director and chief of research of the Washington Institute for Public Policy, Roxanne Lieb and Steve Aos, as well as senate staffer Bernie Ryan, Roger Goodman and his research director at the Sentencing Guidelines Commission, and others.

We also talked with the fiscal note coordinator in the Office of Financial Management regarding the need for a longer and more detailed fiscal analysis of sentencing bills, whose increased costs usually run far beyond the normal six year analysis. We had drafted a bill to address this, but it appeared from what we learned that this could be done administratively without legislative action, so we decided not to pursue that for now.

The Proposal

There are many ways to address prison growth issues, the most common of which is to attempt to reverse or oppose one-by-one the incremental lengthening of sentences and the continual creation of new crimes which have been occurring in recent years. After our study and consultations we decided on a more comprehensive approach to the fiscal and social problems created by the runaway growth in prison populations, and accepted the invitation to draft a measure mandating a comprehensive

review of the entire state sentencing policy. After some intricate debate about the whether the measure should be a bill or a resolution, we drafted House Concurrent Resolution 4426 and Senate Concurrent Resolution 8418 mandating the comprehensive review of state sentencing policy by the Sentencing Guidelines Commission, including consideration of cost effectiveness, fiscal impacts, prison capacities, and alternatives to confinement for nonviolent offenders, with required recommendations to the legislature by December 1, 2001 to include an alternative sentencing grid within existing prison capacity. We first circulated the draft resolutions within Quaker Voice, to our allies, and to the public officials we were consulting with, including Bernie Ryan and Roger Goodman with whom we worked closely. We then revised the draft for presentation to our proposed sponsors.

Legislative Advocacy

Sponsors. Our actual lobbying began with the effort to secure the most favorable sponsors in each house. Our goal was to secure prime sponsorship by the chairs of the relevant policy committees to which the resolution would be referred. In December during the week when the party caucuses and most of the legislative committees meet to prepare for the January legislative session, Roger Lauen and I went to Olympia again.

Our first break came when Al O'Brien signed our resolution in the house as the primary sponsor and obtained the sponsorship of 15 other house members, including his Republican co-chair, the other three Democrats on his committee, and three other house Republicans including two conservatives from east of the mountains. The three remaining Republicans on his committee declined to sign. In the Democratically-controlled Senate, it wasn't clear which of two committees the resolution would be referred to, so we approached the chairs of both Human Services & Corrections and Judiciary, and both agreed to sponsor it.

Jim Hargrove, the Human Services chair was more conservative and became the prime sponsor, but the resolution wound up in Judiciary. Five other senators joined as sponsors, including Judiciary chair Mike Heavey

and vice-chair Adam Kline, Jeanne Kohl-Welles, Democratic Whip Rosa Franklin and Republican Jeanine Long who served on both committees.

Senate Judiciary Committee. Because 2000 was only a 60-day supplemental legislative session, it was important to get an early hearing in each house. After Roger Lauen flew off to winter in Mexico, in January I returned to Olympia as a registered lobbyist for Quaker Voice and began to work with the committee chairs as well as Sherry Appleton, the contract lobbyist for the two statewide criminal defense organizations we were working with, and Sara Merten Fleming of WAC.

At our first hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee on January 21, even though our sponsors told us to keep it short because we already had the necessary votes, we wanted to use the occasion for some general education and were wary of Pam Roach, an outspoken Republican senator who serves on the committee, is also a liaison to the Sentencing Guidelines Commission, and who had stalked out of the commission's legislative committee meeting in December after hearing discussion about the resolution, threatening to take the issue on talk radio.

Because the Sentencing Guidelines Commission normally works through consensus, and tends to be dominated by law enforcement, we had not intended to formally seek the commission's endorsement, since we were unsure what the results might be. We had, however, mailed each commissioner a letter urging their individual support, and had enclosed a copy of the resolution, our general letter of concern, and our overview paper. After Senator Roach's outburst though, the commission scheduled a formal discussion of the resolution for its January legislative committee and commission meeting. Though the senator didn't show up, I attended and spoke at those meetings, and while many questions were raised, at the end of the discussion to everyone's surprise the commission unanimously endorsed the resolution and agreed to send representatives to testify for it at the legislative hearings. The commission's only request was that an additional clause be added providing that it consult with all interested organizations and individuals, and that adequate funding be provided. Several members of the commission even took the opportunity to publicly

praised our overview paper, and the new chair of the Indeterminate Sentencing Review Board asked for permission to send it out in a regular mailing to key state officials.

At the televised hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee, I submitted the amendment we had drafted at the request of the commission, and led off the testimony followed by a panel of witnesses we had organized including King County Superior Court Judge Brian Gain on behalf of the Sentencing Guidelines Commission, Kevin Glackin-Coley representing both the Washington Catholic Conference and the Archdiocese, Sara Merten from WAC, and a member of one of the defender associations. A representative of the Washington Association of Counties also weighed in to support the resolution, encouraging consideration of local costs and capacities. No one spoke in opposition, and Senator Roach was fairly well-behaved.

At its next meeting the Judiciary Committee unanimously approved the resolution and our amendment after two further amendments were ruled out of order. The first was from the vice-chair Adam Kline to require a separate death penalty study by the commission. Quaker Voice had joined a coalition of organizations supporting a bill providing for a death penalty moratorium and a study by a special task force, which wasn't going anywhere, so the proposal had come up to have the SGG conduct the study, but the commission didn't want to touch it. The second amendment ruled out of order was a poorly drafted proposal by Pam Roach to include wording assuring the review of the some existing sentencing options she opposed, despite assurances that this was already covered by the resolution.

After the committee's action, in order to avoid a fight on her amendment on the floor of the full senate, at the suggestion of the prime sponsor I meet with her and presented some additional wording we had drafted which was satisfactory to all parties, and which was then was given to the committee's staff to be prepared as a floor amendment in the senate, and also as an amendment to the house resolution.

House Criminal Justice and Corrections Committee. Our next hearing was on January 25 before the House Criminal Justice and Corrections Committee, at which the same organizations testified, and endured only minor questioning by the Republican co-chair Ida Ballastiotes, a house liaison with the Sentencing Guidelines Commission. Two days later the resolution was reported out unanimously by the committee, including the two additions we had presented at the request of the commission and Senator Roach.

Senate Ways and Means Committee. The fiscal analysis prepared by the commission showed a cost of approximately \$160,000 to complete the study, so our next task was the scheduling of a hearing before the fiscal committees of each house. I had been communicating with Valoria Loveland, the chair of the Senate Ways and Means Committee and the senator from my district, since mid-summer and knew she was sympathetic. The committee gave us a hearing on February 1, and the resolution was unanimously reported out the next day and referred to the Rules Committee for possible floor action.

House Appropriations Committee. The House Appropriations Committee, which was in charge of writing the supplemental budget for the legislature that year, took a different tack. Rather than giving the resolution a hearing and reporting it out for floor action, Republican co-chair Tom Huff preferred to simply provide funding for the study and include the wording of the resolution as a budget proviso. Although we continued to lobby for a hearing on the resolution itself, it never happened, and since there were some potential problems with the budget-only approach, we decided to continue with a two-track strategy and sought to move the Senate resolution to the floor.

Senate Rules Committee. Once the resolution was favorably reported out by the Senate Ways & Means Committee, we lobbied to have it reported out to the floor from Rules. Here the advantage of our decision to present the measure as a resolution rather than a bill became clear, since resolutions are not subject to deadlines for committee or floor action as bills are. In order to move a matter from the Rules Committee to the floor, each Rules

Committee member is given a certain number of “pulls”, and a measure first has to be selected by a member from the general list at one committee meeting then approved for floor referral at another meeting. Though this was a tedious process which took two weeks, with help from our allies, including Jerry Sheehan of the ACLU, the resolution was at last sent to the floor.

Senate Caucus Action. The final step before calendaring a measure for floor debate and a vote is consideration and approval by the majority caucus. Since there are usually more bills awaiting action than time allows, we were glad when Judiciary Committee chair Mike Heavey won caucus approval by stepping forward and insisting that our important measure be calendared.

Senate Vote. Finally, on February 18 the resolution was debated and approved by the full Senate, though not without some drama. Although the amendment we had drafted for Senator Roach had been suggested by the prime sponsor Jim Hargrove and later discussed with Judiciary chair Mike Heavey, they apparently forgot this and when it was introduced by Pam Roach they protested and accused her of surprise tactics. Fortunately our other sponsors came to the rescue, and the amendment and the resolution itself were unanimously adopted by the senate and referred to the House.

House Criminal Justice and Corrections II. The last hearing on the senate version of the resolution occurred in the House Criminal Justice and Corrections Committee, which had already approved the identical house version. On February 25, after a brief hearing, the resolution in its senate version was again reported out and referred once more to House Appropriations which would not hear it.

The Budget Battle. By this time, full funding for the first year of the study together with the full wording of the resolution other than the introductory “whereas” clauses had been incorporated into both the House Republican and House Democratic budgets. The only discrepancy was a line referring to the previously enacted legislative intent “to emphasize confinement for the violent offender and alternatives to confinement for the violent

offender,” which was missing in the Republican version. The problem was that because of the standoff in the House, it was possible that no House version of the budget would pass, and that instead a budget prepared by the Senate would be adopted, as had occurred the previous year.

So our next task was to be sure the provisions of the resolution were also included in the Senate budget. After more communications with the Senate Ways and Means staff and chair, the Senate budget was released with the full funding and language of the resolution, except for the same missing clause. Sometime afterwards the house issued a bipartisan budget, which again included the language and funding for the study, and this time including the missing clause, but both the regular session and a special session called to complete the budget ended with no budget agreement.

The governor then called a third session and announced he would issue a new version of his own original budget which had not mentioned the study. I contacted the governor’s criminal justice advisor to request that the study provisions be included in the new budget, which they were, except for the same missing clause. Since we felt the missing clause set forth an important standard for sentencing reform but wanted the measure to maintain a low profile, we quietly pointed out the difference to the Senate Ways & Means chair as well as the governor’s criminal justice advisor, encouraged them to accept the House bipartisan version with the clause in it, which is what happened. On April 27 a negotiated budget compromise was adopted by both houses that included funding for the study and every word of our resolution, and the legislature adjourned.

Evaluation

Several factors contributed to the success of Quaker Voice’s efforts, including the period of study we undertook, our work with allies, the consultations we engaged in with public officials prior to proposing legislation, the drafting of a practical proposal, our flexibility regarding the two amendments, and our persistence in shepherding the measure through the many stages of the legislative process. At the beginning we were told not to get our hopes up, that most proposals take about five years to get

through the legislature, and that the most we could expect was a hearing by a friendly committee chair. When we were through and had secured the passage of a measure with every word intact mandating the review all aspects of state sentencing policy in an election year with bipartisan support and no vocal opposition, one agency official exclaimed, “You performed a miracle!” The director of another called the effort “a model of citizen legislative advocacy which could be a case study for other organizations seeking to affect public policy.”

Admittedly, securing the unanimous approval of the state senate, the criminal justice policy committees of both houses, and the sentencing guidelines commission itself was an unexpected achievement. A key factor was the initial period of study, which increased our own understanding of the criminal justice system, enabling us to speak with more authority and to produce a useful overview paper and a successful analysis of where opportunities lay for significant change.

Consultation with allies and public officials before drafting a specific proposal was also important, as was working closely with them on proposed amendments and legislative strategy, and sharing specific lobbying tasks. Though we received advice and help from allies and friendly officials, it was also critical that Quaker Voice take primary responsibility for its own measure by monitoring and directly guiding its progress through the legislative process. The information and assumptions passed on to us by others were always in good faith but were occasionally erroneous, and first-hand verification and communication was vital.

As to the public education and grass roots elements common to legislative efforts, because of the lack of vocal opposition to the resolution, we intentionally minimized letter writing to newspapers and legislators during the session, in order to keep a low profile. Nonetheless, our initial success in the letters-to-the-editor columns and on the editorial page is a useful preface to what will undoubtedly need to be a more intensive grass-roots campaign in the future, both on this issue and others.

Our success can be largely attributed to our having taken the initiative on an issue for which the time was right for a variety of fiscal and social reasons, and having done so in an open, collaborative way. The Sentencing Guidelines Commission has been devoting the bulk of its time since receiving the mandate to completing the required study and formulating its recommendations, and has involved Quaker Voice and other stakeholders in every step of the process.

The results remain to be seen, but it is clear that the substitution of treatment for incarceration for many nonviolent drug offenders is a major part of the answer to successfully holding the line on further prison growth. It is also clear that the 2002 legislative session when the commission's recommendations will be presented for action will be a demanding one for Quaker Voice and for other advocates of a more civilized and effective way of dealing with public safety problems.