In 2019, you helped us advocate for a more peaceful and just world in the name of Christ.

**You wrote letters.**
5,128 emails to Congress

**You read.**
35 articles published

**You visited.**
212 meetings with policymakers, 72 of them including constituents or MCC partners

**You volunteered.**
11 volunteer advocacy coordinators
4 interns
1 job-shadow participant

**You signed up.**
458 new advocates receiving action alerts

**You listened.**
1,650 people attended our speaking engagements

Above: Staff of the MCC U.S. Washington Office. Left to right, John-Michael Cotignola Pickens (Criminal Justice Education and Advocacy Coordinator), Kate Parsons (Legislative Associate for International Affairs), Estefania Martinez (International Fellow), Tammy Alexander (Senior Legislative Associate for Domestic Affairs), Charles Kwuelum (Legislative Associate for International Affairs) and Rachelle Lyndaker Schlabach (Director).
A local congregation speaks out

What happens when a congregation asks for resourcing on how to advocate on immigration? Our office responds!

In October, Tammy Alexander traveled to Riverside, California, to speak at Madison Street Church, a Brethren in Christ congregation. She gave a sermon about immigration advocacy and spoke about federal spending issues during the Sunday School hour.

The next day, Tammy accompanied 11 members of Madison Street to Rep. Mark Takano’s local office where the group shared their personal experiences with immigration and their opposition to more immigration enforcement and border militarization.

Advocacy coordinators meet

The third annual meeting of our Volunteer Advocacy Coordinators Network took place in Washington, D.C., October 14–15. Participants learned about federal immigration spending and met with staff in 13 congressional offices and with one senator in person. The network is an effort to increase advocacy throughout the U.S. through engagement with our office.

First person: Estefania Martinez, international fellow

My name is Estefania Martinez. I am from El Salvador and I am serving as an international fellow at the MCC Washington Office as part of MCC’s International Volunteer Exchange Program (IVEP). I am doing research on the root causes of migration with a special focus on Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador. I also analyze U.S. policies on immigration and foreign policy and create educational and advocacy materials.

Stay informed!

Get the latest news, resources, events and opportunities to take action. Sign up to receive immigration action alerts at washington.mcc.org.

Join us in 2020 to advocate for migrants

MCC is celebrating 100 years! As in 1920, much of MCC’s work continues to be with people who have had to leave their homes. Throughout 2020 we will have a special advocacy focus on migration. Look for more information and resources beginning in the spring.

Sharing perspectives from Honduras and Mexico

In April we hosted staff from three MCC partner organizations in Honduras and Mexico as part of Ecumenical Advocacy Days. Aracely Medina (left), Mercedes Perez Reyes (second from left) and Aldo Ledón met with congressional staff and others to share insights into the root causes of migration and how they are working for peace.
Together we advocated towards living sustainably.

Empowered to talk about climate change

In March, the Board of Reference for the Center for Sustainable Climate Solutions (CSCS) met in Washington, D.C. CSCS is a collaborative initiative of Eastern Mennonite University, Goshen College and MCC.

The group visited more than 20 congressional offices to advocate for better policies to address climate change, including federal funding to assist vulnerable communities around the world.

For many board members, it was the first time that they had engaged in advocacy and they were surprised by the willingness of the congressional staff to discuss climate change.

Resources available

An introduction to carbon pricing
What is a carbon tax and what are the pros and cons of such proposals, particularly for vulnerable communities?

Election resource: Climate change
Sample questions and tools for engaging with candidates on the issue of climate change.

Find both resources at washingtonmemo.org/environment.

You Got Booked

Want to learn about mass incarceration? MCC has developed an interactive learning exercise called “You Got Booked.” The exercise works well for ages high school and up. Encourage your congregation to experience it. Contact John-Michael Cotignola-Pickens at johncotignola@mcc.org to have “You Got Booked” facilitated for your group.

Video on mass incarceration

MCC has produced a new 16-minute video on our responsibility as Christians to respond. Online at mcc.org/mass-incarceration.

Ecumenical Advocacy Days

April 24–27, 2020
Washington, D.C.

Around the world, vulnerable communities disproportionately experience the impacts of the climate crisis. Join us to imagine and advocate for an Earth and its people restored. More at advocacydays.org.
Responding to Ebola

Earlier this year the Trump administration put restrictions on assistance to some countries as a result of their record on human trafficking. The Democratic Republic of the Congo was one of those countries. While well-intended, the restrictions have prevented some U.S. funding from being disbursed to fight the Ebola outbreak in DR Congo. The outbreak is the second worst in the disease’s history.

Sen. Bob Menendez (D-N.J.) introduced the Ebola Eradication Act (S. 1340), to grant a waiver so the aid could be released. But the bill needed Republican support.

Our staff met with a number of Republican offices, sharing stories from DR Congo. Grassroots constituents also reached out to their senators.

Soon afterwards, Sen. Todd Young (R-Ind.) and Sen. James Inhofe (R-Okla.) added their names as cosponsors. On September 23 the Senate passed the Ebola Eradication Act.*

Congressional briefing on Nigeria

In January Charles Kwuelum spoke on a panel to discuss credible elections in Nigeria and policies to prevent violence. The briefing happened about one month before Nigeria held national elections. It addressed various conflict dynamics in the country, including the militant group Boko Haram and Nigeria’s military response to it, and the tension between herders and farmers.*

Ministerial on religious freedom

In July Charles Kwuelum attended the State Department’s second Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom, where he was able to contribute his perspective on Christian-Muslim dynamics in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Ibanda (right) is pictured with congressional staffer Alexandra Davis.

Pastors call for increased foreign assistance

Each year the Interfaith Working Group on Foreign Assistance brings faith leaders to D.C. to advocate for funding for poverty-focused development. Two Mennonite pastors joined the effort last year: Ry Siggelkow (right) of First Mennonite Church in Minneapolis and Gordon Smith (left) of Mennonite Community Church in Fresno, Calif., here with Charles Kwuelum.
Together we advocated towards peace in places of conflict.

Responding to national service recommendations

The topics of peace and conscientious objection bring a diverse array of Anabaptists together. In June our office helped to convene a meeting to discuss interim recommendations of the National Commission on Military, National and Public Service. Congress formed the Commission to review the Selective Service System, including whether women should be required to register, as well as ways to increase overall participation in service.

Participants sent a letter to the commission outlining their shared perspectives (washingtonmemo.org/ncmnps-letter). The commission is expected to present final recommendations in spring 2020. ⭐

Advocacy works! Restoring humanitarian assistance to North Korea

Mennonite Central Committee has provided humanitarian assistance to the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK, or North Korea) since 1995. In pediatric hospitals supported by MCC, children’s beds sport bright handmade comforters, children eat meals supplemented by nutritious canned meat and surgeons operate with tools donated by MCC.

This support was threatened in September 2018 when the U.S. began to block U.S. humanitarian workers from entering North Korea. The Commerce Department also began to deny most licenses for shipments of food, medicine and medical supplies.

Our office stepped into action, visiting 22 congressional offices and meeting with high-level officials at the State Department to advocate for policies that would allow us to continue our humanitarian work. MCC supporters took action as well, writing to their members of Congress in support of humanitarian assistance.

This pressure was successful! In early 2019, the Treasury and Commerce departments granted us licenses to continue our humanitarian assistance. The State Department also reversed their travel policy, and an MCC delegation was able to travel to North Korea in May 2019 to ensure that the supplies we sent reached the children and families that needed them. ⭐

Current legislation

Visit washingtonmemo.org/legislation to see legislation that our office is working on and where your member of Congress stands.

Kate Parsons joined an MCC monitoring trip to North Korea in October. The delegation visited three pediatric hospitals supported by MCC.
when you are in Washington, D.C. and attend Ecumenical Advocacy Days, April 24–27.

Sign up to receive our alerts and monthly updates. Visit washington.mcc.org.

Organize a meeting in your legislator’s local district office. See how at washington.mcc.org.

Support our work through a financial gift to MCC.

Create videos and essays for our high school public policy contest.

Speak out for migrants as part of our centennial initiative. Stay tuned.

Come see us when you are in Washington, D.C. and attend Ecumenical Advocacy Days, April 24–27.