

## *Friends Affirm God-Given Rights*

Since the United States was “conceived in liberty,” we have held dear the God-given rights of equality, freedom, and opportunity to thrive. Similarly, we members of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) trace our embrace of equality to the words of our founder, George Fox, that “there is that of God in everyone.” As citizens and as people of faith, we are dismayed when our nation’s actions stray from our founding beliefs. Quakers also believe in a life of integrity: we aim to make our words and deeds match our stated beliefs. We are poorer as Americans and we deny that of God in others when we as a nation bully, kill, take away homelands, or otherwise engage in violence, including denying due process to those we imprison or failing to hold accountable those who sexually abused children.

Additionally, Friends believe that God is present not only in each person but in the natural world, where we may find comfort and the face of the divine. Undermining the protection of land, water, and air quality threatens human health and our future, and denies the interconnectedness of all living things.

It is time to restore our civic faith and affirm the moral value of civil rights and of nature. We call on public servants—elected officials, emergency responders, and government employees—to respect the dignity and rights of all persons and of the natural environment upon which all our lives and our future depend.