

Texas Impact report to SCYM Representatives' Meeting, November 19, 2022

SCYM has 2 designated representatives to Texas Impact, a statewide nonprofit faith-based organization that works to influence Texas legislators and legislation: Andrea Beane and Joanna Vaughn. This is our second 2-year period in this position. This report is from Joanna Vaughn.

On July 10, 2022 Andrea and Joanna attended an in-person Texas Impact (TI) Board Members' weekend workshop here in Austin, led by Bee Moorhead, TI's dynamic director. There were about 25 other people attending, from various faith traditions and areas of Texas: Christians, Jews, Quakers, but as far as I know, no Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus. I'm not sure if there were any Catholics. There were a few people of color.

Our first activity was a Talanoa Dialogue, in which everyone is equal and everyone is heard—as in Quaker practice. We shared the issues we can't stop thinking about. For me, it was the Death Penalty. The weekend was about setting TI's legislative priorities, and concrete steps/individual actions.

As “religious leaders” we are asked to put the legislative priorities into religious language, and to speak both to our congregations and to legislators.

TI has a studio for recording podcasts, as well as a website, and Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts. We are all encouraged to follow and read/listen, “tag” and share content.

Facebook: Texas Impact

Instagram- @tximpact

Twitter- @TXImpact

Looking ahead: Tuesday morning January 10th at 9:30 a.m: the opening of the first day of the Texas Legislative session, which starts at noon. It opens at 9:30 with an Interfaith Service of Public Witness which can be watched online.

1/28-31/23 is United Women in Faith weekend: texasimpact.org/uwf-2023 which includes a virtual option, and Joanna will attend. Quaker women statewide are welcome, too. It costs about \$100 for the virtual option, and that brings me to a concern Andrea and I have had about the financial expectations of TI Board membership, which is what we find ourselves part of as SCYM's representatives to TI.

Previously, TI expected \$100/person membership fee from SCYM representatives, in addition to SCYM's organizational membership donation of \$200/year. We have been told that previous SCYM representatives paid their own (annual) fee, which has been increased to \$200/person. We have not yet paid, as we do not feel comfortable paying this ourselves, and SCYM has not yet sent anything to TI for us. We trust this will be resolved soon. We did pay \$30 each for the food we enjoyed while at the Board Meeting workshop. We have considered asking Friends Meeting of Austin's Peace and Social Concerns committee to reimburse us for that expense, and I (Joanna) have asked FMA's PSC that the payment for my virtual participation in the upcoming United Women in Faith workshop be reimbursed.

There is a Muslim Capitol Day event, in February. 3/10/23 is the end of Bill filing and the beginning of hearings and legislative testimony. We expect to be “on call” here in Austin, to participate in the “ministry of presence” through meetings with legislators, letters, emails, phone calls and social media postings. We encourage all SCYM Tx. monthly meetings and members to go online to texasimpact.org to see their legislative priorities and to get involved, as individuals or as a congregation.

