

Quaker Voice Legislative Report 2020

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Priority	Bill Number	House	Senate	Governor	Current Status
Environment & Peace					
Clean Fuels	HB 1110	Passed 53-43	Stopped In Senate Transportation Committee	N/A	Returned to House Rules Committee
Nuclear Weapons	SJM 8006	N/A	Senate Rules Committee	N/A	Returned to Senate State Government Committee
Climate Standards	HB 2311	Passed 55-41	Passed 28-21	Signed 3/19	Effective 6/11
Reusable Bag Act	SB 5323	Passed 67-29	Passed 33-15	Signed 3/25	Effective 6/11
Sustainable Farms & Fields	SB 5947	Passed 74-22	Passed 43-6	Signed 4/3	Effective 6/11
Criminal Justice					
Ban Private Prisons	SB 6442/HB 2576	Passed 64-33	Passed 29-20	Signed 4/2	Effective 4/2
Abolish the Death Penalty	SB 5339	Stopped in Rules Committee	Passed 28-18	N/A	Will be reintroduced next year
Voting Rights for Persons Released From Prison	SB 6228	N/A	Stopped on Senate Floor	N/A	Will be reintroduced next year
Post-Conviction Review Board	HB 1591	Stopped in House Appropriations Committee	N/A	N/A	Will be reintroduced Next Year
End Debt-	SB 5076	N/A	Senate	N/A	Senate

based Driver's License Suspensions			Rules Committee		Rules Committee "X" file (Will no longer be considered)
Bail-Jumping	HB 2231	Passed 54-42	Passed 26-20	Signed 3/18	Effective 6/11
Economic Justice					
TANF Improvement	HB 2441/SB6478	Passed 57-40	Passed 30-18	Signed 4/3	Effective 7/1
HENS Funding	BUDGET	\$75m increase (over 5 years)	\$26m increase (over 5 years)	\$15m increase (over one year)	Signed 3/31
ABD Funding	BUDGET	\$2.5 million increase	\$2.5 million increase	Signed 3/31	Signed 3/31
TANF Funding	BUDGET	N/A	N/A	N/A	Funding Unchanged
Paying Deposits in Installments	HB 1694	Passed 54-44	Pass 30-17	Signed 3/27	Effective 6/11
Just Cause for Evictions	HB 2453	House Rules Committee	N/A	N/A	Will be reintroduced next session
REET Exemption	HB 2634	Passed 94-4	Passed 46-2	VETOED	Will be reintroduced next session
Fruits and Vegetables	BUDGET	\$2 million	\$2 million	Signed 3/31	Signed 3/31
Working Families Tax Credit	HB 1527/SB 5810	No Action	No Action	N/A	Will be reintroduced next session

Highlights:

- Washington State will enact new greenhouse gas emission benchmarks for state agencies and the state as a whole.
- Washington State banned private prisons for state facilities.
- This year saw a large increase in investment in the Housing and Essential Needs (HENS) fund, which targets the most vulnerable people in Washington state without immediate access to Federal aid.
- A bill allowing tenants to pay deposits in installments will lower barriers to housing for low income people

Environment & Peace

Successful bills:

- **HB 2311** updates Washington State's standards and goals for emissions to match the latest climate science, tying them to 1990 levels rather than 2005 levels and creating a faster timeline for a transition to a green economy.
- **SB 5323** makes it so plastic bags issued by retail establishments must be reusable and made from 40% recycled materials. This should lead to more use of compostable bags over non-reusable options.
- **SB 5947** develops a sustainable farms and fields grant program in consultation with WSDA, Washington State University (WSU), and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) within the United States Department of Agriculture. This program will disburse funds to help farmers successfully deliver carbon storage or reduction; provide up-front payments for contracted carbon storage; down payments on equipment; purchases of equipment; purchases of seed, seedlings, spores, animal feed, and amendments; services to landowners, such as the development of site-specific conservation plans to increase soil organic levels or to increase usage of precision agricultural practices, or design and implementation of best management practices to reduce livestock emissions.

Efforts to Continue Next Session:

- **HB 1110** was one of the most controversial bills we lobbied on this session, and would reduce emissions from transportation fuels by 20 percent by 2035 through a combination of agency rulemaking and tax incentives, including introducing a system of tradable credits for

companies making reductions in carbon emissions. One striker which was proposed to help make it pass replaced it with a carbon fee, but it was still stopped in the Senate Transportation Committee.

- **SJM 8008** This resolution would have requested that Congress establish a system of checks and balances to ensure that the President no longer has sole authority to launch nuclear weapons except in retaliation to a nuclear attack and make it the policy of the United States not to use nuclear weapons first.

Criminal Justice

Successful bills:

Although the passage of new bills fell below the Criminal Justice Working Group's expectations this year, we have been remarkably pleased with the success in implementing the corrections ombuds bill that we championed for many years until its passage in 2018. But first, two bills we supported this year are becoming law:

- **SB 6442** prohibits contracts by the WA Dept. of Corrections for privately-operated prisons. It was passed by the legislature, signed by the Governor, and is now law.
- **HB 2231**, "bail-jumping" bill that will reduce penalties for not appearing in court, which tend to affect low-income people most, was passed by the legislature, signed by the Governor, and will become law in June of this year.

Efforts to Continue Next Session:

Unfortunately, several of our priority issues were not resolved this session and await further work next session, including:

- **SB 5339**, abolishing the Death Penalty. This passed the Senate and received favorable vote in House Public Safety Committee, but unfortunately never received a vote in the full House. With some shuffling of House leadership, we have reason to hope for a better result next session.
- **SB 6228**, restoration of voting rights for persons released from prison but under community supervision. This bill was unfortunately stopped on the Senate floor this session.

- **HB 1691**, establishment of a system for review for possible release for persons serving long-term sentences such as 15-20 years.
- **SB 5076**, reforming of debt-based suspension of drivers' licenses.

Quaker Voice understands that we are in this work for the long haul. For many bills, success requires several sessions, as was the case for establishment of the corrections ombuds office and reform of legal financial obligations.

In fact, following many years of advocacy, the corrections ombuds office was set up in late 2018. It is a continuing success for us. Housed in the governor's office, and led by the very talented and energetic Joanna Carns, this office uses a hands-on approach and processes many concerns and grievances from persons in prison, proactively visiting prisons to talk with the residents as well as staff and administrators, and works closely with the families of those in prison. Quickly noting that the grievance procedure then in place was not effective for many individuals, the Ombuds office convinced the Dept. of Corrections to establish a workgroup with diverse representation to resolve concerns; this workgroup has come to consensus on a number of solutions.

In April, Director Carns, along with Rep. Roger Goodman and Governor Inslee's Criminal Justice Policy Advisor Sonja Hallum visited the prison at Monroe after a disturbance there to speak to individuals and conduct a welfare check for COVID-positive individuals in isolation. Several days later the Governor announced the release of many of those confined. Director Carns also hosts weekly phone calls with families of those in prisons and others to share progress and answer questions. While maintaining a very busy schedule, she has kept in continual contact with Quaker Voice and other organizations involved with the ombuds work.

Economic Justice

Successful bills:

- **HB 2441 further reforms** Washington's TANF program, Workfirst, to be more accessible to families struggling to survive. It requires DSHS to waive sanction policies for people who do not meet the obligations of the Workfirst

program in good faith, such as providing childcare needs. It passed both houses, was signed by the Governor and goes into effect on July 11, 2020.

- **HB 1694**, which allows tenants to pay deposits in up to three separate installments, should improve housing stability for low income people by greatly reducing one of the primary financial barriers to moving as a tenant.

Bills we will work on next year:

- **HB 2453**, which would require landlords to provide just cause before evicting tenants, was stopped in the Senate. It will be reintroduced next session.

Funding:

Quaker Voice supports increased funding for the **Housing and Essential Needs (HENS) program**, which provides a small sum in rental and survival assistance for people who are unable to work. The legislature increased funding for this program by about \$15M, on top of the underlying budget of about \$72M. This represents a 20% increase to the funding of the program. Fortunately, this was not cut out of the budget at the last minute due to the impending economic crash, but we may have to defend it in a special session. We also thankfully achieved a full \$2 million funding request to fund the farmers market program to provide low income families with fresh fruits and vegetables.

The Aged, Blind, and Disabled (ABD) grant received no significant increases in its allocation of the budget. Unfortunately, the final budget also included no significant increase in funding for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

Revenue:

While we did pass **HB 2634** which exempts nonprofit housing from the real estate excise tax, this was vetoed by Governor Inslee in light of the impending revenue shortage. The Working Families Tax Credit, which would help to reform WA's tax system to be more progressive, did not move forward this session.

Thank you, Friends, for all of your ideas, advocacy, and faith. We look forward to working with you next session!