

2021 WASHINGTON STATE Legislative Session Accomplishments

WHAT HAPPENED THIS SESSION?

The 2021 session of the Washington State Legislature met almost entirely virtually - for the first time ever! Despite the technological challenges and reduced volume of bills considered on the floor, the Legislature passed policies of critical importance to our community. They made historic investments in the state's safety net to help meet the needs of low-income and communities of color who have borne a greater share of the impacts of the pandemic.

Your Jewish Federation is excited to share that **75%** of the bills we lobbied for passed and all of the budget items were included in the final biennium budget!

Highlights from the state legislative session are below and the full list of legislative results from this session is [here](#).

LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS:

ANTISEMITISM AND HATE CRIMES

Restorative Justice - Hate crimes don't just harm the victim(s), they instill fear in entire communities. Restorative justice has the potential to help survivors and communities heal and prevent future hate crimes by ensuring offenders understand the harm of their actions. The Legislature allocated \$200,000 to research the use and effectiveness of restorative justice practices in connection with hate crimes and recommend whether Washington should begin a restorative justice pilot program.

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The partnership and support we received from the Federation helped JFS advocate effectively for our clients and the programs upon which they rely. Our collaboration with the Federation was key to the historic investments the Legislature made in programs to help the most vulnerable.”

CAROLYN HATHAWAY,
JFS Government Affairs Committee Chair



STRENGTHEN CIVIL LIBERTIES AND MINORITY RIGHTS

Juvenile Access to Attorneys, [HB 1140](#) - Young people have a limited understanding of their rights and of the consequences of waiving their rights. They are vulnerable to being pressured into making false confessions, acting against their interests, and making statements they believe law enforcement wants to hear - vulnerabilities that can have life-long consequences. This legislation ensures children are protected by requiring they be given access to an attorney for consultation before waiving their constitutional rights.

You can find the full results of the legislative session [here](#).

WORK TOWARDS RACIAL EQUITY

Independent Investigation and Prosecution, [HB 1267](#) - When law enforcement is tasked with investigating deadly-force incidents involving their colleagues, those investigations are not always conducted independently or properly. Creating an independent agency to do this work ensures a greater likelihood that justice is served for victims, and allows law enforcement to begin to rebuild trust with their communities. This legislation establishes an independent, non-law enforcement agency charged with investigating deadly-force incidents to ensure accountability, transparency, and integrity.

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It was great to hear about current bills in Olympia that affect education, higher and early learning, makes me want to find a way I can contribute and have a sense of belonging to the Jewish community in Seattle.”

JEWISH COMMUNITY MEMBER
AFTER THE EVENT In the Wings
with the Jewish Caucus | Part 2

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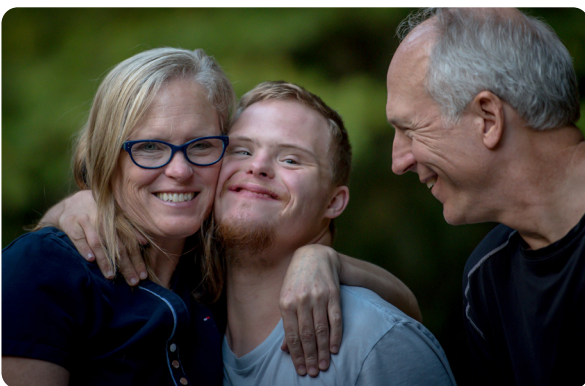
The Federation's government affairs team is a critical partner in helping the ADL advocate effectively. From their strategic guidance only a phone call away, to their hands-on tactical support in pulling together a meaningful lobby day. We are grateful for their support!”

MIRI CYPERS,
ADL Pacific NW Regional Director



PROTECT AND SUPPORT IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

Medicaid Postpartum Expansion, [SB 5068](#) - Healthy moms are critical for healthy families. But currently, Medicaid coverage expires just 60 days after a baby is born. This leaves 45% of women who rely on that assistance unable to access critical treatment for common postpartum issues like gestational diabetes, high blood pressure, and depression. By extending coverage to a full year, this legislation makes it possible for women to access the care they need, prevents pregnancy-related deaths, and helps set up families for healthy and successful futures.



DEEPEN THE SAFETY NET FOR VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES

Increased TANF funding - The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (TANF) is a lifeline for families living in poverty. Most parents on TANF work, but still do not make enough to afford the basics, like food, housing, and healthcare. The Legislature increased funding for TANF by 15% this session - the single largest increase since the program's inception. Increasing TANF benefits helps families meet their basic needs and promotes a more equitable economic recovery.

PREVENT GUN VIOLENCE

Improving Civil Protection Orders, [HB 1320](#) - Protection orders are the most survivor-centered and effective response for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and harassment. But obtaining an order is an arduous and complicated task. This legislation modernizes and streamlines the process to obtain a protection order, making it more accessible and effective. Improving the protection order system will help ensure survivors and their families are able to get the swift help and safety they need.

You can find the full results of the legislative session [here](#).