

# 2023 Legislative Summary

## Racial Equity Team

Dr. Bernal C. Baca, Chair  
Miriam Winnie, Racial Equity Team Coordinator

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### Introduction

The Racial Equity Team which began 12 years ago, serves as a non-partisan forum for identifying and sharing legislative and procedural actions that impact, involve, or specifically address communities of color in Washington State. Membership in the Racial Equity Team is voluntary and includes individuals, for-profit and not-for-profit organizations, educational institutions, and local and state governmental entities. The members analyze legislative proposals for their impact on communities of color utilizing a Racial Equity Impact Assessment .

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The Racial Equity Team convenes weekly hybrid meetings every Tuesday to discuss items on the legislative Watchlist and share information with the Racial Equity Team members, legislators, and staff. The coordinator provides regular legislative watchlist updates and disseminates action requests to members, legislators, agencies, State officials, and staff using email.

During the 2023 Legislative Session the Racial Equity Team worked on 30 bills of which 10 have been signed by the Governor and two were partially vetoed. Overall, the 2023 Legislative Session had some success in services to regulating private detention facilities, voting rights, , and many more areas. The bills signed by the Governor and the bills that didn't make it will be discussed.

### **Bills that passed and have been signed by the Governor**

#### **HB 1329- Preventing utility shutoffs for nonpayment during extreme heat.**

This bill will prohibit utility providers from discontinuing electric service and drinking water, as well as requiring reconnection of these services, to residential customers on days when the temperature is forecasted by the National Weather Service to be above 90° F.

This bill passed the House 64-31. In the Senate it passed 29-20.

Bill Sponsors: Mena, Alvarado, Berry, Duerr, Leavitt, Morgan, Ramel, Ryu, Senn, Simmons, Timmons, Kloba, Bateman, Slatter, Orwall, Reed, Lekanoff, Gregerson, Doglio, Tharinger, Cortes, Donaghy, Pollet, Callan, Fosse, Macri, Davis, Stonier

Companion Bill: SB 5366

The Office of the Washington State Attorney General supported this bill.

#### **HB 1048- Voting Rights Act**

Ensuring that eligible voters are not impaired in registering to vote or voting including having their votes counted; and ensuring that voters of race, color, and language minority groups have equitable access to fully participate in the electoral process in registering to vote and voting free from improper dilution or abridgement of voting power.

This bill passed the House 57-38. In the Senate it passed 27-21.

Bill Sponsors: Mena, Simmons, Goodman, Berry, Ramel, Peterson, Pollet, Doglio, Macri, Morgan, Wylie, Gregerson, Bergquist, Street, Cortes, Santos, Ormsby, Farivar

Companion Bill: SB 5047

One America, Food Lifeline, BIPOC ED Coalition, Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle, and Communities of Concern Commission supported this bill.

### **SB 5128- Concerning jury diversity.**

Requires the Administrative Office of the Courts to collect data on juror demographics and establish a childcare assistance program workgroup. Provide additional compensation for jurors who qualify for means tested state-run benefits programs. Permits electronic service of jury service summons.

This bill passed the House 89-8. In the Senate it passed 34-12.

Bill Sponsors: Trudeau, Dhingra, Billig, Hasegawa, Hunt, Kuderer, Pedersen, Stanford, Valdez, Wellman, Wilson, C.

Companion Bill: HB 1598

### **SB 5225- Increasing access to the working connections child care program.**

Expands Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) eligibility to include child care employees who have incomes up to 85 percent of the state median income and waives their copayment to the extent allowable. Directs the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) to establish and implement policies to allow WCCC eligibility for families with children who in the last six months have a parent or guardian participating in a specialty or therapeutic court. Prohibits DCYF from considering the immigration status of a WCCC applicant or consumer's child when determining eligibility.

This bill passed in the house 81-16. In the Senate it passed 36-13.

Bill Sponsors: Wilson, C., Conway, Frame, Hasegawa, Hunt, Keiser, Lovelett, Nguyen, Salomon, Shewmake, Stanford, Valdez

Communities for Our Colleges supported this bill.

### **HB 1324 - Concerning the scoring of prior juvenile offenses in sentencing range calculations.**

Juvenile points accrued during youth are being automatically added during adult sentencing if the person is to reoffend. A person's brain is not fully developed before the age of 25. Allowing juvenile points automatically makes the sentencing longer.

This bill passed in the House 50-48. In the Senate it passed 26-23.

Bill Sponsors: Hackney, Senn, Simmons, Reed, Lekanoff, Doglio, Pollet, Macri

Companion Bill: SB 5475

The American Civil Liberties Union of Washington and the Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle supported this bill.

### **HB 1470- Concerning private detention facilities**

This bill creates a private right of action and civil penalties for violations of laws related to private detention facilities. Specifies conditions for the operations of private detention facilities. Also requires state and local agencies to inspect private detention facilities for compliance with food, workplace conditions, water and air quality, and performance audits. Makes private detention facilities subject to the Public Records Act.

This bill passed in the House 56-40. In the Senate it passed 29-20.

Bill Sponsors: Ortiz-Self, Chopp, Simmons, Santos, Ryu, Orwall, Chapman, Gregerson, Doglio, Peterson, Ramel, Macri, Ormsby, Berg, Leavitt, Bateman, Morgan, Fey

La Resistencia supported this bill.

### **HB 1238- Providing free school meals for all**

School meals are provided at no cost and without the barrier of applications for all Washington K-12 students. Black, Indigenous, and Pacific Islander students have the highest rates of eligibility for free or reduced-price school meals but cost and applications pose barriers to establishing eligibility for subsidized meals and stigma may pose a barrier to students consuming meals. When school meals are provided at no charge and without the need to apply to all students, we see more students eating meals at school without shame and without the worry of having to pay a copay.

This bill passed in the House 92-4. In the Senate it passed 44-5.

Bill Sponsors: Riccelli, Harris, Alvarado, Thai, Simmons, Senn, Rude, Reeves, Reed, Walen, Peterson, Ortiz-Self, Ormsby, Taylor, Leavitt, Fitzgibbon, Duerr, Doglio, Berry, Bateman, Morgan, Fey, Ramel, Goodman, Fosse, Pollet, Lekanoff, Macri, Chopp, Stonier, Gregerson, Santos

Companion Bill: SB 5339

Northwest Harvest, Food Lifeline, and the Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle supported this bill.

**SB 5200- Concerning the capital budget.**

Communities of Concern Commission budget request is included: Seeking \$1 million in the Capital Budget for project predevelopment. Many small and mid-size community-based organizations do not have the cash flow or access to fund sources to pay for pre development work that is required for some capital fund applications.

This bill passed in the Senate 48-0. In the House it passed 96-0.

Bill Sponsors: Mullet, Schoesler, Nguyen

Companion Bill: HB 1147

Communities of Concern Commission supported this bill.

**SB 5187- Making 2023-2025 fiscal biennium operating appropriations.**

\$300,000.00 in the Operating Budget for organization capacity building, technical assistance and Commission operations. There is a large unmet need for capacity building and project pre development financing in our communities.

This bill passed in the Senate 37-12. In the House it passed 58-40.

Bill Sponsors: Rolfes, Robinson, Nguyen

Companion Bill: HB 1140

Communities of Concern Commission supported this bill.

**HB 1474- Creating the covenant homeownership account and program to address the history of housing discrimination due to racially restrictive real estate covenants in Washington state.**

Creates the Covenant Homeownership Account and a document recording assessment of \$100 to fund the Covenant Homeownership Program (CHP). It also requires the Department of Commerce to contract with the Washington State Housing Finance Commission to create one or more special purpose credit programs to provide down payment and closing cost assistance to one or more economically disadvantaged classes of

persons identified in a CHP study. Commission is to complete an initial CHP study by December 31, 2023, and updated studies every five years after the initial study is complete.

This bill passed in the House 52-44. In the Senate it passed 30-19.

Bill Sponsors: Taylor, Chopp, Berg, Peterson, Reed, Stonier, Gregerson, Bronoske, Cortes, Mena, Street, Ramel, Fosse, Fey, Goodman, Duerr, Bateman, Morgan, Alvarado, Macri, Senn, Berry, Kloba, Hackney, Springer, Slatter, Callan, Orwall, Farivar, Simmons, Ortiz-Self, Thai, Ryu, Stearns, Wylie, Ramos, Doglio, Riccelli, Chapman, Santos, Davis, Ormsby, Bergquist, Pollet

Companion Bill: SB 5496

Communities of Concern Commission, and the Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle supported this bill.

### **HB 1559- Establishing the student basic needs at public postsecondary institutions act.**

Establishes a student basic needs task force on campus to help students connect with public benefits resources for which they are eligible, a meal voucher program to provide free/low-cost meals at dining halls, and navigators on all community college campuses to help SNAP-eligible students connect with SNAP and the BFET program which helps students have transportation vouchers, ESL classes, and other support needed to complete their CTC degrees/programs/certifications.

This bill passed in the House 55-40. In the Senate it passed 28-20.

Bill Sponsors: Entenman, Fitzgibbon, Stonier, Paul, Riccelli, Bergquist, Pollet, Leavitt

Companion Bill: 5566

Northwest Harvest, Food Lifeline, and the Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle supported this bill.

### **SB 5112- Updating processes related to voter registration.**

A person applying for government services that require proof of citizenship as part of that application may receive automatic voter registration services by providing the following information: name, residential address, date of birth, a signature attesting to the truth of the information provided on the application, an address where the person receives mail, if

different from the residence address, presentation of documentation as part of another government 6 transactions confirming the individual is a United States citizen.

This bill passed in the Senate 33-13. In the House it passed 57-40.

Bill Sponsors: Hunt, Hasegawa, Kuderer, Valdez, Wilson, C., Wilson, J.

Companion Bill: HB 1229

The Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle supported this bill.

### **HB 1335- Concerning the unauthorized publication of personal identifying information.**

Prohibits publication of an individual's personal identifying information without consent when the publication is made with intent or knowledge the information will be used to harm the individual, or reckless disregard for the risk of such harm, and the publication causes physical injury, significant economic injury, mental anguish, fear of serious bodily injury or death, or a substantial life disruption.

This bill passed in the House 63-33. In the Senate it passed 40-7.

Bill Sponsors: Hansen, Berry, Farivar, Taylor, Ramel, Simmons, Kloba, Bateman, Reed, Lekanoff

Companion Bill: SB 5321

The Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle supported this bill.

### **SB 5082- Encouraging electoral participation and making ballots more meaningful by abolishing advisory votes.**

The requirement that advisory votes for tax increase legislation appear on the ballot at the subsequent general election is repealed.

This bill passed in the Senate 30-18. In the House it passed 54-43.

Bill Sponsors: Kuderer, Hunt, Conway, Dhingra, Frame, Hasegawa, Nguyen, Nobles, Pedersen, Rolfes, Valdez, Van De Wege, Wellman, Wilson, C.

Companion Bill: HB 1158

The Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle supported this bill.



**SB 5208- Updating the process for online voter registration by allowing voter applicants to provide the last four digits of social security number for authentication.**

An online applicant to register to vote may use the last four digits of their social security number to verify their identity. An online applicant to register to vote not using Washington State-issued identification to verify their identity must submit a signature image to the Secretary of State, or as part of the confirmation notice process.

This bill passed in the Senate 27-18. In the House it passed 58-40.

Bill Sponsors: Trudeau, King, Hunt, Nobles, Randall, Keiser, Kuderer, Lovick, Saldaña, Hasegawa, Lias, Conway, Frame, Nguyen, Pedersen, Stanford, Valdez, Wellman, Wilson, C.

Companion Bill: HB 1443

The Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle supported this bill.

**HB 1177- Creating a missing and murdered indigenous women and people cold case investigations unit.**

Creates a Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and People Cold Case Investigations Assistance Unit within the Office of the Attorney General.

This bill passed in the House 97-0. In the Senate it passed 48-1.

Bill Sponsors: Lekanoff, Orwall, Reed, Berry, Ramel, Callan, Doglio, Timmons, Walsh, Reeves, Chopp, Duerr, Gregerson, Taylor, Wylie, Stonier, Pollet, Davis, Kloba, Ormsby

Companion Bill: SB 5137

The Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle supported this bill.

**HB 1469- Concerning access to reproductive health care services and gender-affirming treatment in Washington state.**

Restricts the ability for a court to issue, and law enforcement to enforce, subpoenas, warrants, criminal process, extradition, and other court orders for civil or criminal liability that is based on the provision or receipt of protected health care services. Defines protected health care services in Washington to include reproductive health care services and gender-affirming treatment.

This bill passed the House 59-38. In the Senate it passed 29-20.



Bill Sponsors: Hansen, Thai, Chopp, Fitzgibbon, Simmons, Berry, Slatter, Santos, Ryu, Street, Gregerson, Goodman, Peterson, Tharinger, Ramel, Macri, Ormsby, Reeves, Senn, Doglio, Riccelli, Alvarado, Bateman, Morgan, Callan, Bergquist, Pollet

Companion Bill: SB 5489

The Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle supported this bill.

**HB 1240- Establishing firearms-related safety measures to increase public safety.**

Prohibits the manufacture, importation, distribution, sale, or offer for sale of any assault weapon, subject to various exceptions for licensed firearm manufacturers and dealers, and for individuals who inherit an assault weapon.

This bill passed in the House 56-42. In the Senate it passed 28-21.

Bill Sponsors: Peterson, Senn, Alvarado, Walen, Street, Springer, Simmons, Reeves, Reed, Ormsby, Kloba, Fitzgibbon, Duerr, Doglio, Berry, Bateman, Fey, Davis, Ramel, Bergquist, Fosse, Pollet, Lekanoff, Macri, Gregerson, Santos

Companion Bill: SB 5265

The Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle supported this bill.

**SB 5078- Protecting public safety by establishing duties of firearm industry members.**

Requires firearm industry members to establish, implement and enforce reasonable controls regarding the manufacture, sale, distribution, import, use, and marketing of the firearm industry members' firearm and firearm related products. Prohibits firearm industry members from creating or maintaining a public nuisance.

This bill passed in the Senate 26-20. In the House it passed 57-41.

Bill Sponsors: Pedersen, Dhingra, Frame, Hasegawa, Hunt, Keiser, Kuderer, Lias, Nguyen, Nobles, Rolfes, Saldaña, Stanford, Trudeau, Valdez, Wellman

Companion Bill: HB 1130

The Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle supported this bill.

**HB 1143- Concerning requirements for the purchase or transfer of firearms.**

Provides that a dealer may not transfer any firearm to a purchaser or transferee until: completion of a background check indicating the person is eligible to possess firearms; and 10 business days have elapsed since the dealer requested the background check.

This bill passed in the House 52-44. In the Senate it passed 28-18.

Bill Sponsors: Berry, Walen, Reed, Peterson, Street, Bateman, Ramel, Senn, Callan, Doglio, Macri, Lekanoff, Duerr, Pollet, Davis, Kloba, Fosse, Ormsby

Companion Bill: SB 5211

The Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle supported this bill.

**HB 1447- Strengthening the ability of assistance programs to meet foundational needs of children, adults, and families.**

Amends the definition of "resource" in the general definitions related to assistance program eligibility to exempt: (1) the entire value of one vehicle, rather than a value of up to \$10,000; (2) retirement funds, pension plans, and retirement accounts; and (3) all other resources up to a value of \$12,000, rather than up to a value of \$6,000.

This bill passed in the House 62-36. In the Senate it passed 31-18.

Bill Sponsors: Peterson, Gregerson, Berry, Taylor, Simmons, Ortiz-Self, Ryu, Reed, Kloba, Doglio, Ormsby, Thai, Fosse, Pollet, Macri, Alvarado, Leavitt

The Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle supported this bill.

**HB 1110- Increasing middle housing in areas traditionally dedicated to single-family detached housing.**

Requires certain cities planning under the Growth Management Act to authorize minimum development densities in residential zones and include specific provisions related to middle housing in their development regulations.

This bill passed in the House 79-18. In the Senate it passed 35-14.

Bill Sponsors: Bateman, Barkis, Reed, Taylor, Riccelli, Berry, Fitzgibbon, Peterson, Duerr, Lekanoff, Alvarado, Street, Ryu, Ramel, Cortes, Doglio, Macri, Mena, Gregerson, Thai, Bergquist, Farivar, Wylie, Stonier, Pollet, Santos, Fosse, Ormsby

Companion Bill: SB 5190

The Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle supported this bill.

**HB 1784- Concerning hunger relief.**

Appropriates a total of \$28 million to the state general fund in fiscal year 2023 to support food assistance programs operated by the departments of Agriculture, Social and Health Services, and Health.

This bill passed in the House 95-0. In the Senate it passed 49-0.

Bill Sponsors: Gregerson, Ormsby, Duerr, Alvarado, Berry, Ryu, Bergquist, Peterson, Berg, Chapman, Mena, Lekanoff, Senn, Thai, Leavitt, Santos, Callan, Macri, Fosse, Riccelli, Doglio, Kloba, Timmons, Ramel, Bateman, Pollet

The Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle supported this bill.

**HB 1260- Accelerating stability for people with a work-limiting disability or incapacity.**

Eliminates, as of October 1, 2025, the requirement for Aged, Blind, or Disabled (ABD) program recipients to repay the state for benefits received during the same period as federal Supplemental Security Income benefits were received.

This bill passed in the House 93-4. In the Senate it passed 44-5.

Bill Sponsors: Alvarado, Leavitt, Taylor, Senn, Farivar, Simmons, Davis, Fitzgibbon, Callan, Reeves, Reed, Fey, Gregerson, Cortes, Macri, Fosse, Doglio, Pollet

Companion Bill: SB 5480

The Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle supported this bill.

**The Capital Budget**

- \$1 million for Communities for Concern Commission to fund project predevelopment.
- \$400 million for the Housing Trust Fund.
- \$40 million for land acquisition to quickly acquire land for affordable housing to be built.
- \$14.5 million for shelter and housing for homeless youth and young adults.

- \$6 million for preservation and investments in manufactured housing communities.
- \$60 million for infrastructure needed when building new affordable homes.

### **The Operating Budget**

- \$300,000 for Communities of Concern Commission to fund their organization capacity building, technical assistance and Commission operations.
- An 8% increase in the Aged, Blind and Disabled (ABD) cash grant starting in 2024.
- Over \$50 million for House Bill 1260 (Rep Alvarado) to eliminate the requirement that ABD recipients repay state support when they become eligible for federal assistance.
- A permanent ongoing increase of \$26.5 million for the Housing and Essential Needs (HEN) rental assistance program.
- An ongoing homeless services increase of 6.5%, which is a \$45 million investment in our state's frontline provider workforce.
- \$5 million for eviction prevention and increased funding for tenant's right to counsel.
- \$150 million for House Bill 1474 (Rep Taylor) to create the Covenant Investment Act to provide homeownership opportunities for people harmed by racist real estate practices like racially restrictive covenants and redlining.
- Funding was also included to make up the loss of funding for homeless services that is the result of reduced document recording fee revenue.
- \$500,000 for state nonprofit security grants which will help more organizations obtain the resources they need to secure their facilities. The Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle has been very involved with the federal nonprofit security grant program.
- \$1.5 million over the next biennium for Holocaust and Genocide Education. The Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle advocated for the funding in partnership with

the Holocaust Center for Humanity and it will enable them to expand their programming and reach more teachers and students across the state.

### **Bills that didn't make it/ Remaining Priorities**

- **HB 1189 Concerning the release of incarcerated individuals from total confinement prior to the expiration of a sentence.**
- **HB 1554 Reducing public health and environmental impacts from lead.**
- **HB 1388 Protecting tenants by prohibiting predatory residential rent practices and by applying the consumer protection act to the residential landlord-tenant act and the manufactured/mobile home landlord-tenant act.**
- **HB 1124 Protecting tenants from excessive rent and related fees by providing at least six months' notice for rent increases over a certain amount, allowing tenants the right to terminate a tenancy without penalty, and limiting late fees.**
- **HB 1228 Building a multilingual, multiliterate Washington through dual and tribal language education.**
- **HB 1045 Creating the Evergreen Basic Income Pilot Program.**
- **HB 1440/ SB 5434 Concerning the jurisdiction of juvenile court.**
- **HB 1374 Establishing the office of career connect Washington.**
- **HB 1389/ SB 5435 Concerning residential rent increases under the residential landlord-tenant act and the manufactured/mobile home landlord-tenant act.**
- **SB 5474 / HB 1432 Concerning juvenile justice.**
- **SB 5651/ HB 1723 Concerning equity and environmental justice in the growth management act.**
- **SB 5270 Limiting the department of corrections' assistance with federal immigration enforcement activities.**
- **HB 1094 / SB 5125 Creating the Washington Future Fund Program.**

- **HB 1087/ SB 5135 Concerning Solitary Confinement.**
- **SB 5451/ HB 1325 Allowing qualifying persons serving long sentences committed prior to reaching 25 years of age to seek review for possible release from incarceration.**
- **HB 1089/ SB 5114 Supporting adults with lived experience of sex trafficking.**

## Conclusion



Photograph of the original Racial Equity Team Members from 2011.

It was a significant year of advocacy for many of the Racial Equity Team's priorities. The achievements and support that our devoted members of lobbyists, activists, and community members did to help with these bills was astounding. Nevertheless, we are pleased with our success in the 2023 legislative session, but there is still some work to be done in the coming years. When the legislature resumes in January 2024, the Racial Equity Team will resume our work of advancing legislation on behalf of Washington's Communities of Color.