

Friends Committee on Legislation of California (FCLCA) Report to PYM Annual Session 2018

SUMMARY

The Friends Committee on Legislation (FCLCA) is a nonpartisan, statewide public interest lobby founded by Quakers in 1952. Our supporters include people of all backgrounds and beliefs.

For more than 65 years, we have advocated for state laws that are just, compassionate and respectful of the inherent worth of every person.

With your support in the past year, we helped to enact significant criminal justice reforms. We co-sponsored the RISE Act, which eliminated sentencing enhancements for prior nonviolent, felony drug convictions. This was historic because it was the first time the Legislature has repealed a sentence enhancement. We supported a bill that gives those that were convicted to life without parole while a minor the chance to show they have rehabilitated themselves after 25 years of their sentence. We also supported a bill that keeps more money in vulnerable families' pockets by eliminating the billing of costly administrative fees to the families of youth incarcerated in juvenile halls and camps.

We weighed in on a number of other critical issues as well, including worker protections, public health, and immigrants' rights. We helped to enact the Parent Leave Act, which will provide job-protected paid family leave to over 2.7 million workers so that parents can bond with their newborns. We helped to expand lead testing to more children, particularly those living in "hot spots" of lead contamination. And we were part of the coalition that enacted the California Values Act, which helps protect our immigrant brothers and sisters from the federal deportation machine.

There is so much more to be done! We ask for your support to make sure that FCLCA can continue to be your voice of conscience at the state capitol.

About the Friends Committee on Legislation of California

FCLCA empowers Friends to bring a voice of conscience to California politics:

- We lobby at the Capitol, where we are a constant, vigilant and well-respected presence. Our registered lobbyist weighs in with legislators at critical times when policies are evolving.
- We give you the tools to help you be an effective grassroots lobbyist yourself.
- We provide you with information and analysis to help you navigate complex issues, legislation and ballot propositions.

We are a multi-issue advocacy organization and frequently work in coalition with other organizations to co-sponsor bills, educate the public and legislators, and advocate for social justice issues.

Current Legislation

This year, we are in the midst of co-sponsoring bills with other interfaith, civil liberties, and immigrant rights organizations that would promote transparency and accountability when local law enforcement wants to acquire military equipment, as well as a criminal sentencing reform bill that would restore a judge's discretion to strike a 5-year sentence enhancement for prior felony convictions. We were successful in working with an interfaith coalition of Quakers, Protestants, Lutherans, Catholics, Jews and Muslims to lobby the legislature to include important priorities in the state budget that was passed on June 14: one will provide increased CalWORKs funding to get families out of deep poverty, and the other will expand the California Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) to many more working adults.

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Ballot Propositions

As in all election years, FCLCA prepared detailed analyses of statewide ballot propositions and disseminated our recommendations through the FCLCA Newsletter, which we publish quarterly. California's voters paid close attention to our recommendations, passing propositions to raise funds to improve state and local parks, natural resource conservation, safe drinking water and flood control; to ensure that fuel taxes and registration fees will be used for transportation purposes; to incentivize home rain-capture systems; and defeating a bill that would have required a two-thirds supermajority vote of the Legislature instead of the current simple majority requirement to spend funds from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund. It was a very successful election season for progressive values in California!

Lobby Day

We held an FCLCA Lobby Day on May 21 at the state capitol. 36 FCLCA supporters from across the state visited 30 legislative offices to advocate for our priority bills, including three of our co-sponsored bills and SB 100, a landmark environmental bill to achieve 100% clean energy by 2045.

But There's Still So Much to Do!

While we were able to expand funding for the Earned Income Tax Credit to those 18-25 years old and over 65, and provide money for tax preparation and outreach, the legislature stopped short of including undocumented workers. One of our co-sponsored bills, which would have repealed the automatic one-year sentencing enhancement for each prior prison or felony jail term, unfortunately fell short in the Senate. And we still live in a state that is doing what it can to resist federal policies that seek to undermine important environmental, public health, and human rights protections. We need your support to do the work!

Help Keep the Work Going!

FCLCA is a nonprofit 501(c)(4) organization. Individual contributors provide 90% of the financial support for FCLCA, with the remainder from Quaker Meetings and their fundraising events. We receive no government support, and in order to do direct lobbying, donations are not tax-deductible. Our sister organization, the FCL Education Fund, is a 501(c)(3) charity, and donations are tax deductible.

As in the recent past, we anticipate a significant shortfall in our budget if Friends do not step forward to support our work. To fill the deficit, we need both increased gifts from existing supporters and gifts from new donors. If you have the ability to stretch your budget to support FCLCA, we would love to have your support! Contributions can be made at our website: www.FCLCA.org.

The Boards of Directors

The FCLCA and FCL Education Fund Boards consist of James Alexander (Redwood Forest), Steve Birdlebough (Redwood Forest), Peggy Craik (Conejo Valley Worship Group), Ellen Eggers (at-large), Jim Eusebio (Davis), Shannon Frediani (Santa Cruz), Carolyn Keys (Sacramento), George Millikan (Berkeley), Stephen Myers (Sacramento), Shelley Tanenbaum (Strawberry Creek), and Vicki Carroll (Clerk) (Central Coast).