

Quaker Voice Annual Legislative Report for 2024

This was a session of baby steps, rather than great leaps forward, towards the state of Washington we seek. The supplemental budget for the 2023-24 biennium had precious few additional resources to offer. The majority party was divided on progressive measures, enough to keep key bills from passing. The minority party agreed with the majority on many bills, but small ones. With elections looming for all the members of the state House in the fall and half the Senate, many members were not prepared to take any bold actions.

Rooted in our testimonies, Quaker Voice focuses on long-arc issues, pursuing systemic change. This was not a session where systemic change was likely to happen. Although disappointing, it was not completely surprising that none of our priority bills became session law. Some missed by one vote at a key juncture, and some of those deciding votes were from members who represent districts where we live. Others remained stalled at the points they reached last year; even our coalition efforts could not move them forward. In the wider circle of bills we supported, there were successes, as the working group reports below describe in more detail.

A bright spot in our advocacy came from our new pathway to speak out on equality issues. Friends have volunteered to monitor legislation that reflects our equality testimony in the areas we describe in our [Testimonies and Issue Areas](#) statement. This year, at the recommendation of our monitor on LGBTQ+ issues, we submitted written testimony on SB 5462, the inclusive curriculum bill. This bill prohibits discrimination in all textbooks and instructional materials and requires school boards to adopt curricula that include the “histories, contributions, and perspectives of historically marginalized and underrepresented groups, including but not limited to, people from various racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds, LGBTQ people, and people with various socioeconomic and immigration backgrounds.” It has been signed by the Governor and goes into effect on June 6.

Adding to the sense of progress temporarily thwarted, however, were six legislative initiatives, fueled by wealth, to roll back recent advances. Disguised in the language of common values, they proposed to make streets more dangerous for pedestrians, close safe spaces for students, let the super-rich off the hook for state revenue, and shred our crucial climate commitments. With heavy hearts, we saw the legislature turn three out of the six into law. Majority party leadership wanted to be able to revisit these sooner rather than later and to focus attention on stopping the other three with “no” votes in the general election in November. Quaker Voice will be asking its members to work actively on two that would force the state backwards on issues we championed in previous years: the Climate Commitment Act (vote no on Initiative 2117) and the capital gains tax (vote no on Initiative 2109). We have added [information on the initiatives](#) in the Take Action section of quakervoicewa.org and will continue to update that page as the campaigns evolve.

The next page of the report summarizes action on our priority bills from this year. Three working group reports then go into detail on bills we advocated for and supported in each area.

Final Status of Priority Bills

Bill Number	Working Group	Sponsor	Bill Descriptor	House Action	Senate Action
HB 1087	Criminal Justice	Peterson (21st)	Solitary Confinement	Stopped at Appropriations	
HB 1513	Criminal Justice	Street (37th)	Traffic Safety for All	Stopped at House Rules	
HB 1798	Criminal Justice	Doglio (22nd)	Earned Release Time	Stopped at House Rules	
HB 1045	Economic Justice	Alvarado (34th)	Improving Housing Stability	Passed	Stopped at Ways and Means
HB 2144	Economic Justice	Berry (36th)	Basic Income Pilot Program	Stopped at Appropriations	
SB 5335	Economic Justice	Hasegawa (11th)	Universal Healthcare		Did not receive hearing in policy committee
HB 1933	Environmental Stewardship	Senn (41st)	Right to Repair	Stopped at policy committee	
HB 2049	Environmental Stewardship	Berry (36th)	ReWRAP	Stopped without House vote	
HB 2253	Environmental Stewardship	Hackney (11th)	Community Solar	Stopped at policy committee	

Criminal Justice Working Group

Unfortunately, none of the three CJ Priority bills were successful this year, nor were any of our original Secondary Support bills. However, three bills that we added to our Support list late in the session did pass the legislature and were signed by the Governor. These bills are:

HB 1903. Report stolen and lost firearms to law enforcement, so that they can be tracked.

HB 2303, to modify conditions for community custody on petition from individual in custody citing changed circumstances. This compromise bill – intended to clarify some issues – also includes features that we did not support.

HB 2084. Improve training for construction trades for persons in prison, through establishment of a supervisory committee.

Priority Bills that we expect to work for again next session:

HB 1513 / SB 5572: Traffic Safety for All

Traffic stops by police have too often led to entanglement with the criminal justice system, disproportionately for communities of color. By reducing unnecessary low-level stops, this bill helps law enforcement officers focus on traffic stops related to road safety issues such as impaired/distracted driving and reckless driving. It creates grant money to help people fix their vehicles for low-level infractions. For a one-pager with more details about this bill, see [here](#). For action items including talking points, see [this page](#).

HB 1798: Earned Release Time

The opportunity for incarcerated people to earn reductions in their sentences by participating in training and educational programs provides incentives to participate and promotes rehabilitation and accountability, preparing incarcerated persons for re-entry. This bill would expand the types of sentences for which substantial release time credits would be available and help address the disproportionate prison population that is Black. Further information about the bill is [here](#).

HB 1087: Solitary Confinement

The Dept. of Corrections ended its use of solitary confinement for disciplinary purposes in 2021. HB 1087 would confirm that practice into law and extend it by prohibiting involuntary solitary confinement except for medical isolation and when there is danger to the individual or to others. Solitary confinement is traumatic and dehumanizing and harms the mental health of people subjected to it, especially those already mentally unstable and ill. Violence is often a symptom of isolation, not a cause.

Secondary Support bills, which are candidates for our efforts for next session:

HB 2287, to establish an **Ombuds Advisory Board**, passed the House 58-39, but expired in the Senate.

HB 2065, on **re-sentencing (on petition) for juvenile offenses that are no longer scorable**, i.e., making the previous law on juvenile offenses retroactive. This bill passed the House 56-41, but expired in the Senate.

[HB 1445](#). Authorize the WA state Attorney General (not just the federal Justice Dept.) to **investigate systemic law violation by law enforcement agencies. Expired in the House.**

[HB 1268](#). **Unstacking sentencing enhancements. This bill would provide discretion to judges to not add or stack enhancements on top of basic sentences. Expired in the House.**

[HB 2030](#). **Voting rights in prison. Expired in the House.**

[HB 1174](#). **Remove barriers to voting in jail (persons incarcerated in a county or municipal jail -- as opposed to a state prison -- can now legally vote, but procedures need to be established to make this feasible throughout the state). Expired in the House.**

[HB 1024](#). **Minimum wage for prison labor (currently wages for work in prison by incarcerated persons are now far below the minimum wage). HB 1024 expired in the House.**

Economic Justice Working Group

Our housing priority bill, on rent stabilization (HB 2114/ SB 5961), generated the most dramatic story of the legislative session. While the House version was moving forward steadily, the Senate version was heard by a more skeptical committee. One member of that committee reneged on her initial positive vote, preventing the bill from moving forward there. After the full House passed its version with a solid majority, leadership sent that version straight to the Senate Ways and Means Committee – where it failed again, one vote short of approval. There were active negotiations at every point, in particular over whether to exempt small landlords and at what level to cap rent increases.

The guaranteed basic income pilot bill (HB 1045/ SB 6196) was not expected to be adopted this year, but its sponsor was happy with its progress and expects to continue to build the coalition for this transformative and effective approach to creating pathways out of poverty.

The universal healthcare bill (SB 5335) also did not make any progress this year, nor was the request sent to the federal government to put conditions in place to start implementing a system when the state makes the decision to do so (SJM 8006). Changes in key decision bodies may create more possibilities next year.

There were several steps forward among the additional bills the committee supported:

- [HB 1652](#). Allows child support to be passed through to the children in TANF families at 100%, rather than having administrative fees subtracted.
- [HB 2007](#). Cash assistance (TANF) time limit extensions, to permit the Dept. of Social and Health Services to grant them beyond the federal five-year time limit in cases of hardship.
- [HB 2368](#). Authorize the Dept. of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to administer services to immigrants who are not eligible to get them from the Federal government.

Several important bills passed that took steps towards universal healthcare, with priority action from our coalition partners:

- HB 1508, Improving consumer affordability through the health care cost transparency board.
- HB 1957 Preserving coverage of preventive services without cost sharing.

- SB 5986 Protecting consumers from health care service charges for out-of-network ground ambulance services.
- SB 5213 Concerning pharmacy benefit managers
- HB 1979 Reducing the cost of inhalers and epinephrine autoinjectors.

Environmental Stewardship Working Group

While none of our priority bills moved into law this year, two of them moved closer to passage, and we learned a great deal about all of them and their prospects.

- HB 1933, Right to Repair, which we've been supporting for three years now, made progress but didn't cross the finish line. Significantly, we are now part of a coalition including the primary bill sponsor, Mia Gregerson, and will continue work on this important issue next year.
- HB Re-WRAP, the Washington Recycling and Packaging Act, made it through committee in both houses but stalled out right at the end of the session. This act, which pushes responsibility for packaging onto the producers, was new this year. A great deal of progress was made to educate people about this effective solution. We are part of the coalition that is supporting the effort; Liz Berry, the primary bill sponsor, is optimistic about the bill's success next year.
- HB 2253, Community Solar, stalled out, probably because the utilities lobbied heavily against it, saying that they already have community solar projects.

We had more positive results in our support bills, three of which will now become law.

- HB 1368, Zero Emission School Buses, requires and funds electric school buses. We had supported this bill both last session and this.
- HB 1589, the PSE Gas Ban Bill, will phase out gas hook-ups in some new construction. We had followed this bill last session and were happier with it as it was revised for this session.
- SB 6058, the Linking Bill, ties together the carbon markets of California, Quebec, and Washington. This was a new bill for us, but one we supported.

Zero Emission School Buses and The Linking Bill are important for indicating the benefit of the Climate Commitment Act, which is threatened by one of the initiatives that will be on the ballot this fall.

One of our support bills nearly made it into law.

- HB 1433, Residential Energy Scores, has support in both houses but time ran out for it to get the final needed vote. This was our second session supporting this bill; likely it will be back on our support list next year.

Other issues we followed or supported that didn't move into law were these.

- Cumulative Risk Burden (HB 2070)
- Culverts for Salmon budget issue
- The Bottle Bill (HB 1900)
- EV Battery Recycling
- Maintenance of Old-Growth Forests