

# Quaker Voice *on Washington Public Policy*

[QuakerVoiceWa.org](http://QuakerVoiceWa.org)

PO Box 452, Olympia WA 98507-0452

Summer 2024

Dear Friend of Quaker Voice,

We greet you with appreciation for your support – in prayers, personal efforts, and donations – for the work of Quaker Voice. We have never felt more optimistic about what we are doing. The legislature has made remote citizen participation easier than ever, and you have responded magnificently to our Action Alerts. Thank you!

Three strong working groups, in Criminal Justice, Economic Justice, and Environmental Stewardship, dig deeper and deeper into issue areas that speak to Quaker testimonies. Our legislative advocate team combines Quaker roots with legislative know-how to amplify our voices in Olympia.

To speak plainly, the most impactful public policy effort this year still lies ahead of us. As you may have heard, several initiatives to repeal recent legislative progress were sent to the legislature this year. To make a long story short, **we must work with our allies to defeat three of them that will appear on our November ballots**. We'll need your help. Engaging in electoral politics on ballot measures is a whole new endeavor for us.

- **Initiative-2109** would repeal the capital gains excise tax on stock and bond sales over \$250,000. This excise tax has moved our state barely out of last place for fairness in taxation, for it has had the most regressive taxes in the country—an issue we've followed for over 20 years. Passage of this measure would eliminate \$5 billion for public education, childcare and early learning over the next 5 years.
- **Initiative-2117** would repeal the Climate Commitment Act, withdrawing support for transitioning to cleaner and more efficient use of energy, and for restoring and protecting our air, land and water.
- **Initiative-2124** would allow people to opt out of contributing to long term care insurance, undermining the spreading of risk that makes insurance work.

Although we urge you to **VOTE NO on all three initiatives**, Quaker Voice will focus on defeating the two that would undo progress on issues we have championed: the capital gains excise tax (oppose I-2109), and the Climate Commitment Act (oppose I-2117). The "Take Action" section of [QuakerVoiceWa.org](http://QuakerVoiceWa.org) has background information on these two initiatives. More will be included as our understanding and the campaigns to defeat them develop. In addition, a quick online search will provide more than enough information and access to other organizations working to defeat these initiatives. As Quakers, we commend voices that speak with civility and respect about proponents of the initiatives. Your efforts opposing these initiatives, as well as your NO votes, will be appreciated.

The 2024 legislative session is now in the rearview mirror. This was a session of baby steps, rather than great leaps forward, towards the 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 in the fall for all the members of the state House 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 one bill at a time, but even that was unlikely to happen this year. Although disappointing, it was not completely surprising that none of our priority bills became 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 we describe in detail in our annual legislative report, posted on [QuakerVoiceWa.org](http://QuakerVoiceWa.org) in the “About” section.

A bright spot in our advocacy came from a new opportunity to speak out for equality. This year, at the recommendation of our monitor on LGBTQ+ issues, we submitted written testimony supporting SB 5462, the inclusive school curriculum bill. It has been signed into law and goes into effect early in the summer.

Looking to the future, the working groups are doubling down on critical issues they intend to continue pursuing next year, including:

- Affordable housing, especially rent stabilization and new housing;
- Universal healthcare and guaranteed basic income;
- Sentencing reform, release and re-entry from prison, alternatives to police;
- Conversion to clean energy, forest preservation, air quality, and environmental justice.

Needless to say, if there is a problem or issue area **you’d** like to contribute to solving, whether or not it is mentioned here, and whether you already have relevant knowledge, are willing to learn more deeply about it, or simply are tempted to join this work without knowing what you can add— let’s talk and see what develops. Begin by contacting a Board member from the Contact Us page at [QuakerVoiceWa.org](http://QuakerVoiceWa.org).

We could not be more enthusiastic about our new legislative advocate team. We have just one position, but two people have agreed to split it and join their complementary talents to the work. Paul Benz brings decades of faith-based advocacy and an incredible web of connections, while Jacob Squirrel brings deep spiritual roots, connections to Quaker community and practice, and a thirst for learning. Under their influence, we are expanding the support we give to the citizen advocacy that is at the heart of Quaker Voice. We are strengthening coalition relationships, providing more information tools, and asking for urgent action with more information on when it is needed and where.

These deeper ways of engaging in the legislative process run on two fuels:

- The dedication, energy and knowledge provided by volunteers like you in learning about issues, following legislation, and communicating with our legislators and with other supporters, typically with mutual support in our working groups;
- The professional time and expertise of our legislative advocates.

If you value this work, please become or stay involved, and contribute financially as you are able. In addition to contracting with our Legislative Advocate, we have just a few other essential expenses, such as our website and the two letters we mail Friends each year.

**One-time donations** may be made

- By sending a check to Quaker Voice Treasurer, 612 S Warner St., Tacoma, WA 98405, or
- Online at [QuakerVoiceWa.org/donate/](http://QuakerVoiceWa.org/donate/) using a credit/debit card or with PayPal.

**Automatic monthly donations** may be made by

- Asking your bank or credit union to send a monthly check to our Treasurer (usually at no charge to you or Quaker Voice), or
- Using PayPal through the link at [QuakerVoiceWa.org/donate/](http://QuakerVoiceWa.org/donate/).

**Online donations** are convenient and welcome in any amount. Quaker Voice pays between 2.5% and 3% for this convenience. Contributions to offset this expense are much appreciated.

**For questions or help arranging automatic payments, please email** [treasurer@QuakerVoiceWa.org](mailto:treasurer@QuakerVoiceWa.org).

With gratitude for all the ways you have supported Quaker Voice and each other this year,

Susan Cozzens, Clerk

K. Terry Thorsos, Finance & Fundraising

Your help defeating I-2109 and I-2117 will be much appreciated.