



FCLCA Update - October 18, 2021

Here in Sacramento, the first year of the current two-year legislative session has now come to a close. We extend a heartfelt “thank you” to all our supporters, who have allowed FCLCA – for the seventieth year – to bring a voice of conscience, based on your values and concerns, to the state Legislature.

In the first half of the year, FCLCA actively lobbied for a state budget that would respond to the needs of Californians hard-hit by the pandemic and strategically invest the state’s higher than expected revenues in the wellbeing of our people.

Earlier this summer the Legislature passed, and the governor signed, a transformational \$262 billion state budget for fiscal year 2021-2022 that, among many other provisions, offered additional financial relief for undocumented tax filers ineligible for federal relief and unemployment benefits and Medi-Cal inclusion for all income-eligible people aged 50 and over regardless of immigration status.

The budget also protected wage replacement for paid family leave and state disability insurance; instituted “Free School Meals for All,” providing free breakfast and lunch so that no child goes hungry at school; provided eviction protection and tenant rental assistance for those affected by the pandemic and increased investments in climate change mitigation.

We’d like to give you a brief update on some of the key bills that FCLCA was able to advocate on because of the contributions and activism of our supporters.

Not only did our supporters enable registered lobbyists representing FCLCA to weigh in these bills and others this year, but close to 900 constituents sent over 3,400 messages weighing in with their legislators during 2021 through our FCLCA Action Network.

Bills passed by the Legislature and signed by the governor

SB 2 – Gov. Newsom signed this bill to create a statewide decertification process for law enforcement officers who are convicted of a felony or found guilty of serious misconduct.

SB 16 - Expands the use-of-force category subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act to include a complaint alleging unreasonable or excessive force and a sustained finding that an officer failed to intervene against another officer who was using clearly unreasonable or excessive force. Signed by Gov. Newsom.

AB 1540 – Provides courts with needed guidance and ensures equitable due process when processing resentencing referrals. Signed by Gov. Newsom.

SB 81 – Legislation requiring sentencing judges to give great weight to a defendant’s mitigating circumstances when determining whether to apply sentencing enhancements was signed into law by Gov. Newsom.

AB 1276 – Gov. Newsom signed this bill to expand the plastic straws only upon request law to include other single-use food accessories, other food facilities, and third-party delivery platforms - including food that is taken away, delivered, or served on-site.

SB 343 – Gov. Newsom signed the Truth in Recycling Act to prohibit the use of the chasing arrows "recycling symbol" on products and packaging that are not recyclable.

SB 62 - Expands and strengthens enforcement of wage theft liability in the garment manufacturing industry, ensuring that retailers cannot use layers of contracting to avoid responsibility under the law. Signed into law by Gov. Newsom.

AB 1140 - Unaccompanied Immigrant Children Protections Act - Ensures that unaccompanied minors in federal custody who are held in state-licensed settings receive the same care and rights as other California children. Signed into law.

AB 263 - Requires private detention facilities to comply and adhere to all local and state public health orders and occupational safety and health regulations. Signed into law.

AB 1177 - Creates the basis for a BankCal program that would provide Californians with a zero-fee, zero-penalty public option for essential financial services. Signed by Gov. Newsom.

SB 221 - Closes a loophole in state law and regulations and establishes a clear and appropriate timely access standard for follow-up appointments for mental health care and substance use disorder treatment. Signed by Gov. Newsom.

Bills that may be acted on in 2022 – “two-year” bills

AB 1041 - rectifies an inequity in our current leave laws. Specifically, AB 1041 would allow workers to take job protected sick leave or family leave to care for a “designated person” identified by the employee when they request the time off. This change would provide important and impactful protections for workers – particularly low-wage immigrant workers, LGBTQI workers, and older workers– who need to care for a loved one with a serious illness.

AB 256 – Makes the California Racial Justice Act retroactive. The California Racial Justice Act (enacted in 2020) prohibits the state from seeking or obtaining a criminal conviction, or from imposing a sentence, based upon race, ethnicity or national origin.

AB 1395 – Legislation to codify the state’s goal to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible, but no later than 2045, and achieve and maintain net

negative greenhouse gas emissions thereafter is on the Senate Floor and will be taken up next year.

SB 300 - The Sentencing Reform Act of 2021. California law mandates a sentence of death or life without the possibility of parole for anyone convicted of “murder with special circumstances,” even if the person participated in the crime but did not kill anyone, nor intended for anyone to die. SB 300 will return to judges the discretion to dismiss a special circumstance allegation if the judge determines that a sentence of 25 years-to-life – that is, life with the possibility of parole – is more appropriate and better serves the interest of justice.

AB 256 - The California Racial Justice for All Act. Makes AB 2542, signed last year by Gov. Newsom, retroactive. AB 2542 prohibits the state from seeking or obtaining a criminal conviction, or from imposing a sentence, based on race, ethnicity, or national origin.

What's next?

Soon, here at FCLCA and FCL Education Fund we will begin our end-of-year fund campaign, where we hope to raise the funds to take us into the second year of this two-year session as a strong, effective voice for the values we all share. We'll be reaching out to our community to ask for their generous support as we prepare for another busy year here in Sacramento. Again, many thanks to our supporters around the state!

Kevan Andrea Insko, Director
Friends Committee on Legislation of California
kevan@fclca.org