

FCLCA Update on Key Criminal Justice and Environmental Bills

April 29, 2022

- AB 2167, by Assembly Member Ash Kalra, is sponsored by FCLCA, Initiate Justice and the California Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers. The bill requires judges, when sentencing persons convicted of a crime to consider alternatives to incarceration and states the Legislature's intent that the disposition of any criminal case shall use the least restrictive means possible. The bill had its first hearing in the Assembly Public Safety Committee, where it passed on a party line vote. AB 2167 now moves to the Assembly Floor.
- AB 256, the California Racial Justice Act, also by Ash Kalra, prohibits the state from seeking or obtaining a criminal conviction, or from imposing a sentence, based upon race, ethnicity or national origin. The bill is currently in the Senate Appropriations Committee where it will hopefully be taken up in late May. FCLCA helped recruit support from faith leaders and participated in a faith delegation that delivered a letter from faith leaders to Senate pro Tem Toni Atkins and to Appropriations Committee Chair Sen. Anthony Portantino.
- SB 300, the Sentencing Reform Act of 2021 by Sen. Dave Cortese, will reform California's unjust "felony murder special circumstance" law to ensure that the death penalty and life without the possibility of parole cannot be imposed on those who did not kill, nor intend that a person die, during the commission of a crime. This bill will also restore a judge's discretion to impose a sentence of 25 years-to-life when an opportunity to earn parole would best serve the interest of justice in a case where special circumstances have been charged. First degree murder convictions with a finding of a special circumstance currently require a sentence of death or life without the possibility of parole. SB 300 passed the full Senate and has been assigned to the Assembly Public Safety Committee for hearing.
- FCLCA plans to support a new bill by Assembly Member Akilah Weber to require the California Department of Education (CDE) to develop a standard model to implement restorative justice best practices on school campuses as an alternative to suspensions and expulsions. AB 2598, unanimously passed the Assembly Education Committee and now moves to the Appropriations Committee for consideration of the bill's fiscal impacts.
- A broad coalition of justice reform advocates, including FCLCA, has successfully pushed back on numerous bills that would ask voters to undo all or parts of

Proposition 47. Proposition 47, which FCLCA supported, reclassified some nonviolent felonies as misdemeanors with the savings resulting from reduced incarceration being reinvested in mental health and drug treatment, programs for at-risk students and services to victims. Though property crime rates have ticked upward in recent years, they appear to be part of a national trend and remain at historic lows; however, Proposition 47 remains a favorite target of law enforcement.

- Numerous gun control measures are moving forward. FCLCA is supporting AB 2253, by Mia Bonta, which would create the State Crime and Violence Center and requires the development of a plan to take a public health approach to gun violence. AB 2253 passed the Assembly Public Safety Committee on a party line vote and now moves to the Appropriations Committee.
- SB 260, the Climate Corporate Accountability Act by Sen. Scott Wiener, would require corporations that do business in California with annual gross revenues of at least \$1 billion to report their greenhouse gas emissions in a way that is accessible and understandable to the public in order to create transparency and hold them accountable for their GHG emissions. The bill passed the full Senate in January and should have its first Assembly policy committee hearing in May or June. FCLCA has been participating in the Fossil Fuel Divestment Coalition, which is sponsoring SB 1173 by Sens. Lena Gonzalez and Scott Wiener. The bill requires CalPERS and the STRS to divest in the largest fossil fuel companies by 2030. Despite intense opposition from the State Building & Construction Trades Council and the Western States Petroleum Association, the bill has passed both the Senate Labor and Judiciary Committees and now moves to the Appropriations Committee.
- Bills to address plastic pollution and contamination are moving forward, including AB 2026, by Laura Friedman, which will phase out single-use packaging by online retailers and AB 1690, by Luis Rivas, which would phase out the sale of single-use cigarette filters, all-in-one non-rechargeable electronic vaping devices, and plastic cigar tips. AB 2026 is now in the Assembly Appropriations Committee while AB 1690 is now on the Assembly Floor.
- AB 1931, also by Luis Rivas, requires California water agencies to complete full lead service line replacements, cease partial replacements and immediately employ safeguards to ensure that Californians are protected against lead exposure caused by lead service line replacement activity. The bill passed its policy committee hearing and is now in the Appropriations Committee. FCLCA is

also supporting AB 2771, also by Laura Friedman, to prohibit the sale of beauty and personal care products that contain highly toxic PFAS, forever chemicals. AB 2771 passed both the Assembly Environmental Safety and Health Committees and is now in the Appropriations Committee.