

Report to Friends Meetings from Friends Committee on Legislation of California

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The national political climate has lent a new sense of urgency to California's legislative session, and thanks to your financial support and activism, FCLCA is able to respond, bringing your "voice of conscience" to the Capitol. In Sacramento, things are moving along quickly – by June 2, all bills that are going to move forward this year must be out of their house of origin.

FCLCA has taken action on 65 bills this year – writing letters in support or opposition, testifying in committee hearings, making lobby visits and organizing grassroots efforts with emails, phone calls and in-district visits. You can see a list of these bills by going to www.fclca.org, and clicking on Action Center. They include

- **31 bills on criminal justice reform.** Our co-sponsored bill, Senate Bill 180, to repeal sentencing enhancements for prior drug convictions, **passed the Senate on May 15 with a vote of 22-13!** The bill's author, Sen. Holly Mitchell, has spoken of the urgent need to "begin undoing the damage of the failed War on Drugs."

FCLCA staff and supporters and our coalition partners worked hard to achieve the minimum 21 YES votes required to pass the bill. Activists sent in over 1,230 messages to their legislators via petitions and the FCLCA Action Alert system. FCLCA volunteers also attended in-person, in-district meetings with the legislators' staff – which had a big impact. **Your contributions as volunteers, activists and donors are making this year one of our most active ever in terms of grassroots involvement - thank you!**

- **13 bills on economic justice**, including important bills on expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and on expanding parental leave. In support of EITC expansion -- a key way to address California's high poverty rate -your FCLCA lobbyist testified in committee and FCLCA Action Network members generated 516 messages to legislators in 36 hours.
- **9 bills on one of this session's most important issues, protecting immigrants and religious minorities.** With your support, FCLCA has been very active in lobbying for Senate Bill 54, to make California a "sanctuary state." The great news is that SB 54 has already passed the Senate. It now heads to the Assembly where it will face an even more difficult hurdle. Along with interfaith partners like the California Catholic Conference, California Church Impact and the National Council of Jewish Women, and through a wide coalition of community organizations, FCLCA has organized petitions, visits and lobbying here at the Capitol in support of this important bill. FCLCA activists are visiting and calling their legislators in their districts in an attempt to move Assembly members from "on the fence" to a YES vote.
- **11 environmental justice bills**, including SB 623 to create a fund for safe and affordable drinking water for all Californians (did you know that over one million residents of our state face issues with unsafe drinking water?) and AB 885, which mandates schools to take measures to ensure lead-free water is available for children to drink.

More good news: Last year, FCLCA co-sponsored Senate Bill 1157, to ensure that county jails continued to provide in-person visitation between people who were incarcerated and their families. Gov. Brown vetoed that bill, but in his veto message instructed the Board of State and Community Corrections to work on the issue. FCLCA and its partners on SB 1157 have been working at the Capitol ever since to make sure a trailer bill is added to the upcoming budget package that would require all county jail facilities to provide in-person visitation now, with the exception of 8 facilities that must comply within 5 years, and prohibits counties for charging for video visitation, whether on-site or from a remote location.

On May 16, the Senate Budget Committee on Corrections approved the budget trailer bill with a bi-partisan vote of 3-0! We expect the bill to be approved by the Assembly and included in the Legislature's budget package. A great development that is in line with the goals of rehabilitation and realignment, it will mean a lot to those who are incarcerated and their families. And your support of FCLCA helped make it happen.

Because knowledge is power, the FCL Education Fund, too, is helping build the movement for a more just and compassionate California by providing detailed information on the legislative process and how to effectively weigh in through our guidebook, ***Bring Your Voice: FCLCA's Guide to Grassroots Lobbying and the California Legislature***. We've been sharing it with community organizations working on the bills we support and we're hearing back from them that they find it "extremely helpful." It's available free online:

<http://www.fclca.org/images/stories/pdfs/bringyourvoicefinal.pdf>

Opportunities for You to Lobby

Green California Advocacy Day; Wednesday, August 30 in Sacramento, Location TBA. Focus: Key environmental issues.

In-district visits: If you are interested in doing an in-district visit, contact me at kevan@fclca.org with your address and I'll let you know if your legislator is uncommitted on one of our key bills, particularly Senate Bill 180 and Senate Bill 54.

Actions you can take as individuals:

Go to <http://cqrcengage.com/fclca/home>

- Take action on any Action Alerts listed there
- Sign up to receive future Action Alerts

Join FCLCA as a contributing member at www.fclca.org. Your contributions support an FCLCA lobbyist at the Capitol and a program of grassroots lobbying to bring a voice of conscience when laws are made.

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