

# Quaker Voice *on Washington Public Policy*

[www.quakeroicewa.org](http://www.quakeroicewa.org)

PO Box 452, Olympia WA 98507-0452

August 2022

Friends,

Thank you for the many ways your support has contributed to the work of Quaker Voice this year. With it, we achieved the legislative successes described below, and also laid foundations for future efforts. We again ask for your financial help supporting our witness working to address the many challenges the state of Washington faces in creating conditions for each and every one of us to live a full and satisfying life with our essential needs met.

The 60-day legislative session in 2022 moved far too quickly. Last year, during the 105-day session in 2021, our legislators passed many bills that took big strides forward on the long-term priority issues of Quaker Voice. During the 2022 short session, the time and attention of the legislators were scarce resources. Legislators were limited in the number of bills they could introduce, and they had to abandon some important ones along the way because committees did not have time to consider them. Facing elections in newly-drawn districts with a polarized voting public, some were timid on particularly sensitive issues. In this environment, we were surprised by the progress of several bills that we thought would require longer-term educational efforts, and disappointed that others did not move closer to becoming law. There is always work for tomorrow.

Among the bills we prioritized and others we supported, three become state law:

- Another reform of **legal financial obligations** (LFOs) follows almost two decades of Quaker Voice work in this area. As you may recall, LFOs are fees imposed by the courts that imprisoned people must pay, such as court fees and restitution. Just a few years ago many of our legislators knew nothing about them. This new law expands the ability of courts to consider poverty and other mitigating factors when imposing, reducing, or sanctioning fees. (HB 1412)
- Courts can now help **returning citizens** with housing vouchers for six months rather than three after they are released from prison. (HB 1818)
- Landfills will release **less methane** into the atmosphere because of new emissions standards. Methane is one of the worst offenders contributing to global warming. (HB 1663)

Our working groups are doubling down on several other priority actions, ones that will take longer to succeed. For example,

- This year we began prioritizing **Guaranteed Basic Income**, the proven most effective way to help people get out of poverty. These grants can be used for whatever the recipients choose – school, work, food, diapers, whatever. Importantly, they can fill in the gaps between fragmented help in specific areas like housing or food. The state-level conversation started this year with a House committee hearing. (HB 2009)
- We will keep working on the **Right to Repair**, provisions to open an option of repairing rather than abandoning many electronic items in our lives. We are up against well-organized big corporations on this one. One major local firm kept out of the fray – something of a triumph in this difficult terrain. (HB 1810)
- A bill to reduce racially-disproportionate **sentencing enhancements** progressed much further through the process than many expected, passing in the House before running up against Senate hesitancy. This one will stay on our priority list and certainly be back in the coming session, with modifications that raise hopes. (HB 1169)

A new and especially important component of the work in Quaker Voice this year was not embodied in specific legislation, but rather in what we have been learning from our new contract lobbyist, Lonnie Johns-Brown. Along with values aligned with ours, Lonnie brings over thirty years of lobbying experience. As soon as she started last fall, we started meeting with legislators, getting glimpses of their plans and hopes. We delved much more deeply into every step of the pathway bills follow in their shorter or longer journeys towards the Governor's desk. She is showing us how important it is to also engage with the implementation of the bills we support, not shifting our attention once they become law. She continues to keep us informed on connections to the task forces, working groups, and agency/advocate coalitions where issues emerge.

These deeper ways of engaging in the legislative process run on two fuels: the volunteer time provided by you and our working groups in learning about issues, following legislation and communicating with our legislators; and Lonnie's professional time. The latter is supported entirely through your donations.

How we work with legislators is high on our priorities; acknowledging and respecting that of God in each of them is part of our witness.

Needless to say, if there is an issue **you** care deeply about and either already have relevant knowledge or are willing to learn more deeply about it, let's talk. We can be reached through Contact Us page at [QuakerVoiceWa.org](https://www.QuakerVoiceWa.org).

Lastly, Quaker Voice is now in the midst of discerning the scope and structure of its public policy advocacy, through consultation with those who are already active in its network and with the broader Quaker community in Washington State. The results will contribute to a new policy statement, forming the framework for Board decisions about signing on to advocacy letters and asking our activists to contact their legislators or sign in to legislative hearings—taking a pro or con position. We are leaving space for revised working group structures as Spirit leads. Please contribute to the Quaker Voices survey by answering just three questions:

1. What are the issues that concern you most in the state of Washington, at the state or local level?
2. Would you like Quaker Voice to take a position on these issues? If yes, what position?
3. On which of these issues are you willing to take action at least at the level of contacting your state legislators about it?

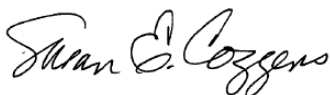
Contribute your concerns at <https://www.QuakerVoiceWa.org/finding-our-quaker-voices/>, by September 10. Responses will contribute to open discernment sessions, including one already at the NPYM Annual Session, another at Pacific Northwest Quarterly Meeting and at least one online. Look for Action Alerts on opportunities to talk over what is emerging from the responses. (Sign up for Action Alerts at [QuakerVoiceWa.org](https://www.QuakerVoiceWa.org))

If you value this work, please become or stay involved, and contribute financially as you are able. Three-quarters of our budget pays for our contract Legislative Advocate. The rest goes to essential, but less costly, expenses, such as our website and the two letters we mail Friends each year.

The financial stability provided by automatic monthly donations is deeply appreciated. Arrange them through PayPal or your bank/credit union. Financial institutions usually send automatic payments without charging either you or Quaker Voice.

You may contribute by PayPal, credit or debit card using the donate button at [QuakerVoiceWa.org](https://www.QuakerVoiceWa.org). Checks may also be sent directly to our Treasurer: Quaker Voice, c/o Noell Krughoff, 612 S Warner St, Tacoma, WA 98405. An envelope addressed to her is enclosed. Although we are asking for your financial support now, we also value other support you provide: your responses to our email alerts by contacting your legislators, your participation in our Annual Meeting and Quaker Lobby Day, and your involvement with our working groups.

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



Susan Cozzens, Clerk



Terry Thorsos, Finance & Fundraising Clerk

PS:

*Please see [QuakerVoiceWa.org](https://www.QuakerVoiceWa.org) for our 2022 Legislative Report.*