

Quaker Voice Annual Legislative Report for 2026

The 2026 legislative session was again dominated by funding issues. The state Office of Financial Management had projected a further shortfall in revenue, more than was forecast at the time of the 2025 session. Changes in federal programs were generating new needs among residents of the state, plus new implementation costs for human service agencies. More cuts were inevitable, but the time was ripe for new revenue as well.

Progressive revenue thus became a central theme of the session. This is the kind of revenue that asks the wealthiest state residents and the largest corporations to contribute the largest proportions of their income or wealth to state revenue. Financial leadership in House and Senate focused this year on a Tax on Millionaires. This is a tax on personal income over \$1 million per year. In addition to helping balance the budget overall, the bill that establishes this tax expands the Working Families Tax Credit, rolls back some Business and Operations taxes from small businesses, and provides free school lunches for all public-school students in the state. Quaker Voice supported the bill, with leadership from the Economic Justice Working Group.

Another priority for leadership in the legislature was protecting the civil rights of immigrant residents. Quaker Voice helped, through our support for the Immigrant Worker Protection Act and a bill prohibiting face coverings for law enforcement officers.

Within Quaker Voice, we experienced growth in numbers and expansion in policy areas. Our in-person Annual Meeting in the Fall of 2025 was designed to open the door for new activists, who were also supported by a follow-up workshop for bill champions. New bill champions emerged in gender justice, environmental justice, and indigenous issues.

Every working group saw increased participation. To make room for the new interests, we experimented with offering Quaker Lobby Day participants more options to discuss with their legislators, while urging them to focus on a few that were close to their hearts.

2026 continues to be an exciting time of evolution and change. Our successes and challenges are described in what follows.

Successful Priority Bills

Bill Number	Issue Area	Sponsor (district)	Bill Descriptor	House Action	Senate Action
SB 5974	Criminal Justice	Lovick (44)	Standards for law enforcement leaders	Passed (54-42)	Passed (30-19)
SB 5855	Criminal Justice	Valdez (46)	Face coverings for law enforcement	Passed (56-37)	Passed (30-19)
HB 1859	Economic Justice	Salahuddin (48)	Faith-based housing incentive	Passed (94-1)	Passed (48-1)
HB 2105	Economic Justice	Ortiz-Self (21)	Immigrant Worker Protection Act	Passed (56-38)	Passed (27-21)
SB 6346	Economic Justice	Pedersen (43)	Tax on Millionaires	Passed (51-46)	Passed (27-22)
HB 1903	Environmental Stewardship	Mena (29)	Statewide Low Energy Assistance Program	Passed (60-33)	Passed (35-13)
SB 6355	Environmental Stewardship	Hunt (5)	Electric transmission system	Passed (66-27)	Passed (32-17)
HB 2103/ SB 6004	Environmental Stewardship	Stearns (47)/ Boehnke (8)	Designating nuclear as green energy	Success-fully blocked	Success fully blocked
SB 6081	Gender Justice	Pedersen (43)	Privacy of sex designation	Passed (57-36)	Passed (30-19)
HB 1604	Gender Justice	Salahuddin (48)	No strip searches for gender ID	Passed (56-39)	Passed (30-19)

Criminal Justice

Given budget constraints and concerns about the federal government, we realized that criminal justice legislation would be difficult this year. Although our three original Priority bills (all relating to sentencing) and most of our Supported bills were not successful this year, several new bills that we came to support passed both houses and have been signed by the governor. These included two bills that pertain to law enforcement agencies and two shared with other working groups that related to immigrant protection or gender justice:

SB 5974. Standards for law enforcement leaders: Modernizes and strengthens laws concerning sheriffs, police chiefs, and other law enforcement officers.

SB 5925. Attorney General investigative authority: Authorizes the WA AG to issue civil investigative demands for documents and other materials when investigating possible violations of the US and WA Constitutions and other specified laws.

SB 5855. No masks for ICE agents: Permits legal action if an ICE agent detains an individual while the agent is wearing a mask.

HB 1604. Protection for transgender individuals: No strip searches in jails solely for gender determination.

Economic Justice

The Quaker Voice Economic Justice Working Group welcomed new members to our clerking team this year, a step that has built momentum for our work and enhanced our ability to support bill champions. In choosing our priority legislation, we considered the challenges of the state budget deficit and the threats to food assistance and Medicaid posed by cuts at the federal level.

We initially focused on housing, health care and progressive income sources. In addition, we added two Priority bills with a focus on immigrant rights. As the legislative session moved forward, we learned the importance of having a list of additional Support legislation when our Priority bills did not move.

Our initial Priority bills were:

- **HB 5946, Expanding Medicaid.** When this bill did not have a hearing, we began championing **HB 1903, Statewide Low Income Energy Assistance.** This bill was signed into law.

- **HB 2489, Decriminalizing Homelessness.** When this bill did not reach the floor, we began championing **HB 1859**, a bill which would ease the process for Faith groups to build affordable housing. This bill was signed into law.
- **HB 2100, the Well Washington Fund**, a high-earner payroll tax on large employers. When this didn't gain traction, we switched to **SB 6346, the "Millionaires Tax,"** which was signed into law.

In addition to our three Priorities, we championed two bills focused on protecting immigrant rights:

- **HB 2105, the Immigrant Worker Protection Act**, which was signed into law.
- **HB 2173**, a bill prohibiting the use of face masks by law enforcement officers: this was also signed into law.

We also included a bill on environmental justice, **HB 1303 the CURB Act**, intended to improve environmental decision making in the government, but switched to prioritizing **HB 1903** (above) when our environmental justice coalition partners moved their priorities.

As we look forward to the next session, the team will continue to work in all of the areas we have prioritized above, with a strong focus on the progressive revenue sources that will be necessary to provide the funds for basic human services for all.

Environmental Stewardship Plus

This year the Environmental Stewardship Working Group was joined by people interested in Gender Justice and Native Issues. We also worked with the Economic Justice Working Group on issues specific to Environmental Justice. Our expanded focus was both enlivening and complex. With so many issues to cover, we relied heavily on our super good bill champions to stay current with each bill we followed. Jacob Squirrel, our legislative advocate, managed to follow our whole expanded set of our chosen issues.

Related to Environmental Stewardship, we had one major success. **SB 6355** unexpectedly rose out of the ashes of an earlier bill. The final result was a bill that will improve the reliability and capacity of the electric transmission system so that green energy can be more easily integrated into it. This bill also establishes a tribal clean energy partnership work group to identify and evaluate opportunities for tribal participation in the development and ownership of clean energy facilities and infrastructure. Bill Gillis was influential in as the champion for this issue.

We joined other voices to successfully oppose bills that would have broadened green energy definitions to include nuclear and would have given nuclear power facilities disastrous advantages in the state. Ginny Lohr did a super job on Quaker Lobby Day to inform all of us as to the problems with these bills.

However, we also advocated for a many good bills that did not get passed. These included:

- The Bottles and Can Recycling Refund Act
- A bill concerning 6PPD and regrettable 6PPD substitutes in tires (these substances are harmful to salmon; protecting salmon is a priority for us)
- The Bag Bill
- The CURB Act (in partnership with Economic Justice)

In addition, we kept watchful attention on the negotiations for the Operational Budget (SB5998). We advocated for using Climate Commitment Act funds only for projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In the end, unfortunately, it appears that more of those funds were used for administrative and program purposes than previously. We will continue to advocate for achieving the greatest climate impacts with these precious funds, which will only be available for a limited time.

Gender Justice bills had greater success this session. Cheri Allen faithfully kept us informed of essential bills to watch in support of LGBTQ+ folks. Both **SB 6081, protecting the privacy of sex designation**, and **SB 5490**, providing parameters for conducting searches of transgender and intersex individuals in local jails, have already been signed by the governor.

We also opposed some harmful gender-related bills that, happily, did not make it through the legislature. However, some of them will be on the ballot as initiatives this fall, so we are preparing to inform Quakers about their harmfulness.

None of the bills we initially supported for Indigenous Issues survived the session. We worked in support of HB1982, vacating convictions involving the exercise of treaty rights by Indian tribal members; HB 1894, supporting public school instruction in tribal sovereignty and federally recognized Indian tribes; and 2117, adding a tribal member to the board of natural resources. Although none of these passed this year, they are likely to come back in revised form next session.

On a brighter note, we chose an Environmental Justice bill that was important to the Tribes to replace the CURB Act when that one failed to make the cut-off. That bill, **HB 1903, for a statewide low-income energy assistance program**, did make it into law this year.

Legislative Fellows

Our two legislative fellows, Anastasia Schaadhardt and Destiny Dodge, both from Vancouver WA and both active with Multnomah Meeting, reported to Pacific Northwest Quarterly Meeting in April 2026, on their experiences during the legislative session.

Anastasia contrasted her ideas about how the legislative process worked when she started her fellowship with what she now knows. After her fellowship, she recognizes that advocacy is not just convincing one representative to vote a certain way. It is a network of relationships, with others in Quaker Voice and with coalition partners as well as with legislators and their staff. Dedication holds the networks together – the passion that draws individuals into Quaker Voice, the discernment process in working groups, and the energy that goes into Quaker Lobby Day conversations. The impact of both individual leadings and collective wisdom impressed Anastasia.

Legislative advocacy is like gardening, she learned. Seeds are planted in the soil of relationships that may only sprout and grow into laws many years later. This was particularly evident to Anastasia as she learned how few of her personal priority bills made it through the various steps in the legislative process. Being part of the Quaker Voice community helped her take a moment to breathe and ask what is next. The Quaker Voice community knows the steps to take to keep things moving, year on year. Joining that community has been valuable for Anastasia.

Destiny had developed a focus on indigenous issues. She experimented with identifying priority bills for Quaker Voice drawn from priority lists for tribes. Quaker Voice support enabled her to attend the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians conference in Portland this spring, an experience that transformed her understanding of how Quaker Voice might engage helpfully with issues that are important to tribes. Environmental issues served as an instructive example. The projects are often big and rushed into operation, without proper time for consultation with tribes that are affected. For example, a failed wind power project polluted a wide area of ocean where fishing was crucial to tribal livelihood.

Destiny was particularly impressed with what climate justice means for indigenous Washingtonians. “Indigenous people have the most at stake in climate justice. They know this land. They were here long before we came and will be here when we are gone,” she noted. Tribal sovereignty is where the wisdom and investment reside. Respecting it, listening to it, is at the core of what Quaker Voice can do in this collaboration.