



## Friends Committee on Washington Public Policy (FCWPP)

— A Quaker Organization

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### 2014 Legislative Report

FCWPP was successful well beyond expectations during the 2014 Washington state legislative session, given the challenge of two legislative chambers with sharply conflicting views. Several bills were enacted, including one protecting victims of domestic violence by depriving abusers from possessing a firearm, another providing for sealing the records from public distribution for juvenile offenders not committing serious crimes, and a third requiring youths found to possess guns illegally to participate in programs designed to reduce the likelihood of re-offending. At the same time we helped block some undesirable bills relating to the environment and helped pass a law protecting benefits to grandparents providing foster care.



**Governor Inslee signing bill to seal juvenile records**

Friends from around the state have supported FCWPP's efforts by contacting their legislators in person at Quaker Lobby Day and by email and phone calls throughout the legislative session. They have also supported FCWPP's work through financial donations and through background study of issues and by the administrative work that keeps an organization like ours functioning. Our Legislative Advocate and Policy Advocate has made use of his relationships with legislators and their aides to bring forth our voice again and again on bills before the legislature that are consistent with our priorities. This session a total of 13 Action Alerts and Updates were emailed to activists and posted on the FCWPP website ([www.fcwpp.org](http://www.fcwpp.org)) during the past year.

We individually contacted FCWPP supporters who live in the districts of crucial committee chairs or "swing vote" legislators, encouraging them to lobby those legislators when their votes were most needed. Thanks to all who participated in lobbying efforts by contacting legislators through phone or email, speaking with them in person, testifying at public hearings, and encouraging friends and neighbours to do the same.

#### ***Quaker Lobby Day: February 18, 2013***

Our sixth annual Quaker Lobby Day attracted almost fifty Friends, who started the day at Olympia Friends Meetinghouse. Participants split into small groups for discussions on the three major FCWPP issue areas in preparation for lobbying. Then, on the capitol campus, we met and talked with legislators and their aides from fourteen legislative districts. Friends spoke with appreciation about their experiences at Quaker Lobby Day. Be on the lookout next year for another opportunity to bring our

Friendly presence and Quaker testimonies to the seat of public policy decision making in Washington State.

### ***Criminal Justice***

- 1) **Youth Opportunity.** HB 1651 was passed, which seals the records of juveniles who have not committed serious crimes, affording them a second chance to pursue education, housing, and employment without the yoke of a public record of their youthful indiscretions around their necks.
- 2) **Gun Violence.**
  - (a) Victims of domestic violence will be safeguarded by HB 1840, which prohibits persons with a restraining order who are deemed to be a threat to family or intimate partners from possessing or acquiring a firearm.
  - (b) HB 2164 requires youths found to possess guns illegally to participate in programs designed to avoid their continuing to do so.
  - (c) FCWPP supports Initiative 594, which would provide background checks for nearly all purchases and transfers of firearms. As expected the legislature sidestepped this initiative, leaving it for the voters to decide in the election next November.
- 3) **Other Criminal Justice Efforts.** Legislation to permit state funding of post-secondary education for prisoners and a measure to reduce the penalties for mentally ill and homeless persons who have failed to pay Legal Financial Obligations (court costs, etc.) were both passed by the House but, unfortunately, were stopped in the Senate.

### ***Economic Justice***

- 1) **TANF.** Legislation was approved that will ease the reductions in pensions incurred by “unearned” income for persons providing foster care – including grandparents providing care for grandchildren – for those who are eligible for Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF).
- 2) **Basic Health.** Efforts to at least study how to take advantage of the Basic Health Option of the Affordable Health Care Act were approved in the House but blocked by the Senate.
- 3) **Tax System.** Efforts to reduce the regressive nature of our state’s tax system -- and provide increased revenue needed to pay for education without further reducing funding for social services -- ended in stalemate. Lower income residents will continue to contribute a higher percentage of their income for state services than their wealthier neighbors and several out of date special interest tax breaks not only were not repealed but additional ones were introduced, further challenging the state to find the revenues needed to support education.

### ***Local Responses to Global Challenges***

- 1) **Governor’s Greenhouse Gas Emission Work Group.** FCWPP submitted testimony about the necessity of addressing climate change. Partisan obstruction, however, prevented approval of a plan for implementing the Governor’s initiative.
- 2) **Safe Transportation of Oil.** A bill for the safe transportation of oil was not passed, although \$300,000 was put in the budget to study the issue.
- 3) **Nuclear Power.** FCWPP helped block a bill to study nuclear power plants under the assumption that they were an effective alternative to address climate change.