



Quaker Voice

on Washington Public Policy

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Quaker Voice commits to the struggle to dismantle systemic racism. The policies and practices of the state of Washington, from settler times forward, have contributed to the systems of racism in our lives. Throughout that history, some Washingtonians have stood up for human rights and equality. More and more are doing so now, and the citizen advocates of Quaker Voice are among them.

In environmental, criminal, and economic justice, Quaker Voice will continue to work on issues that impact people of color disproportionately. Significant new legislation, passed in 2021, includes

- The Healthy Environment for All (HEAL) Act SB5141 to reduce environmental health impacts among those most affected by pollution. It establishes a permanent Environmental Justice Council to work with state agencies and expand equitable community participation.
- The Capital Gains Tax, which is a step in the direction of improving economic equity for all Washingtonians. Under Washington's worst-in-the-nation-tax code, most communities of color pay the highest rate.
- Legal representation for tenants in the eviction process. As a result of decades of housing discrimination, people of color are more likely to be renters than white Washingtonians and face eviction at the end of the moratorium at higher rates than white renters. Quaker Voice worked hard this year in support of SB5160, the nation's first state guarantee of legal representation for renters in the eviction process.
- Several important steps in dismantling the carceral state, a central pillar of U.S. racism, including
 - Restoration of voting rights for persons released from prison,
 - Police accountability for and restrictions on the use of force as well as decertification for wrongdoing and independent investigation for use of deadly force, and
 - Prohibition of operation of prisons or detention centers by private companies.

In 2018, an independent corrections ombuds office was established, following long-time and persistent advocacy by Quaker Voice. This office has been highly successful in visiting prisons, meeting regularly with families and other stakeholders, assessing complaints from persons in prison and resolving issues with the Dept. of Corrections, and bringing to light lapses in medical care and need for vaccines and other protections during the pandemic. All of these efforts help redress racial inequity because Black offenders are sentenced to prison at a rate nearly five times greater than their proportion in the Washington state population, and other people of color at rates significantly greater than the general population.

In this work, Quaker Voice is allying itself with legislators, advocacy organizations, and communities of color throughout Washington State to support our common work towards justice for all.

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