

Dear Advocacy Day Participant –

Thank you for joining us last month in Richmond. Alongside more than 200 Virginians from around the Commonwealth, you enthusiastically lobbied for legislation impacting our community and, as importantly, shared your personal stories of Jewish life and antisemitism with our representatives. [Here are some pictures](#) from Advocacy Day.

As the General Assembly’s 2024 General Session has now concluded, I am writing to provide a summary on the legislation we supported:

Countering antisemitism and supporting Israel

- The hate crimes legislation at the top of our agenda has passed both houses unanimously and will be on its way to the Governor for his signature. ([HB18](#) Delegate Helmer/[SB7](#) Senators Reeves, Subramanyam and Bagby). As noted, the legislation passed with no “no” votes. However, four senators, including Senators Boysko, Salim and McPike from our region, did not vote when the bill came to the Senate floor.

Security for Faith-Based Institutions and Support for Social Services

- An amended budget has been sent to the Governor. The current version includes
 - our social service funding requests for JSSA and Makom programming, and
 - increased funding (\$5 million over 2 years) for the Hate Crimes Security Grant Program, as well as language amendments that provide for increased access for communities at risk of hate crimes.

Democracy protection/voter access

- Several bills have passed both houses, including
 - [HB43](#) (Delegate Thomas)/[HB441](#) (Delegate Bennett-Parker), ensuring assistance at polling places for all people with disabilities;
 - [HB1408](#) (Delegate Srinivasan), providing for standardization in the establishment of voter satellite offices, and
 - [SB364](#) (Senator Ebbin), providing for the protection of election officials.
- SJ2 (Senator Locke), a constitutional amendment that would restore voting rights to individuals who have completed their sentences has been continued to next year.

Reproductive Health

- Several bills have passed both houses, including
 - [HB78](#) (Delegate Watts), protecting menstrual health data from production pursuant to search warrants, subpoenas, and court orders;
 - [HB819](#) (Delegate Mundon King), requiring health insurance coverage for contraceptive drugs and devices; and

- [SB15](#) (Senator Favola), prohibiting extradition related to reproductive health care services.
- Legislation that has been put on hold until next year includes
 - [HJ1](#) (Leader Herring), a constitutional amendment that would create a fundamental right to reproductive freedom, and
 - [SB140](#) (Senator Carroll Foy), establishing a Fetal and Infant Mortality Review Team.

Gun Violence Protection

- Several bills have passed both houses, including
 - [HB183](#) (Delegate Simon), requiring safe storage of firearms in a home where minors and people prohibited from possessing firearms are present,
 - [SB55](#) (Senator Salim) / [SB273](#) (Senator Subramanyam), establishing a waiting period for firearms purchases,
 - [SB225](#) (Senator Pekarsky), requiring school boards to provide parental notification of responsibility of safe storage of firearms in the household,
 - [SB447](#) (Senator Marsden), providing for civil penalties for leaving a firearm in view in an unattended motor vehicle, and
 - [SB642](#) (Senatory Perry) / [HB798](#) (Delegate Hope), prohibiting the purchase or possession of firearms following an assault and battery.
- Legislation that has been put on hold until next year includes
 - [HB158](#) (Delegate McClure) requiring firearm locking devices, and
 - [HB270](#) (Delegate Reid), establishing a comprehensive gun safety program

Justice for Individuals and Communities

- Several bills have passed both houses, including
 - [HB159](#) (Delegate Seibold), prohibiting the use of canines in correctional facilities,
 - [HB174](#) (Delegate Henson), providing for the issuance of marriage licenses regardless of the applicants' sex, gender or race,
 - [HB509](#) (Delegate Cohen), requiring universities to adopt transparent and explicit processes by which they determine eligibility for disability accommodations (bills differ in each house and must be resolved in conference committee),
 - [HB719](#) (Delegate Reaser), requiring schools to adopt research-based hazing prevention measures,
 - [HB962](#) (Delegate Lopez), removing the term “aliens” throughout the Code,
 - [SB283](#) (Senator Roem), providing for school meals to be provided to students at no cost, and
 - [SB504](#) (Leader Surovell), providing for the epungement of police and court records.



- Legislation that has been put on hold until next year or did not advance includes
 - [HB167](#) (Delegate Keys-Gamarra), would have established special grand juries when an unarmed person is killed by law enforcement; (did not advance)
 - [HB984](#), (Delegate Tran), would have expanded Head Start, making programs available at community colleges (did not advance),
 - HJ9 (continued) [HJ9](#) (Delegate Sickles), a constitutional amendment that would define marriage as being between two individuals (continued to next year), and
 - [SB311](#) (Senator Boysko), would have required the Board of Medical Assistance Services to investigate violence prevention services benefit programs (did not advance).

Environment and Climate Change

- [HB71](#) (Delegate Bulova), requiring compliance with Chesapeake Bay Watershed regulations has passed both houses, has passed both houses.
- Legislation that has been put on hold until next year or did not advance includes
 - [HB197](#) (Delegate Krizek), would have established an income-tax credit for solar energy equipment (did not advance),
 - [HB638](#) (Delegate Sullivan), would have required electric utilities to implement energy efficiency programs (did not advance), and
 - [HJ36](#) (Delegate Sewell), would have directed the Department of Energy to study the barriers that prevent localities from purchasing clean energy (continued).

It is clear that your voice made a difference! I am grateful for your commitment to this important work and your continued support of the JCRC of Greater Washington. Although the General Session has ended, I will continue to provide updates on legislation as they move to the Governor's desk and, if necessary, back to the General Assembly when it reconvenes on April 17 to consider any vetoes or amendments. As always, please let me know if I can be of any assistance. We look forward to seeing you again soon.

Best regards,
Vicki