

## **2023 Virginia General Assembly Legislative Session Wrap-Up**

The 2023 Virginia General Assembly session officially adjourned *Sine Die* on Saturday, February 25<sup>th</sup>. During the “short session,” 2,863 bills and resolutions were introduced by members of the General Assembly. Eight hundred nineteen bills passed both the House and the Senate and will be heading to the Governor for his amendments, signature, or veto in the coming days.

The General Assembly passed a biennial budget that included funding for JSSA, Makom (formerly Jewish Foundation for Group Homes) and the Hate Crimes Security Grant program

### **Legislation Related to JCRC’s 2023 Legislative Priorities**

Due to the divided control of the General Assembly (Republican House and Democratic Senate) a lot of legislation was defeated after crossover. As a result, no legislation repealing voting access, rolling back access to reproductive healthcare, attacks against the LGBTQIA community, or increased access to guns passed this legislative session.

Legislation purporting to limit solitary confinement did pass both houses and will be sent to the Governor for his signature. The legislation that passed requires the Virginia Department of Corrections (VADOC) to give anyone held in Restorative Housing (the term used by VADOC to describe its separation of individuals from the general prison population) to be given at least four hours of out-of-cell time per day. The bill does not limit how many days a person may be held under such conditions nor the reasons a person may be placed into such housing.

A full bill report and summaries from some of our partners can be found here:

[LIS > Bill Tracking > Reports > 2023 session \(virginia.gov\)](#)

[Virginia Housing Alliance](#)

[Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy](#)

### **Bills Related to Antisemitism**

**IHRA Definition.** [HB1606](#) (Tata) passed the House of Delegates on a bipartisan 73-25 vote after the legislation was amended on the House floor to explicitly state that the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition is “non-legally binding.” The legislation passed the Senate 32-0 - with eight members not voting because an amendment offered by Senator Scott Surovell was not adopted. The final bill awaits Governor Youngkin’s signature. We issued a [joint statement](#) with our partners throughout Virginia thanking the General Assembly, the Governor and Attorney General for their work on this issue.

**Boycott Israel.** [HB1898](#) (McGuire) and [SB1375](#) (Vogel) as amended, prohibited any company who contracted with the Commonwealth in an amount of \$100,000 or more from actively engaging in a boycott of Israel. The legislation passed the House of Delegates on a 50-48 vote, with only Republicans supporting the legislation. Both the

House and Senate versions of the bill were defeated in the Senate General Laws Committee.

**Hate Crimes.** The House and Senate both amended the legislation originally introduced in different ways. [SB1184](#) (Reeves) amended the discrimination sections of the Human Rights Statute by adding “ethnic or” throughout to be consistent with the language found in the hate crimes section of the statute, which clearly included “ethnic or national origin” as protected classes. [HB2208](#) (Kilgore) passed a separate bill stating that for the purposes of specific Code sections, “race,” “religion,” or “national origin” shall include persons of the Jewish faith or ethnicity. The two different versions passed their respective chambers. However, no agreement could be reached between the chambers on a compromise.

**Jewish American Heritage Month.** Delegate Eileen Filler-Corn introduced [HJ543](#), a resolution recognizing May as Jewish American Heritage Month. This legislation was recommended by the Commission to Combat Antisemitism and passed with bipartisan support.

While this year’s General Session of the General Assembly has concluded, we will continue to educate the community and elected officials on these and other issues. We also will continue to connect you with your elected officials and candidates for elected office as the 2023 election approaches.