



Advocacy Agenda 2019

Jewish Center for Justice Advocacy Agenda
Spring/Summer/Fall 2019

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Gun Violence Prevention

While the Jewish Center for Justice respects the constitutional right to own firearms, we cannot deny the alarming and disturbing reality that the U.S. averages nearly one mass shooting per day, not to mention all other gun related violence. In the book of Leviticus, we are commanded to never stand idly by while our neighbor's blood is shed, a moral call that drives our support of common-sense gun laws such as closing gun show loopholes and banning assault rifles. Together, we must act to curb the epidemic of gun violence that has plagued America.

Jewish Source

And for every stumbling block that threatens lives, one must remove it, protect oneself from it, and be exceedingly careful in its regard; as it says: "You shall guard and protect your lives," (Deuteronomy 4:9). And if it is not removed instead is placed in front of those who come to danger, one has violated a positive commandment and has violated "bring not blood." - *Shulhan Arukh Hoshen Mishpat 427*

Advocacy (Federal)

Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2019 (Rep. Mike Thompson): The purpose of H.R. 8 is to utilize the current background checks process in the United States to ensure individuals prohibited from gun possession are not able to obtain firearms. H.R. 8 passed the House on March 4, 2019.

Background Check Expansions Act (Sen. Chris Murphy): After H.R. 8 passed in the House, the bill moved to the Senate as S. 42, the Background Check Expansions Act. This bill would establish new background requirements for firearm transfers between private parties (unlicensed individuals).

Assault Weapons Ban of 2019 (Sen. Dianne Feinstein): S. 66 would ban the sale, manufacturing, transfer and importation of 205 military-style assault weapons. The bill would also ban any assault weapon that accepts a detachable ammunition magazine and has one or more military characteristics including a pistol grip, a forward grip, a barrel shroud, a threaded barrel or a folding or telescoping stock. This would also ban magazines and other ammunition feeding devices that hold more than 10 rounds of ammunition, which allow shooters to quickly fire many rounds without needing to reload.

Keep Americans Safe Act of 2019 (Rep. Ted Deutch & Sen. Bob Menendez): This bill, H.R. 1186/S. 447, would ban the sale of high capacity magazines.

Advocacy (California)

AB-165 (Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel): This bill would require law enforcement to train officers on the use of gun violence restraining orders as part of basic training. Critics say law enforcement groups have underutilized the restraining orders since they were introduced in 2016. The bill is sponsored by the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, and the California Statewide Law Enforcement Association.

AB-276 (Assemblymember Laura Friedman): Would expand California’s safe storage laws by requiring individuals to securely store a firearm(s) in the home when the person is outside the residence. The bill seeks to prevent gun theft or use by unauthorized persons, and will impose a 10-year firearm prohibition on persons convicted of violating safe storage laws.

AB-1064 (Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi): Would bring accountability and transparency to gun sales in California by 1) requiring security cameras inside and outside gun stores, 2) requiring firearm dealers to carry liability insurance, 3) prohibiting residential firearm dealers, and 4) giving the California DOJ Bureau of Firearms more tools to enforce dealer laws and regulations. The bill would also help detect straw purchasers and ensure that gun stores in California are not a source of illegal guns.

AB-879 (Assemblymember Mike Gipson): Would require the sale of firearm precursor parts to be conducted by – or processed through – a licensed firearm precursor part vendor, in person, pursuant to a background check.

AB-1121 (Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan): Would prohibit any individual who goes through a court-ordered mental health diversion program from possessing firearms while in the program, and requires them to petition a judge to regain firearm access upon successful completion of the program.

SB-55 (Sen. Hannah Beth Jackson): Would impose a 10-year firearm prohibition on those with two alcohol/drug-related convictions within a three-year period. This includes driving under the influence of alcohol, public intoxication that is unsafe, and vehicular manslaughter while intoxicated.

SB-61 (Sen. Anthony Portantino): This bill would limit the ability to purchase firearms to one every 30 days, deterring gun traffickers who purchase firearms in bulk to sell for profit on the black market.

Women’s Rights

The Jewish Center for Justice firmly defends a woman’s right to make her own decisions regarding her reproductive health and opposes any attempts to restrict access to quality, affordable health care. JCJ values the ideal that each and every woman has agency over her own body, which is why we serve as a strong advocate and supporter of organizations that offer critical health services to women.

Gender equality is an essential component to a free and just society, yet in 2018 women are still regularly paid less than their male counterparts for the same work. JCJ is working to close the gender pay gap by advocating for policies and legislation that dismantle the institutional barriers that women face on a daily basis.

Jewish Source

And Devorah, wife of Lappidoth, was a prophetess; she led Israel at that time. – *Judges 4:4*

Commentary: Devorah served as a prophet, leader, and warrior in Israel with the same power and influence of the male counterparts of her era.

Advocacy (Federal)

Paid Family Leave Act of 2019 (Rep. Rosa DeLauro & Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand): H.R. 1185/S. 463 would provide paid leave and medical benefits to individuals and spouses. A similar bill, mentioned by the president during the State of the Union, is likely to be offered within the next month. We look forward to urging our elected officials to work together on a bipartisan compromise.

Pay Check Fairness Act of 2019 (Rep. Rosa DeLauro & Sen. Patty Murray): H.R. 7/S. 270 offers a much-needed update to the Equal Pay Act of 1963 by providing new tools to battle pervasive pay gaps and challenge discrimination.

Advocacy (California)

College Student Right to Access Act (Sen. Connie Leyva): SB-24 would expand abortion care at California's public universities by requiring that the UC and CSU offer the abortion pill at campus health centers. This bill reaffirms the constitutional right of all Californians to access abortion care and guarantees that college students do not have to endure the added financial, logistical, and emotional burden of seeking standard reproductive healthcare off-campus.

Advocacy (Washington)

Reproductive Health Access for All Act (Rep. Nicole Macri & Sen. Emily Randall): HB 1612/SB 5602 would expand access to all needed reproductive health care by ensuring all Washingtonians receive insurance coverage regardless of race, sexual orientation, gender identity or immigration status. This bill also clarifies gender-affirming reproductive health care for transgender patients to ensure that insurance companies cover all forms of appropriate care.

Economic Justice

In the book of Proverbs, Jews are commanded to “speak up, judge righteously, champion the poor and the needy.” With 45 million Americans living below poverty, rising levels of food insecurity, and the gap between the rich and the poor growing rapidly, the Jewish Center for Justice is committed to acting on our moral tradition to provide for the most vulnerable in society.

Jewish Source

For there will never cease to be needy ones from the midst of the land, which is why I command you: open your hand to your fellows, your poor and your needy in your land. - *Deuteronomy 15:11*

Advocacy (Federal)

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Pay Check Fairness Act of 2019 (Rep. Rosa DeLauro & Sen. Patty Murray): H.R. 7/S. 270 offers a much-needed update to the Equal Pay Act of 1963 by providing new tools to battle pervasive pay gaps and challenge discrimination.

Raise the Wage Act (Rep. Bobby Scott & Sen. Bernie Sanders): H.R. 582/S. 150 would gradually increase the federal minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$15 per hour by 2024, and then require that the minimum wage increase based on changes in the median wage. It would also eliminate the tipped minimum wage and prohibit the use of subminimum wages for employees with disabilities.

Advocacy (California)

AB-1309 (Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan): This bill would allow more Californians access to affordable health care, namely by extending the application period by two weeks in order to apply for health insurance through Covered California.

AB-39 (Assemblymembers Al Muratsuchi & Kevin McCarty): Would substantially increase funding for school districts under the Local Control Funding Formula base grant.

Child Hunger Prevention and Fair Treatment Act (Sen. Bob Hertzberg): SB-265 would expand protections to ensure that a child in a public school is not shamed or denied a meal when they do not have lunch money.

AB-24 (Assemblymember Autumn Burke): Would establish a targeted child tax credit for families with children who have incomes below half of the supplemental poverty level.

Advocacy (Washington)

HB 1523/SB 5526 (Rep. Eileen Cody & Sen. David Frockt): This bill would expand health care access by increasing the availability of quality, affordable health coverage in the individual market. JCJ expects Gov. Inslee to sign this bill into law in this legislative session.

Voting Rights

The ability to vote is one of the most essential rights of any thriving democracy. That is why the Jewish Center for Justice supports and organizes local and national efforts to increase voter registration, educate people about the issues, and assist those who need help in getting to the

polls. At the same time, we are working adamantly to quell any attempts by politicians to engage in voter suppression tactics such as reducing early voting and enacting strict voter ID laws.

Jewish Source

“For any community matter on which they cannot find common ground, they should convene all taxpayers, and they should agree that each will voice his or her view for the selfless benefit of the community, and they will follow the majority.”- *Shulchan Arukh, Choshen Mishpat 163:1*

Advocacy (Federal)

For the People Act of 2019 (Rep. John Sarbanes): A top priority for Speaker Pelosi, H.R. 1 would protect voting rights, reduce the influence of money in politics, and strengthen ethics rules for federal officials.

Advocacy (California)

SB-727 (Sen. Henry Stern): This bill would lower the minimum age for voter pre-registration to 15 and a half years of age.

Advocacy (Washington)

The House recently passed a bill, HB 1251, requiring the Secretary of State to work with other state and county officials to identify security breaches of election systems or election data on an annual basis.

LGBTQ Rights

As part of our mission to ensure that all people are treated with dignity, respect, and equality, the Jewish Center for Justice rejects any attempt to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. We support the right of LGBTQ people to live openly and without fear, and while same-sex couples are now free to marry, LGBTQ individuals still face discrimination in many areas including housing, employment, and the justice system. While some invoke religion as a shield for discrimination, our tradition informs the belief that all people should be treated equally and justly regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Jewish Source

And I will give peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid -
Leviticus 26:6

Advocacy (Federal)

The Equality Act (Rep. David Cicilline & Sen. Jeff Merkeley): H.R. 5 would provide federal civil rights protections to LGBTQ people across the country. Specifically, the Equality Act would amend existing federal civil rights laws — including the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Fair Housing Act, the Equal Credit Opportunity Act and the Jury Selection and Services Act — to explicitly prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. The bill would also amend the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to prohibit discrimination in public spaces and services and federally funded programs on the basis of sex.

The Retention and Service of Transgender Individuals in the Armed Forces Act (Rep. Jackie Speier & Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand): H.R. 1032/S. 373 would protect the rights of qualified transgender servicemembers to enlist and serve openly in the military.

Advocacy (California)

AB-493 (Assemblymember Todd Gloria and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond): Would provide California schools with resources to support LGBTQ students and create safer school environments. LGBTQ students have higher dropout rates than their non-LGBTQ peers and report missing school because of safety concerns at higher rates than non-LGBTQ students. This legislation would give teachers and school staff the tools and training to support LGBTQ students who may be facing harassment or lack of acceptance at school, rejection at home or discrimination in the broader community.

SB-41 (Sen. Cathleen Galgiani): Would allow transgender Californians to update their marriage certificates and the birth certificates of their children to accurately reflect their legal name and gender, while still protecting their privacy. Current state law allows transgender people to petition courts to change their legal name and gender to conform with their gender identity. The law would then allow a person's old birth certificate to be sealed and a new one to be issued as an original to protect the person's privacy and respect their identity. This legislation would simply align the process for updating transgender individual's marriage certificates and the birth certificates of their children with the process for updating their own birth certificate.

AB-711 (Assemblymember David Chiu): Would ensure that educational agencies update the records of former students who identify as transgender, making certain that their legal name and gender are accurately reflected on critical documents such as a high school diploma or school transcripts. This includes reissuing high school diplomas and high school equivalency certificates, as needed.

Civil Rights

The Jewish Center for Justice is committed to fighting back against persistent racial injustice that leads to the marginalization of communities and people of color. Black and brown Americans face higher rates of poverty, incarceration and police violence, and as descendants of those who faced extreme oppression, we understand that we cannot stay silent as fellow Americans are treated differently on the basis of their race or skin color.

Jewish Source

Why did God create only one person, Adam? All people are descended from a single human being, Adam... so that no one can say, ‘my ancestor is worthier than yours’” -*Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:5*

Advocacy (Federal)

The Do No Harm Act (Rep. Joe Kennedy, Rep. Bobby Scott & Sen. Kamala Harris): H.R. 1450/S. 593 would clarify that the original intent of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993’s was to protect religious exercise, but could not be leveraged to violate civil rights by using the justification of religious exemptions.

Advocacy (California)

SB-652 (Jewish Democratic Caucus): Would protect Californians’ freedom to display religious symbols, particularly mezuzahs, at their doorway; prohibits landlord interference.

Criminal Justice Reform

The U.S. currently has the highest incarceration rate in the world, with an overwhelming number of convictions for nonviolent crimes. A central belief of the Jewish tradition is the ability for repentance and acceptance back into society. As a result, we seek a criminal justice system that honors rehabilitation and creates pathways for repentance.

Jewish Source

Forgive the iniquity of the people according to the greatness of Your compassion. And continue to forgive them as you have forgiven them since Egypt. -*Numbers 14:19*

Advocacy (Federal)

The Fair Chance Act (Rep. Elijah Cummings/Sen. Cory Booker): H.R. 1076/S. 387 would remove barriers to employment for people with a criminal record. The bill also would prohibit federal employers and contractors from asking about an applicant’s criminal history until after an initial offer of employment, with important exceptions for security positions.

Advocacy (California)

SB-36 (Sen. Bob Hertzberg): Would require that counties maintain data on pre-trial risk assessments in order to study and minimize bias in pre-trial services. This would strengthen the work from SB-10, last year’s bill that served as the first step in necessary bail reform.

SB-42 (Sen. Nancy Skinner): Would establish statewide standards to ensure that formally incarcerated individuals are released from prison at a safe time to ensure anti-recidivism.

Immigration Reform

As descendants of an immigrant tradition, we have a moral duty to welcome the stranger, as is commanded of us on 36 occasions in the Torah. Honoring this legacy, the Jewish Center for Justice believes we must call on our elected leaders to reform our nation's broken immigration system in a manner that acknowledges rule of law while also recognizing the human dignity of undocumented individuals by providing a pathway to legal citizenship.

Jewish Source

You shall not oppress the stranger, for you know how it feels to be a stranger in a new land for you were a stranger in the land of Egypt. -*Exodus 23:9*

Advocacy (Federal)

The DREAM and American Promise Act of 2019 (Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard): H.R. 6 would give immigrants who arrived in the U.S. before their 18th birthday and prior to Dec. 31, 2016, an opportunity to apply for permanent legal status if they meet certain requirements. The legislation will also provide relief for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) recipients. The current Administration has sought to cancel and restrict these programs, putting millions of immigrants across California and the United States – people who attend school here, work here and pay taxes here – at risk.

Advocacy (California)

Human Trafficking Victim Confidentiality Protections Act (Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan): AB-1735 would protect victims of human trafficking by ensuring that conversations they have with caseworkers are confidential.

SB-296 (Sen. Ben Allen): Would expand the Cal Grant financial aid program to include students who are seeking asylum in the U.S.

Environmental Justice

The Jewish Center for Justice is dedicated to combating the negative impacts of climate change, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, investing in alternative energy sources and protecting the vulnerable populations most affected by environmental injustices. The Book of Genesis shows

our obligation to act as stewards of the earth, a moral mandate that drives our support of practices and policies that maximize our ability to protect the environment.

Jewish Source

God said: Take care not to spoil or destroy My world, for if you do, there will be no one to repair it after you. – *Midrash Kohelet Rabba 7:13*

Advocacy (Federal)

The Climate Change Resiliency Fund for America Act (Sen. Dick Durbin & Rep. Ted Deutch): S. 763/H.R. 1689 would authorize the Treasury Department to issue as much as \$1 billion in state and local tax-exempt “climate bonds” each year, which any American could purchase as an investment. Revenues from bond sales would be deposited into a Climate Change Resiliency Fund at the Commerce Department. Federal agencies, state and local governments, utility districts, and nonprofit organizations could then apply for funding to support an adaptation project, and the commission established by the bill would vet applications and select recipients of funds.

Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act of 2019 (Rep. Ted Deutch): H.R. 763 would create a Carbon Dividend Trust Fund for the American people in order to encourage market-driven innovation of clean energy technologies and market efficiencies. This would reduce harmful pollution and leave a healthier, more stable, and more prosperous nation for future generations.

Advocacy (California)

Wildfire, Drought, and Flood Protection Bond Act of 2020 (Sen. Ben Allen): SB-45 would place a bond on the 2020 ballot to finance wildfire restoration and projects that protect California against future wildfires, droughts and floods.

SB-43 (Sen. Ben Allen): Would study replacing California’s state sales tax with a revenue-neutral carbon tax.

California Circular Economy and Plastic Pollution Reduction Act (Sen. Ben Allen): SB-54 would phase out all single-use plastics that cannot be recycled or composted by 2030.

Advocacy (Washington)

SB 5116/HB 1211 (Sen. Reuven Carlyle): Would enact 100% clean electricity, supporting the transition to a clean, affordable and reliable energy future.

Clean Buildings Act: Concerning energy efficiency, SB 5293/HB 1257 would reduce greenhouse gases, create jobs, and make buildings healthier places to live and work.

The Healthy Environment for All (HEAL) Act: SB 5489/HB 2009 would direct agencies to create a taskforce to address environmental health disparities and develop a definition of ‘environmental justice.’

Israel

For more than 2,000 years, our ancestors dreamt of a Jewish state where they could live in safety and peace and express their Jewish values. Now that their dream is a reality, the Jewish Center for Justice believes that defending Israel's right to exist is a religious and cultural obligation.

Jewish Source

My heart is in the East, and I am at the edge of the West. – *Yehudah HaLevi*

Advocacy (Federal)

A safe and secure Israel is dependent upon a strong foreign aid budget from the United States. We urge Congress to support full funding of annual security assistance to Israel at \$3.3 billion and \$500 million in missile defense funding. Additionally, we call on Congress to support strong funding for the FY 2020 International Affairs Budget.

Advocacy (State)

We urge greater participation and cooperation between our State Governments and the government of Israel to further creative partnerships on environmental ingenuity, technology and security.

Advocacy (Local)

We urge for strong relationships with our city officials and their counterparts in many of Israel's local municipalities.