



The World We Want CA Legislative Agenda 2018

The California Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (formerly Reform CA)

Reform Jewish Congregations across the state are standing in solidarity with other vulnerable populations and working to advance Jewish values in the public sphere. We have endorsed an agenda of bills and ballot measures that is multi-issue and also focused - because our congregations care about multiple issues and because we can be more flexible and impactful if we can move on multiple fronts, but we also recognize that without focus, we dilute our power to make change.

We divide the bills and ballot measures we are supporting into three categories:

- **Central priority bills and ballot measures** are the main focus of RAC-CA actions and communications. We will ask all congregations to take some action on the central priority bill and ballot measure.
- **Targeted priority bills and ballot measures** are tracked by RAC-CA's lay-led Issue Research Teams, who will identify actions congregations can take to advance the bills or ballot measures. We will communicate about these bills to congregations that express interest in working on these issues and/or where there is a strategic reason to reach out to others.
- **Endorsement-only bills and ballot measures** are bills we publicly support but do not track or otherwise act upon.

These bills and ballot measures were chosen based on research by lay-led RAC-CA Issue Research Teams and informed by two web meetings attended by more than 100 Reform clergy and lay leaders from around the state.

Overview of the RAC-CA 2018 Agenda

RAC-CA has two central priorities:

- SB 10 The Money Bail Reform Act (bill)
- The Veterans and Affordable Housing Bond Act (ballot measure)

RAC-CA has 10 targeted priorities and 10 endorsement-only bills and ballot measures in six issue areas.

More information on all the ballot measures and bills endorsed by RAC-CA is below.



The Religious Action Center pursues social justice and religious liberty by mobilizing the Reform Jewish community and serving as its advocate in Washington, D.C. The Center is led by the Commission on Social Action of the Central Conference of American Rabbis and the Union for Reform Judaism (and its affiliates) and is supported by the congregations of the Union.



Housing/Homelessness – Standing with the homeless and those who struggle to afford housing

The Jewish people have been wanderers throughout our history, and perhaps this is why there is such a strong emphasis of providing shelter to the homeless. On Yom Kippur, our holiest day of the year, we read God’s commandment to “take the poor into your homes” (Isaiah). The Mishnah does not allow a person to evict a tenant if the eviction will result in the tenant being “thrown in the street” (Baba Metzia 8:6). Today we work to provide housing for the homeless and address the shortage of affordable housing.

Central Housing Priorities

Housing Bond Act (Ballot measure, support)

Housing Bond Measure authorizes \$4 billion in general obligation bonds for housing-related programs, loans, grants, and projects and housing loans for veterans. This measure was placed on the ballot by the state legislature. It is supported by Housing California. [Measure Text](#). [More information about the Measure](#).

Targeted Housing Priorities

AB 3171 Homeless Services Block Grant (Ting, with more than 22 legislators as coauthors) establishes the Local Homelessness Solutions Program and creates a Local Homelessness Solutions Account for the purpose of providing funding to cities to create innovative and immediate solutions to homelessness. The bill would appropriate General Funds to this account and directs appropriations in proportion to each city’s most recent homeless population. The bill requires cities to match all funds received from the program. It authorizes expenditures for shelter diversion, rapid rehousing, and permanent supportive housing, among other things. [Bill Text](#) [This Bill is endorsed by mayors of California’s 11 largest cities](#)

AB 2162 Supportive Housing Streamlining (Chiu) allows developers to build supportive housing “by right,” promoting siting of supportive housing, without battling stigma of housing people with disabilities. While local jurisdictions would be able to apply objective standards to reviewing an application to build support housing, AB2162 would allow non-profit developers to build supportive housing without the prolonged approval process typically required in these projects. Endorsed by Housing California. [Text of bill](#). [Fact Sheet](#).

Endorsement-Only Housing:

SB 918 Homeless Youth Act (Weiner/Rubio) establishes the Office of Homeless Youth, funded at \$60 million from the General Fund and set forth the duties of the Office, including, but not limited to, setting specific, measurable goals aimed at preventing and ending homelessness among youth in the state. SB 918 will invest in low-barrier and diverse housing opportunities, so each county can have an array of options for youth to escape homelessness. California has the highest number of unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness in the country and the second highest number of youth who are unsheltered. Yet, California lacks a clear strategy to prevent and end homelessness among young people. This bill will require the Office of Homeless Youth to provide a coordinating role, set statewide goals and outcome measures, evaluate the effectiveness of programs in reaching those goals, and develop and administer grants for services to young people experiencing homelessness. Endorsed by Housing California. [Text of Bill.](#) [Fact Sheet](#)

SB 1010 Parolees: Supportive Housing Pilot program (Beall) creates a pilot to provide supportive housing to parolees who are either experiencing homelessness or were homeless when incarcerated and have no place to go upon discharge. Under the pilot, the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) would work to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with one of two counties. Endorsed by Housing California. Homelessness and incarceration are intrinsically linked. Parolees who are homeless are seven times more likely to recidivate than those who are housed. About half of all people who are homeless report having been incarcerated. [Text of Bill.](#)

Criminal Justice Reform – Standing with people of color to end mass incarceration

Our tradition teaches us, “You shall commit no injustice in judgment; you shall not favor a poor person or defer to a great man; you shall judge your fellow with righteousness” (Leviticus 19:15). Our people have been mistreated by authorities and know that a justice system that discriminates based on any kind of group identity is not a just system. Individuals and communities of color are disproportionately impacted by biased policing, harsh mandatory sentencing, and a system of incarceration that does not yet prioritize rehabilitation and reintegration.

Central Criminal Justice Priority

SB-10 CA Money Bail Reform Act (Hertzberg, Allen, Atkins, Beall, Bradford, Lara, Mitchell, Monning, Skinner, Wieckowski, Wiener) aims to ensure that people are not held in pretrial detention simply because of their inability to afford to pay bail. Defendants held for misdemeanors would be released on their own recognizance unless the court determines that money bail is the only way to ensure public safety

and the appearance of the defendant. This bill passed the Senate last year and was turned into a two-year bill to give more time to win enough votes to pass the Assembly. Supporters of the bill are negotiating with Governor Brown and will make changes to get his support and the support of the legislators. [Text of SB-10](#). [\[link to Fact Sheet\]](#)

Targeted Criminal Justice Priorities:

Rollback of Propositions 47/57 Criminal Justice Reform (Ballot Measure, opposition) restricts parole for non-violent offenders and authorizes felony sentences for certain offenses currently treated only as misdemeanors. This measure is a partial repeal of Propositions 47 and 57, criminal justice ballot measures that RAC-CA helped pass. This Measure would limit which offenders are eligible for parole by adding crimes to the list of violent felonies for which early parole is restricted, re-categorize certain crimes of misdemeanor theft—such as repeated thefts—as felonies and make changes to parole rules and proceedings. It would also require DNA collection for certain misdemeanors. Opponents include the ACLU, PICO CA, Californians for Safety and Justice, Asian Americans Advancing Justice. [Text of Measure](#). [More information](#). OPPOSE.

SB 1391 Trying Youth As Adults (Lara/Mitchell) prohibits children age 14 and 15 from being tried as adults in criminal court and being sentenced to time in adult prison. The bill recognizes that 14 and 15 year olds are developmentally different from adults and should not be treated like adults in the criminal justice system. If they commit crimes, studies show that youth fare better and are less likely to commit crimes in the future if they are given age-appropriate services and education. Sponsored by Human Rights Watch. [Fact Sheet](#)

AB 2438 Automatic withdrawal of plea (Ting) requires the court to automatically withdraw the plea of guilty or nolo contendere and enter a plea of not guilty when the defendant has fulfilled the conditions of probation. It would allow offenders who have done *teshuvah* and gone through the criminal justice system to have felony convictions stricken from their record so they can more easily get jobs and lead productive lives. Sponsors include Californians for Safety and Justice. [Text of Bill](#).

Endorsement-Only Criminal Justice:

SB 1421 Access to police misconduct and use of force records (Skinner) provides transparency by releasing records of police misconduct, including cases of excessive use of force (police shootings and other serious or deadly uses of force incidents), sexual assault, or dishonesty in criminal investigations (including confirmed instances of lying, planting evidence, or falsifying police reports during

investigations). Sponsored by ACLU, Drug Policy Alliance, Policy Link, Youth Justice Alliance and others. [Text of Bill.](#)

SB 1392 & SB 1393 Sentencing Enhancements (Mitchell/Lara) eliminates two sentencing “enhancements” that lengthen sentences beyond the primary sentence. SB 1392 eliminates a one-year enhancement for previous non-violent felonies convictions. Current law requires the court to add a five-year enhancement for a prior violent felony; SB 1393 gives the court discretion, if they do not believe the enhancement is warranted. According to the Public Policy Institute of California, “California has more than 100 separate code sections that enhance sentences” based on a person’s current offense and/or record of prior convictions. As of 2016, 79% of offenders had some kind of sentence enhancement attached to their base sentence; 25% had three or more enhancements tacked on. Sponsored by the ACLU among other groups. [Text of SB 1392.](#) [Text of SB 1393.](#)

Health Care – Standing with poor people, the elderly, and women whose access to health insurance and reproductive care is threatened

For centuries, Jewish law has commanded communities to provide health care to their inhabitants (Mishneh Torah, Hilchot De'ot IV: 23). “You have endowed man with the wisdom to relieve the suffering of his brother, to recognize his disorders, to extract the healing substances, to discover their powers and to prepare and to apply them to suit every ill” (The Oath of Maimonides). We learn that health care is a core element of creating a society of equality and justice. Leaving millions of people without health care would undermine years of progress and an important measure that lifts up the most vulnerable among us.

Targeted Health Care Priorities:

SB 974 The Health4All Act (Lara) removes eligibility barriers for low-income undocumented adults to participate fully in Medi-Cal, the CA version of Medicaid. SB 974 is being advanced by Health Access California and the California Immigrant Policy Center. SB 974 builds on the gains California has made and takes the state one step closer to universal coverage. Ensuring that everyone has access to health care--regardless of their immigration status--is a key part of our allies’ strategy to reach this goal. Of the nearly three million Californians who remain uninsured, 58% are undocumented adults. This bill is both a healthcare and immigration bill. [Text of bill.](#) [Fact Sheet](#)

Endorsement-Only Health care:

AB 2430 Medi-Cal Program for Aged and Disabled Persons (Arambula) corrects an unfair anomaly whereby the Medi-Cal income limit for disabled people and people over 65 is lower than the income eligibility limit for all others. So, a person can be eligible for Medi-Cal at age 64 and dropped off Medi-Cal on their 65th birthday if their income is slightly over the limit for seniors. Similarly, a disabled person is excluded from Medi-Cal at a lower income level than the eligibility level for all others. This bill adjusts the Medi-Cal income eligibility limit of seniors and disabled people upward to 138% of the poverty level, the same standard used for eligibility of all other people. [Text of Bill](#).

AB 2499 Medical Loss Ratios (Arambula) requires insurance companies to keep a smaller percentage of premium dollars and spend more of the premium dollars on medical care. The medical loss ratio (MLR) is the percent of the premium dollar that health insurers spend on medical care and quality improvement activities as opposed to overhead costs (administrative costs, sales expenses, and profits). Plans and insurers that do not meet the MLR standards must provide rebates to consumers and employers. AB 2499 would improve upon existing medical loss ratio standards as follows: for the individual market from 80/20 to 85/15 and for the large group market from 85/15 to 90/10. The bill would also codify Obama-era regulations on MLR calculations that capture medical expenses, quality improvement activities, and administrative costs. [Text of Bill](#). [Fact Sheet](#)

Immigration – Standing with immigrants and refugees

The importance of providing sanctuary for immigrants is central in Jewish tradition. The Torah instructs, “When strangers sojourn with you in your land, you shall not do them wrong. The strangers who sojourn with you shall be to you as the natives among you, and you shall love them as yourself” (Leviticus 19:33-34). More recently, we recall the immigrant experiences of our own families, many of whom came to North America seeking safety and freedom from persecution. We have an obligation to advocate for a state where immigrants and refugees are welcomed and where all residents can have positive relationships with law enforcement. This will make California safer.

Targeted Immigration Priorities:

Implementation of SB 54 The Sanctuary State Bill. Rather than focusing on new legislation, many of our immigration allies are concentrating their efforts this year on implementation of SB 54, the so-called “sanctuary state” bill RAC-CA helped to past last year. Reform congregations could be involved by joining with others in their communities to meet with sheriffs to urge the broadest possible interpretation

of SB 54 protections. Congregations might want to host candidate forums for sheriff races and include SB 54 questions for the candidates. [Text of Bill](#).

SB 974 The Health4All Act (Lara). A joint immigration and health care bill. See above under Health Care for more information on this bill. [Text of bill](#). [Fact Sheet](#)

Climate Change - Standing with our descendants who will inherit the planet from us

Genesis 2:15 emphasizes our responsibility to protect the integrity of the environment so that its diverse species, including humans, can thrive, stating, "The human being was placed in the Garden of Eden to till it and to tend it." Similarly, Jewish tradition teaches us that human dominion over nature does not include a license to abuse the environment. The Talmudic concept of *bal tashchit*, "do not destroy," was developed by the rabbis into a universal doctrine that dramatically asserted God's ownership of the land. Psalm 24 notes, "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." From this basic concept, it follows that any act of destruction is an offense against the property of God.

Targeted Climate Change Priorities

SB 100 The 100 Percent Clean Energy Act of 2017 (de León) advances the state's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and toxic air pollution by: 1) accelerating the state's primary renewable energy program—the Renewables Portfolio Standard (RPS), raising the current requirement from 50% to 60% by 2030; and 2) establishing a new policy that all electricity produced to meet end-uses come from zero-carbon resources by 2045. SB 100 also promotes economic growth throughout our state and improves quality of life in vulnerable communities where power plants are often located. Three-fourths of Californians favor setting a 100% renewable energy target, and the bill has strong bipartisan support. This bill passed the Senate last year and then was held over as a two-year bill. It is in the Assembly now. RAC-CA supported SB 100 last year. It is also supported by approximately 150 organizations, including Environment California, Sierra Club, Environmental Defense Fund, Natural Resources Defense Council, California Environmental Justice Alliance, and Union of Concerned Scientists. In addition, many of the RAC-CA congregations signed on to an interfaith letter supporting the bill. [Text of Bill](#). [Fact sheet](#).

Endorsement-Only Climate Change

SB 834 (Jackson/Lara)/ AB 1775 (Muratsuchi/Limon) State Lands: Leasing: Oil and Gas. These Identical bills ensure that pipelines and other infrastructure cannot be built in California waters to support any new federal oil development. The bills protect the California coast by prohibiting: 1) the State Lands Commission from approving any new leases for pipelines, piers, wharves, or other infrastructure

needed to support new federal oil and gas development in the three-mile area off the coast that is controlled by the state; and 2) any lease renewal, extension or modification that would support the production, transportation or processing of new oil and gas. [Text of SB-834](#) [Text of AB 1775](#). [Summary](#).

SB 49: The CA Environmental Defense Act (Stern/de Leon) Makes current federal clean air, climate, clean water, worker safety, and endangered species standards enforceable under state law, even if the federal government rolls back or weakens those standards. Directs state environmental, public health, and worker safety agencies will be empowered to take all actions within their authorities to ensure standards which are in effect and being enforced today continue to remain in effect. This bill passed the Assembly last year and was held over as a two-year bill. It is in the Senate now. RAC-CA endorsed this bill last year. [Text of Bill](#). [FAQ](#).

Repeal of Gas Tax (Ballot measure, opposed) repeals the gas tax passed by the legislature in 2017 to fund transportation improvement, and zero-emission vehicles. It would also require majority voter approval for the state legislature to impose, increase, or extend a tax on gasoline, diesel fuel, or the operation of a vehicle or trailer coach on public highways. This measure is supported by the other Reform California (Not Us!) and is opposed by most of our environmental allies. [Text of measure](#). [More information](#).

Gun Violence Prevention – Standing with victims of gun violence

The U.S. has tens of thousands of gun deaths per year, with the highest rate of gun violence in the developed world. The Jewish tradition teaches us to put down our weapons, as it says "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning-knives; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore" (Isaiah 2:4). Our tradition tells us, "Do not stand idly by while your neighbor's blood is shed" (Leviticus 19:16). From this we learn that we must act to help end the plague of gun violence facing our country.

Targeted Gun Violence Prevention Priorities:

AB 3 Age Restrictions on Gun Purchases (Bonta) would expand to rifles and shotguns the prohibition on purchase of handguns by anyone under 21 years of age. This is a two-year bill that passed the Senate last year but failed to pass the Assembly. [Text of Bill](#).

AB 785 The Disarm Hate Act (Jones-Sawyer) adds a 10-year firearm prohibition to a misdemeanor hate crime conviction. Endorsed by the Brady Campaign. [Text of Bill](#). [Fact sheet](#).

These bills may be amended by the legislature before they are voted on. For the latest on the bills, including the links to bill text and fact sheet, see www.rac.org/RAC-CA

For a bill to pass, three things must happen:

- 1. Bills must be passed by the house of origin (Senate for bills that start with SB, and Assembly for bills that start with AB) by June 1*
- 2. Bills passed by the other house by August 31*
- 3. Governor must sign or veto bills by September 30.*