

## Maryland 2022 General Assembly Legislative Session Wrap-Up

The Maryland General Assembly wrapped up its 444<sup>th</sup> session on April 11<sup>th</sup>, passing more than 600 bills. For the JCRC, it was an incredibly productive legislative session in terms of our lobbying for security dollars for synagogues, schools, and childcare centers, and for funding for our social service agencies. We also proudly secured capital dollars for two priority projects - the Bender JCC's special needs camp and the Hebrew Home's Revitz House infrastructure upgrade. Finally, we advocated successfully for many public policy issues of critical importance, including banning ghost guns, expanding abortion access, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

### Budget/Funding Success:

Given budgetary constraints due to continued pandemic needs, the JCRC strategically requested level funding for our agencies in the FY23 State budget. This strategy paid off as *all* our budget requests were met, and some were even increased. For example, we had requested \$3 million dollars in security for our synagogues through the **Protecting Against Hate Crimes** (PAHC) grant program. But given the rise in antisemitism and all forms of hate, the Governor increased that allocation to **\$5 million dollars**. The final budget also included our request of **\$2 million dollars** for security at schools and childcare centers through the **Hate Crimes Grant** (HCG) program of the Maryland Center for School Safety. Additionally, **\$10 million dollars** was approved for the **BOOST** (Broadening Options & Opportunities for Students) program, which helps students offset nonpublic school tuition costs.

The JCRC also advocated to secure funds for our non-sectarian social service agencies. **JSSA** received **\$350,000 dollars** to meet the needs of Holocaust Survivors and **\$225,000 dollars** to help support its Aging in Place services. The **ElderSAFE Center** of the Charles E. Smith Life Communities' (CESLC) received **\$75,000 dollars** to protect older victims of abuse, and the **Maryland Israel Development Center** (MIDC) received **\$300,000 dollars** to promote bilateral trade between Maryland and Israel. We also advocated to secure Legislative Bond Initiatives - **\$150,000 dollars** for **JFGH** and **\$250,000 dollars** for the **Berman Hebrew Academy**. (Our friend, State Senator Ben Kramer, was able to secure an additional \$415,000 for the school).

Finally, regarding the State's FY23 capital budget, the JCRC received the *full* amount of its requests for both the Bender JCC and the Hebrew Home of Greater Washington/CESLC's Revitz House. The **Bender JCC** received **\$600,000 dollars** to build an outdoor accessible Inclusive Sportscomplex for its special needs campers. And, **CESLC's Revitz House**, which serves low-income seniors, received **\$600,000 dollars** to repair its antiquated piping and broken plumbing systems.

### Legislative/Policy Success:

#### 1. **Ghost Gun Ban/Untraceable Firearms: (SB 387/HB 425)**

This legislation prohibits selling/buying and possessing/owning untraceable firearms, also known as ghost guns. It requires any firearm made after Oct. 22, 1968, to have a serial number and bans the sale of untraceable "kit guns." Anyone who possesses a ghost gun will be subject to a misdemeanor punishable by up to two years in prison. For people who sell/ transfer the firearms,

it would be punishable up to five years in prison or a \$10,000 fine. This bill became law without the Governor's signature. This ban on the purchase of ghost guns takes effect on June 1, 2022, and ownership, on March 1, 2023.

### 2. **Reproductive Freedom/Abortion Care Access Act: (SB 890/HB 937)**

This Act allows nurse-practitioners, nurse-midwives, and physician assistants to provide abortion services. It provides \$3.5 million to train these health care professionals to offer reproductive services. Additionally, the legislation would make the state's existing abortion care coverage under Medicaid permanent and require private plans — with exceptions for those with religious or legal exemption — to cover abortion care without cost-sharing or deductibles. The legislature overrode the Governor's veto. This bill takes effect July 1, 2022.

### 3. **The Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022: (SB 528)**

This bill sets aggressive goals for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and establishes new policies to help achieve that goal by requiring more building electrification. This Act expands the state's electric vehicle fleet and creates a green bank to invest state funds into private projects that reduce gas emissions. It is groundbreaking in terms of reducing the state's greenhouse gas emissions to 60% of 2006 levels by 2031, with a requirement to reach net-zero by 2045. The new law also establishes a Building Energy Performance Standard, requiring buildings that are 35,000 square feet or larger to achieve net-zero emissions by 2040. This bill became law without the Governor's signature. It takes effect June 1, 2022.

### 4. **Access to Counsel in Evictions Special Fund: (SB 662)**

This bill **funds** a program that lawmakers created last year to pay for Access to Counsel in Eviction (ACE) cases for low-income tenants. Although the legislation to establish this program passed in the 2021 session, the funding mechanism failed. This year, lawmakers have funded the ACE program *only* for fiscal year 2024 by requiring the Comptroller to send \$14 million from abandoned property funds (State's Unclaimed Property Fund) to this special fund. This bill goes into effect July 1, 2022.

### 5. **Childcare Package- Scholarship Program (SB 920/HB 995), Providers/Employees Bonuses (SB 806/HB 1100), and Capital Support Revolving Loan Fund (HB 993)**

This first bill grants individuals on the edge of eligibility automatic enrollment for the **Child Care Scholarship Program**. It establishes a simplified process, presuming families who apply for the Program are eligible so that they can immediately enroll while their applications are reviewed. Secondly, the **Bonuses for Provider and Employees** legislation provides \$16 million for employee retention and new hire bonuses. It creates a fund to attract workers to this job sector by establishing funding and distribution of bonuses for childcare providers and employees. And finally, the **Child Care Capital Support Revolving Loan Fund** will provide no-interest loans for capital expenses to childcare providers who participate in the Child Care Scholarship (CCS) Program. \$15 million was allocated for this fund, with priority given to child care providers that are located in underserved communities. These bills go into effect July 1, 2022.

