

THE JCRC'S 2023 VIRGINIA LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

State & Local Issues

- **Reproductive Health:** The JCRC supports legislation that ensures that Virginians have access to comprehensive health care, including reproductive health care, contraception and abortion and that Virginians do not face discrimination or government overreach into their relationships with their health care providers, their family or their faith.
- **Gun Violence Protection:** The JCRC supports bipartisan efforts to prevent gun violence, such as background checks on all purchases and transfers of ownership that keep guns and firearms out of the wrong hands.
- **Voter Access:** Laws limiting voter access – regardless of intent – may disenfranchise eligible voters and disproportionately affect minorities, the elderly, voters with disabilities, and those who live in poverty. The JCRC supports legislation to expand access to the polls and opposes legislation unduly restricting ballot access.
- **Fighting Poverty:** The JCRC supports programs that help the most vulnerable in our community acquire tools to success by providing access to affordable housing, fighting food insecurity and ensuring quality education.
- **Security for Faith-Based Institutions:** The JCRC supports the continued funding and an expanded reach for security measures and programs to support nonprofits, including faith-based organizations, at risk of hate crimes.
- **Supports for Social Services:** Our Jewish agencies provide a range of support for aging adults, individuals with disabilities, victims of domestic violence, Holocaust survivors, and individuals seeking counseling and mental health services, regardless of faith, background, or ability to pay. We support expanding the social safety net to support our agencies in their work to serve all Virginians in need.
- **Environment and Climate Change:** The JCRC supports policies to protect our environment through adaptation, mitigation and resilience.
- **Criminal Justice Reform:** The JCRC is committed to advocating for a criminal justice system for adults and juveniles that is just, provides equitable treatment for all under the law, and ensures accountability for conduct and performance of police, prosecutors, wardens and parole officers.
- **Immigration:** The JCRC supports a generous, nondiscriminatory immigration policy that enables a path to legal status and citizenship, ensures access to social services and affordable housing for immigrants and their families. We support humane efforts to reduce the flow of distressed immigrants into the United States and legislation and practices that promote protection of human rights in detentions and deportations.
- **Separation of Church and State:** The JCRC supports the constitutional right to individual religious expression and affirms our opposition to efforts to legislate coercive religious practice into Virginia government institutions and schools.
- **Disability Advocacy:** The JCRC seeks to ensure that individuals with disabilities have the resources they need to live with dignity and fully participate in society and Jewish life. We are committed to creating opportunities and affordable accessible housing that enable self-sufficiency and inclusion.

- **Affordable Housing:** Decent, safe, accessible, and affordable housing is a basic human right with repercussions on employment, health, schooling, food security, and the overall wellbeing of our communities. The JCRC supports policies and legislation that look to public-private partnerships to meet affordable housing challenges and supports public investments aimed at keeping people in their homes.
- **Virginia-Israel Advisory Board:** The JCRC supports the Virginia-Israel Advisory Board (VIAB) in its mission to facilitate economic development opportunities between the Commonwealth of Virginia and the State of Israel.

Federal Issues:

- **Security Funding:** Support increased funding of the **Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP)** to safeguard nonprofit and faith-based institutions against terrorist attacks.
- **Support Israel:**
 - Continued support of the **Middle East Partnership for Peace Act (MEPPA)** which funds people-to-people programs between Israelis and Palestinians.
 - Support the **COI (Commission of Inquiry) Elimination Act** which aims to dismantle and withhold funds budgeted for yet another biased, anti-Israel UN COI
- **Ensure Access to Reproductive Care:** Support the **Women’s Health Protection Act (WHPA)**, which would create a new tool for safeguarding access to high-quality care and securing constitutional rights by protecting patients and providers from political interference.
- **Fund Social Services:**
 - Increase funding of the **Holocaust Survivor Assistance Program (HSAP)** to support aging Holocaust survivors and their caregivers.
 - Support funding of DOJ grants established by the **Jabara-Heyer NO HATE Act** to help states improve enforcement of hate crimes.
 - Support the **Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP)**, which reimburses organizations, including Jewish agencies, for providing housing to those in dire need, including migrants.
 - Support the **Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Age Adjustment Act**, which would provide a pathway to greater independence for disabled individuals by allowing them to establish tax-free savings accounts for disability-related and health care expenses.
- **Protect refugees:** Continued support for passage of the **Afghan Adjustment Act (AAA)** to provide a pathway to permanent legal status/residency.