



Update on JCPA Legislative Actions on COVID-19 March 26, 2020

During this COVID-19 public health crisis, JCPA is working to ensure the safety and health of the Jewish community, support the Jewish Community Relations Councils (JCRCs) on the frontlines of engagement with legislators, increase our educational webinar platform, and intensify advocacy with our diverse issue-based coalition partners. Our aim is to ensure that the community relations work is strong during this pandemic. Our priority advocacy areas are focused on helping those vulnerable populations at higher risk of infection, including individuals in prison, immigrants and children in detention, in long-term care facilities, and those who are homeless, while we support the efforts of the Jewish community that is also severely impacted by this pandemic.

The world had changed drastically in a few weeks' time, and JCPA's policy leaders have been working hard to reach out to our coalition partners and members, and to legislators to advocate for emergency needs during this pandemic. In our first week, we undertook the following:

Convened JCPA Member Agencies

- Convened the Washington Reps group and focused on COVID-19 legislation and priorities of different Jewish organizations
- Held two check-in meetings with JCRC Directors to create a space for them to speak with each other and to share with us areas where they can use support.
- Participated in JFNA's government affairs meetings and actions on the COVID-19 stimulus package.

Legislative Action

- Cosponsored a webinar on "A Faith Response to COVID-19" on March 11, organized by the Interfaith Domestic Human Needs Coalition (DHN), in which JCPA is an active member. JCPA may help organize a second webinar for DHN on priorities post-stimulus 3.0, details forthcoming.
- Held a Policy Advisory Committee meeting on Tuesday, March 24 to discuss our issue priorities and advocacy strategy during the pandemic.
- Sent a letter to Congressional leaders to urge support for the most vulnerable in the third economic stimulus package

- Working in collaboration with coalition partners, JCPA signed onto the following letters to Congressional leadership and other government agencies:

Domestic Human Needs (Poverty, Health, and Nutrition) — Provide for testing and treatment for all, along with paid sick and family leave for all workers; support low-income workers; protect those at increased risk of infection including in prison and immigrant detention, long-term care facilities, and experiencing homelessness; economic stimulus measures should focus first on low income and vulnerable groups.

- *Washington Interfaith Staff Community (WISC) Domestic Human Needs Working Group* Letter on Stimulus Package #2 Principles and Priorities
- *MAZON and NCJW* Jewish Letter on Nutrition Assistance During COVID-19
- *Washington Interfaith Staff Community (WISC) Domestic Human Needs Working Group* Letter on Stimulus Package #3 Principles and Priorities

Democracy: Voting Rights and the 2020 Census — Expand early and vote-by-mail options, online registration; prohibit polling place adjustments that disproportionately impact vulnerable populations; and increase voter education. Letters based on the [Brennan Center's recommendations](#). For the census, Congress must carefully monitor the situation.

- *Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights* Letter on Voting Rights During COVID-19
- *Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights' Voting Rights Task Force* Letter on Requesting \$2 Billion in Elections Funding During COVID-19

Criminal Justice — Release as many people from incarceration as possible through existing mechanisms, particularly elderly and medically-vulnerable people; provide soap and other critical supplies to everyone; develop and release policies for handling COVID-19 within each prison facility. For those who will be or already been released, lift of any ban to access social services and housing.

- *NY Coalition on Criminal Justice Reform* Jewish Community Letter on Bail Reform
- *Jewish Coalition on Criminal Justice Reform* Statement on Coronavirus and Conditions in Prisons & Jails
- *Interfaith Criminal Justice Coalition* Letter

Immigration — Extend the Medicaid state option for the uninsured to all green card holders and others lawfully residing in the US, and people who file taxes, regardless of whether with a social security number or other individual taxpayer number, can get economic relief.

- *National Immigration Law Center* Letter on Immigrant Exclusion from Medicaid State Option and Cash Assistance in the Third Stimulus Package

- Domestic Violence — Fund programs focused on the urgent needs of domestic violence and sexual assault survivors and programs that serve them as violence surges during lockdowns.
 - *Interfaith Coalition on Domestic and Sexual Violence (JWI)* Letter on Addressing the Increase in Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Due to COVID-19 Lockdowns

Other

- *Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights' Hate Crimes Task Force* Letter to White House and FBI on Hate Crimes Against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders Due to COVID-19
- *National Women's Law Center* Letter Opposing the Non-profit Medicaid Exclusion in the COVID-19 Package
- *Anti-Defamation League* Joint Statement by Jewish Communal Organizations on COVID-19 Scapegoating
- An analysis of the third stimulus bill is forthcoming.