

Jewish Community Relations Council 2021 Legislative Priorities

Medicaid. The JCRC continues to support the safeguarding of Medicaid funding for Oregon's most vulnerable populations. The upcoming 2021-23 biennium will be particularly challenging given the adverse impact of Covid-19 and the wildfires on the state budget. During the 2021 legislative session, the JCRC will work hard to protect Medicaid and other critical human service programs.

Gun Violence. The JCRC is committed to making Oregon safer from gun violence and remains involved in the coalition developing and bringing to the legislature common-sense gun violence prevention measures: closing the Charleston loophole and requiring gun owners to safely store their firearms.

Holocaust Education. In 2019, the JCRC partnered with the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education to mandate Holocaust and genocide education in the state's public high schools. Given the alarming level of ignorance about the Holocaust among millennials and Gen Z individuals, the JCRC is committed to working with the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) and key legislators to ensure implementation of this legislation.

Ethnic Studies. The JCRC is seeking to include the history and contributions of the American Jewish community in the state ethnic studies standards being finalized by ODE in accordance with legislation passed over the last three years. We believe that Jews should be considered an historically marginalized community along with the indigenous, Black, Latinx and Asian communities.

Wage Theft. The JCRC believes that every worker has the right to live and labor with dignity, safety and hope. Traditionally, victims of wage theft can file lawsuits to hold bad actors accountable, but many businesses are now burying forced arbitration provisions in employment contracts, denying access to courts and juries. The JCRC is a member of the Oregon Coalition Against Wage Theft, which supports legislation that would authorize whistleblowers to join the state attorney general as a party to their case, thereby bypassing forced arbitration provisions that deny victims their right to go to court.

Climate Change. The JCRC believes that climate change is an urgent global security threat and one of the greatest moral issues of our time. We support legislation to promote renewable energy and other clean-energy innovations that will enable Oregon to lower its carbon footprint and help mitigate the dangerous impacts of climate change.