



## **The RAC-CA World We Want Agenda 2018 - The Bills**

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, because we can be more flexible and impactful if we can move on multiple fronts, and because without focus, we dilute our power to make change.

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.

This document contains information about RAC-CA's number one priority bill SB- 10 Money Bail Reform, as well as 13 other RAC-CA-supported bills in 6 issue areas.

The most critical bill in each issue area is listed first, based on a combination of the scale of impact the bill would have and the opportunity for RAC-CA action to influence passage of the 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 for thousands of years 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.



## RAC-CA's #1 Priority Bill for 2018:

**SB-10 CA Money Bail Reform Act** (Hertzberg, Allen, Atkins, Beall, Bradford, Lara, Mitchell, Monning, Skinner, Wieckowski, Wiener and House Cosponsors Bonta, Bloom, Chiu, Jones-Sawyer, Quirk, Mark Stone) aims to ensure that people are not held in pretrial detention simply because they cannot 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 is now in the Assembly Appropriations Committee. [Text of SB-10](#). [Fact Sheet](#). [URJ Resolution](#)

## Other Criminal Justice Bills:

**SB 1437 BESTT Practices Act** (Skinner) clarifies California's "felony murder" rule to ensure that individuals are charged appropriately for the crime they actually committed. Currently, a person who participates in any portion of certain felonies that result in a death can be charged with first-degree murder, even if they were unaware that a killing would or did take place. SB 1437 clarifies California's murder statutes to reserve the most serious murder charges for those who actually plan or participate in a homicide. This bill also establishes a process for those who wrongfully sentenced under the current felony murder interpretation to seek resentencing. [Text of Bill](#). [Fact Sheet](#). [URJ Resolution](#).

**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. This bill passed the Senate on May 30 and is now in the Assembly Appropriations Committee. [Text of bill](#). [Fact Sheet](#). [URJ Resolution](#)

**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. This bill passed the Senate on May 30 and is now in the Assembly Appropriations Committee. [Text of Bill](#). [Fact Sheet](#). [URJ Resolution](#)



## **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 God's creation.

**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 would promote economic growth throughout our state and the quality of life in vulnerable communities where power plants are often located. RAC-CA supported SB 100 last year, and the bill passed the Senate on a party-line vote (25-13) in May 2017. It was held over as a two-year bill but stalled in the Assembly's Utilities and Energy (U&E) Committee last September. After adoption of author-approved [amendments](#) in late June, it passed the U&E Committee on a party-line vote (10-5) on July 3 and goes to a vote on the Assembly floor in August. SB 100 is [supported](#) by many organizations, including Environment California, Sierra Club, Environmental Defense Fund, Natural Resources Defense Council, California Environmental Justice Alliance, and Union of Concerned Scientists. [Text of Bill](#). [Fact sheet](#). [URJ Resolution](#)

## **Health Care** – Standing with low-income 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.



**SB 974 (Lara) and AB 2965 (Arambula) The Health4All Acts** remove eligibility barriers for low-income undocumented adults of age 65 and older (SB 974), and under age 26 (AB 2965), to participate fully in Medi-Cal, the CA version of Medicaid. These two bills are being advanced by Health Access California and the California Immigrant Policy Center. SB 974 and AB 2965 build on the gains California has made and take the state one step closer to universal coverage. Of the nearly three million Californians who remain uninsured, a large fraction are undocumented adults. Ensuring that everyone has access to health care--regardless of their immigration status--is a key step toward reaching universal coverage. These two bills fall under both the healthcare and immigration issue areas. Both bills were approved by the Senate on 05/30/18 and later the Assembly Health Committee. They both are now in the Assembly Appropriations Committee. [Text of SB 974](#). [Text of AB 2965](#). [SB 974 Fact Sheet](#). [AB 2965 Fact Sheet](#). [URJ Resolution](#) (Note: these bills are also included in our agenda as Immigration bills)

**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 65<sup>th</sup> 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 the standard 138% of the poverty level. AB 2430 was approved by the Assembly on 05/29/18 with strong bipartisan support and sent to the Senate, where it was approved by the Health Committee and awaits passage by the Appropriations Committee. [Text of Bill](#). [Fact Sheet](#). [URJ Resolution](#)

**AB 2499 Medical Loss Ratios** (Arambula) requires insurance companies to adhere to the standards of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) on the percentage of premium dollars that must be spent on medical care. The medical loss ratio (MLR) is the percent of the premium dollar that health insurers spend on x` as opposed to overhead costs (administrative costs, sales expenses, and profits). The ACA requires insurers in the large group market to have a MLR of 85% or better, and in the small group and individual markets to have a MLR of 80 % or better. The Trump Administration has proposed to loosen these standards. AB 2499 would require that, within California, insurers must adhere to the MLR standards specified by the ACA. AB 2499 was approved by the Assembly on 05/29/18 and sent to the Senate, where it was approved by the Health Committee and Appropriations Committee. This bill now awaits an Assembly vote. [Text of Bill](#). [Fact Sheet](#). [URJ Resolution](#)



## **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.

**SB 974 (Lara) and AB 2965 (Arambula) The Health4All Acts** remove eligibility barriers for low-income undocumented adults of age 65 and older (SB 974), and under age 26 (AB 2965), to participate fully in Medi-Cal, the CA version of Medicaid. These two bills are being advanced by Health Access California and the California Immigrant Policy Center. SB 974 and AB 2965 build on the gains California has made and moves us closer to universal coverage. Of the nearly three million Californians who remain uninsured, a large fraction are undocumented adults. These two bills fall under both the healthcare and immigration issue areas. Both bills were approved by the Senate on 05/30/18 and later the Assembly Health Committee. They both are now in the Assembly Appropriations Committee. [Text of bill](#). [Fact Sheet](#). [URJ Resolution](#) (Note: these bills are also included in our agenda as healthcare bills)

## **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.

**AB 3 Age Restrictions on Gun Purchases** (Bonta) would expand to rifles and shotguns California's existing prohibition on purchase of handguns by anyone under 21 years of age. This bill is currently under consideration in the Senate Appropriations Committee. (It previously passed the Assembly in substantially different form). [Text of Bill](#). [Giffords Law Center Support Letter](#). [URJ Resolution](#)



**AB 2888 Gun Violence Restraining Orders** (Ting) expands who could file for a temporary restraining order to prevent people who are an extreme risk of harm to self or others from owning or acquiring a gun. Under current law, only family or household members and law enforcement can file for a "gun violence restraining order" limiting possession and purchase of guns. This bill would also allow co-workers and school personnel to petition courts for these orders. AB 2888 does not change the standard used to issue a gun violence protection order; instead it expands who can request this order. This bill passed the Assembly and is currently under consideration in the Senate Appropriations Committee. [Text of Bill](#). [Giffords Law Center Support Letter](#). [URJ Resolution](#)

### **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 (Bava Metzia 8:6). Today we work to provide housing for the homeless and address the shortage of affordable housing.

**AB 2162 Supportive Housing Streamlining** (Chiu) allows developers to build supportive housing "by right," i.e. without having to get a zoning variance. This bill promotes 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, AB 2162 would allow non-profit developers to build supportive housing without the prolonged approval process typically required in these projects. Endorsed by Housing California. Passed the Assembly on May 29, the bill awaits a vote in the Senate. [Text of bill](#). [Fact Sheet](#). [URJ Resolution](#)

**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. Passed the Senate on May 30 and sent to the Assembly where it awaits a vote. [Text of Bill](#). [Fact Sheet](#). [URJ Resolution](#)



**SB 1010 Parolees: Supportive Housing Pilot program** (Beall) creates a pilot project 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. Passed the Senate on May 31, and now awaiting a vote in the Assembly. [Text of Bill](#). [Fact Sheet](#). [URJ Resolution](#)

*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](http://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.*

*If a bill has not yet passed its house of origin by lobby day it is dead for the year. Most bills that are still viable at lobby day have gone to the Appropriations Committee of the other house (not their house of origin) and are placed in the "suspense file," a holding zone for a bill until the leadership determines whether or not they want to bring the bill to a vote on the house floor. The Appropriations Committee must vote to remove a bill from the suspense file, and then it can proceed to a vote on the floor of the second house, the last step before a bill can be passed by the legislature.*