



## The World We Want CA Legislative Agenda 2017

*The Brit Olam/Covenant for the World We Want* campaign is based on rapid response by California Reform congregations and communities to attacks on vulnerable populations as well as opportunities to advance Jewish values in the public sphere. As part of this campaign, Reform CA is supporting a slate of 11 bills on five issues before the California state legislature. Your congregation should feel free to prioritize those bills that are most important to your community.

### Immigration – Standing with immigrants and refugees

Our tradition offers teachings about the importance of providing sanctuary for immigrants. 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 feel welcome, and where all residents can have positive relationships with law enforcement. This will make California safer.

- **SB-54 CA Values Act** (Kevin de León). Prevents the use of state and local public resources to aid federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents in deportation actions. [Text of Bill](#)
- **SB-30 California-Mexico Border Protection** (Ricardo Lara). Requires a vote of the people to approve a border wall project that would harm California’s environment, such as endangered species of wildlife and river watersheds, or California’s economy, through trade and tourism. [Text of Bill](#)
- **SB-6 Legal Services Fund for Immigrants** (Ben Hueso, with cosponsors de Leon and Rendon). Provides funds for legal services for immigrants facing deportation. [Text of Bill](#)
- **AB-343 Refugees and In-State Tuition** (Kevin McCarty). Allows refugees to pay in-state tuition at public colleges. It also would give priority enrollment to refugees on special immigrant visas, such as those who served as translators or interpreters in Iraq and Afghanistan; California veterans would also receive a similar benefit. [Text of Bill](#)

### Bias – Standing with Jews, Muslims, LGBT people and others who face discrimination and hate crimes

Our tradition teaches us that, "God said to Moses: Is there anyone whom I do not respect? Whether it be Israelite or Gentile, man or woman, slave or handmaid, whoever does a good deed, shall find the reward at its side" (Midrash Yalku Lekh Leka 76). Our merit in the world is based on our individual

actions, not on our membership in any group, and yet we know from long experience that people can be vulnerable when any group is demonized or discriminated against. As we seek to live our lives conscious of being created in God's image, we must work to ensure that no one is discriminated against based on any specific group identity.

- **SB-31 California Religious Freedom Act** (Ricardo Lara). Prevents state and law enforcement agencies from collecting information on religious beliefs and practices of individuals as well as from collaborating with the Federal government in compiling a database of religious affiliation for law enforcement or immigration purposes. This would prevent local and state governments from cooperating with a national Muslim registry. The bill would not impact the sharing of information from law enforcement for purposes of national security. Reform CA has signed on as an official co-sponsor. [Text of 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 the authorities for thousands of years. We 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.

- **SB-180 The RISE Act** (Holly Mitchell and Ricardo Lara) Repeals the three-year sentence enhancement for each prior drug conviction that is applied on top of the main sentence in a new conviction (with the exception of convictions involving a minor). [Fact Sheet](#); [Text of the Bill](#)
- **AB-42 CA Money Bail Reform Act** (Rob Bonta, Richard Bloom, David Chiu, Reggie Jones-Sawyer, Bill Quirk, and Mark Stone) Aims to ensure that people are not held in pretrial detention simply because of their inability to 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. [Text of Bill](#)

### **Health Care** – Standing with poor 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). “Thou hast 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.

- **AB-569 Reproductive Health Nondiscrimination Act** (Lorena Gonzalez Fletcher) Protects employees who work in California from workplace discrimination based on their personal reproductive health care decisions. For example, it would prohibit an employer from firing an employee for using birth control or getting an abortion. [Text of Bill](#)

[CA healthcare advocates are waiting for the national health care situation to resolve itself before they move on state legislation, so Federal cutbacks in health care are not justified by the claim that the States can pick up the slack. We will watch for state bills to support after the national policy debate concludes.]

### **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 domain 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 the property of God.

- **AB-378 California Global Warming Solutions Act** (Cristina Garcia, Chris Holden, and Eduardo Garcia) Affirms greenhouse gas reduction goals set last year and requires the CA Air Resources Board (ARB) to take into account the effect of greenhouse gasses in disadvantaged communities which have been disproportionately affected. The bill also would authorize the ARB to continue using a carbon-pricing market mechanism and other equitable measures to meet the statewide greenhouse gas reduction target of 40% by 2030. [Text of Bill](#)
- **SB-49 The California Environmental Defense Act** (Kevin de León and Henry Stern) Makes current federal clean air, climate, clean water, worker safety, and endangered species standards enforceable under state law, even if the federal government rolls back or weakens those standards. Directs state environmental, public health, and worker safety agencies will be empowered to take all actions within their authorities to ensure standards which are in effect and being enforced today continue to remain in effect. [Text of Bill](#)
- **SB-51 The Whistleblower and Public Data Protection Act** (Hannah-Beth Jackson) Protects government employees from losing their state licensure in environmental and climate-change related fields for revealing violations of law, unethical actions or dangers to public health and safety. It also directs state environmental and public health agencies to protect any information or data under state law, even if a government entity orders their censorship or destruction. [Text of Bill](#)