

FAITH ACTION NETWORK

A Partnership for the Common Good

FAN's 2016 End-of-Session Successes

On March 29, the Washington State legislature adjourned its special thirty-day session with a final supplemental budget. FAN celebrates four budget victories from our legislative agenda:

- Washington's **mental health system** received about \$40 million in funding for more staff, particularly at our state's largest mental health hospital, to help provide better care and reduce the boarding of mentally ill people.
- **Housing and homeless programs** received about \$15 million, \$2 million of which went to address youth homelessness with a voucher system for homeless students in our public schools.
- **The Office of Civil Legal Aid** received about \$552,000 to continue coordinating the statewide effort to provide a variety of legal needs for those in our state who are otherwise unable to afford legal assistance.
- **SB 6260, concerning post-secondary education in prisons** was stalled in the Senate for some time, but a proviso (amendment) that captured the essence of his bill went into the final budget that was adopted. It will give some who are getting ready to come out of prison a 'step up' in regards to having better skills to be successful in their re-entry into society.

Six policy bills on FAN's legislative agenda also passed during this session. Our successes include:

- **The human trafficking definition bill** (SB 5342 – Hasegawa) will expand how our state legally understands human trafficking in terms of enforcement. Particularly, this bill includes the words "forced labor" in the definition, which accounts for the largest portion of human trafficking.
- **The Certificates of Restoration of Opportunity Act (CROP)** (HB 1553 – Walkinshaw) will establish a program that will reduce the chance of someone coming out of our prison system to recidivate.
- **The Use of Deadly Force bill** (HB 2908 – Ryu) will establish a task force of about 17 members that will meet four times before the next session to bring forth recommendations regarding police-community standards and reforms on the use of deadly force by law enforcement.
- **The Homeless Student Stability Act** (HB 1682 – Fey) will begin a voucher system in our public schools to give homeless students and their households more stability, therefore allowing them a better chance to succeed in school.
- **The Fair Tenant Screening bill** (SB 6413 – Mullet) requires transparent, accurate, and fair reporting standards and limits the amount tenants can be charged for a tenant screening report, which will improve access to housing.
- **The Toxics Free Kids & Families bill** (HB 2545 – Van De Wege) will now require the elimination of certain chemicals in kids' products that are sold and manufactured in this state.



On March 31, Co-Director Paul Benz represented FAN to celebrate Gov. Inslee's signing of HB 1553, concerning certificates of restoration of opportunity (CROP).

Thank you to all of you who diligently called or emailed your state legislators this session regarding these budget issues and policy bills. Thank you for your advocacy and support; you continually help, along with our many partners, to make our state more livable for all!