



## 2022 Legislative Session Recap and Successes

**The 2022 Legislative Session was one of the most productive short sessions in recent memory**, with transformational investments across the safety net—food, nutrition, housing, and cash assistance—as well as transportation and education. This 60-day session began on January 10 with hearings and floor votes done mostly virtually. By the end of session on March 10, the largest supplemental budget in history passed with most legislators voting in-person at the Capitol and statewide mask mandates set to lift a couple of days later. “Unprecedented, historic, extraordinary” have been overused words during the pandemic, yet they aptly describe the 2022 session.

The main priorities for lawmakers were the supplemental two-year budget plan, transportation package, the economy, and police reform. What made this supplemental budget year extraordinary was the significant budget surplus from the \$1.2 billion in unspent federal COVID relief funds plus an increase in expected revenue of \$1.45 billion for the budget cycle ending in 2023. With a projected surplus of billions, some lawmakers advocated for tax cuts, while others agreed with FAN and wanted to use the funds for investing in communities and programs that need support. With our coalition partners, FAN demanded the legislature do more to lift Washingtonians out of poverty by providing rental, utility, and food assistance, and by increasing investments in schools, healthcare, and workforce development. We recommended that the Legislature refuse any tax cuts that did not directly put cash back in the pockets of the people who need it the most. And the Legislature listened!

The **\$64.1 billion supplemental budget** passed on the final day of the session, making investments in K-12 education, housing, behavioral health, COVID-19 pandemic recovery, and safety net supports. The budget includes no new taxes. The Legislature also passed a **16-year, \$17 billion transportation package** called Move Ahead Washington. Gov. Inslee described the package as a “transformational, once in a generation feat” that would reduce emissions and dependence on fossil fuels. Unique features of this transportation package are the absence of a gas tax hike and a one-time \$2-billion transfer from the general fund.

Other notable achievements of this session included passing the **nation’s first alert system for missing and endangered Indigenous persons (HB 1725)**, with resounding bipartisan support; **fixes to the state’s long-term care insurance** program; a **momentous victory for gun responsibility advocates**; and **funding for refugee resettlement support**.

### **GUN RESPONSIBILITY**

FAN supported a trio of **Alliance for Gun Responsibility bills** that passed, including the highly contentious **SB 5078 addressing high-capacity magazine restrictions**. The bill passed on party-line vote and bans the manufacturing, distribution, and sale of magazines that hold more than 10 rounds. Possession is not prohibited in the bill. Law enforcement and armed services members are exempt. The bill was introduced at the request of Attorney General Bob Ferguson and sponsored by Senator Marko

Lias, who cited data showing states that limited magazine capacity had lower rates of gun violence. Lawmakers also passed **HB 1706 closing the ghost guns loophole** and **HB 1630 restricting weapons in certain locations** such as school board meetings and election-related facilities.

### **FUNDING for REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT SUPPORT**

Due to the power and passion of grassroots advocates, a committed coalition effort, and House champion Rep. My-Lin Thai, the Legislature provided **\$28.4 million in state funding** for refugee support organizations across Washington. This will strengthen and add capacity to their work, specifically to address the resettlement needs of Afghan and Ukrainian refugees.

FAN was part of the coalition that advocated successfully to include this funding in the supplemental budget. It was led by FAN board member Aneelah Afzali of MAPS-AMEN, WA Immigrant Solidarity Network, Seattle Indivisible, Asian Counseling Referral Service, International Rescue Committee, OneAmerica, and others. More than a hundred organizations signed on to a support letter and their efforts generated over 12,000 emails and hundreds of calls. Well done!

### **ECONOMIC JUSTICE**

It was a banner year for FAN's anti-poverty priorities. While there was no willingness to pass a wealth tax on billionaires this year, legislators decided to use some of the projected budget surplus to support struggling families who are facing tough times and uncertainty. **Every anti-hunger and safety-net priority on our agenda was funded** to meet the unprecedented ongoing need.

- **School Meals HB 1878 will expand free school meals** to more than 92,000 kids and has already been signed into law by the Governor. **HB 1833** will create a statewide multilingual online tool for school meal applications and programs for low-income students.
- **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) was funded to extend to June 2023 the 60-month-time-limit hardship exemption**, and to increase the monthly payment standard for TANF households with nine or more members. TANF families with a child under three years old will also get an additional **\$100/mo. diaper subsidy (SB 5838)**
- **Aged Blind and Disabled (ABD) cash grants will increase** the maximum amount from \$197/mo to \$417/mo for one person and \$528/mo. for two people. ABD eligibility was also expanded to **include human trafficking victims (HB 1748)**.
- **Dept. of Social & Health Services HB 2075 will reduce call center wait times** and provide in-person services at DSHS.
- **We Feed Washington boxes** were funded at \$58 million to continue to connect farmers, food programs, and hungry households.
- **Fixes to the Working Families Tax Credit (WFTC) HB 1888** will ensure that all eligible families will be able to access the tax credit as intended. An additional **\$10 million was also budgeted** for WFTC outreach and language access, meaning more eligible Washingtonians will be aware of the credit and able to benefit from it. Starting in 2023, the WFTC program will provide payments ranging from \$300 to \$1200 to low-to-moderate income households. This will help roughly 420,000 households if fully implemented.
- **Paid Family and Medical Leave** was modified by **SB 5649** to be more equitable.
- **Closing the digital equity divide HB 1723** will increase the accessibility and affordability of telecommunications services, devices, and training.

## **HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES and PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS**

FAN and our coalition partners advocated for more funding for affordable housing and preventing homelessness. The legislature responded by investing **\$829 million in homelessness and housing services**. This includes an **additional \$113 million for the Housing Trust Fund, \$100 million in utility assistance, \$300 million to provide 3,890 additional rapid housing units, and \$50 million to transition people living in unsanctioned encampments** into permanent housing.

Two bills that would have made a meaningful impact in addressing housing disparities did not make the first cut-off on February 15. **HB 1904** would have provided tenants more time to respond to rent increases. **HB 2017**, the Housing Justice Act, would have prevented landlords from automatically excluding someone from rental housing because they have an arrest record or past conviction. We will continue to advocate for these changes in the 2023 legislative session.

## **CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM and POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY**

The criminal justice reform and police accountability section of our legislative agenda had the *most struggle* this session and the most pushback from 2021 successes. **FAN is a member of the WA Coalition for Police Accountability (WCPA)**, which is made up of impacted families and their ally advocates. The WCPA held a rally on the Washington State Capitol steps halfway through session. They protested that bills this year were politically motivated and not really about clarifications, and that they would make our communities less safe. There were a couple of police bills that had broad support and no opposition from WCPA. **HB 1735** clarified law enforcement officers' responses to mental health calls and **HB 1719** allowed agencies to purchase nonlethal weapons like .50 caliber beanbag shotguns.

**The top priority for WCPA and the ACLU this session was to defend and maintain the meaningful reforms passed in 2021**, since there were to be a slew of bills to roll back the progress of 2021. Enoka Herat, police practices and immigration counsel at the ACLU of Washington, stated: "... the effectiveness of those [2021] bills is indicated by data showing a **62% decrease in police killings** since their enactment last year." Every step of the way this session, WCPA and ACLU defended the progress and added language to 2022 bills to make them less harmful. **SB 5919**, a harmful vehicular pursuits bill, did not make it out of the Senate in the last week. **HB 2037** passed, allowing physical force to stop a person from actively fleeing a scene. WCPA wanted the definition to include "intentionally" fleeing a scene, but that language was taken out in the final version.

**None of our criminal justice reform bills passed this session.** **HB 1202 Peace officer accountability** did not make it out of committee and **HB 1507 Independent prosecutions unit** for police criminal use of force was tabled. **SB 5063 clemency reform** passed the Senate, but did not make it out of the opposite House committee. The clemency pardons board testified in opposition in the House Public Safety Committee. **HB 1169 destacking sentences** passed the House and Senate Law & Justice committee but did not have the opportunity to be voted on by the entire Senate.

Many of you took action on **HB 1756 to restrict solitary confinement**, which moved as far as House Rules. Virtual committee hearings made it possible for those currently incarcerated to give powerful testimony on the impacts of solitary confinement on their lives. Solitary confinement is considered a form of torture by the United Nations, disproportionately impacts people of color, and has been shown to have devastating psychological effects. We believe it should not be tolerated in our state and will continue advocating with our multifaith coalition partners and Disability Rights Washington.

## **ENSURING HEALTHCARE ACCESS**

The excellent news for FAN's healthcare agenda was the passage of **HB 1616 to expand Charity Care in hospitals**. This bill significantly increases eligibility to people with incomes up to 400% of the federal poverty level, for full write-offs and/or discounts for hospital costs. This will help approximately half of all Washingtonians.

**The Healthcare Equity for Immigrants Campaign was also a success.** The supplemental budget provides implementation funding for a Medicaid-like health program for low-income immigrants who do not otherwise have access to health care.

Unfortunately, **HB 1868 did not pass**. We advocated and testified in support of our United Food and Commercial Workers union partners **to improve worker safety and patient care in health care** facilities by addressing staffing needs, overtime, meal and rest breaks, and enforcement. Though HB 1868 passed the House, the bill died in the Senate.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

**Environmental justice and climate advances this session were largely made in the budget and transportation package.** Among the environmental bills on our legislative agenda, **HB 1099** progressed the farthest in session, but had trouble in the concurrence process. The bill eventually died in House Rules on the last day of session. HB 1099 would have improved the state's climate response through updates to the state's comprehensive planning framework, ensuring cities and counties are planning for climate resilient communities while reducing contributions to the climate crisis.

**The Renew Recycle Act SB 5697** did not pass early in session. This bill would improve our recycling system, reduce plastics and wastes, and place more responsibility on manufacturers. **The Lorraine Loomis Act HB 1838 concerning salmon** also did not pass. On the bright side, the legislature did budget about \$200 million to support salmon habitat restoration and recovery efforts. The transportation package also included \$2.4 billion for culverts affecting salmon.

*To learn more about FAN's policy work, please contact Policy Engagement Director Kristin Ang at [Ang@fanwa.org](mailto:Ang@fanwa.org).*