

VIRGINIA LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

STATE & LOCAL ISSUES

- **Counter Antisemitism and Its Anti-Zionist Manifestation:** The increasing incidence of antisemitism throughout our communities in the past several years, leading to the tidal wave of antisemitism that has followed Hamas' massacre of Israelis on October 7, have rendered antisemitism and its anti-Zionist manifestation JCRC's most pressing concern. We support legislation, policies and initiatives that fight hatred targeting Jews and the Jewish community as well as all other forms of hatred and bigotry. We further support and encourage efforts to correct misinformation, disinformation and distortion of facts, in our schools, universities and in our larger communities, much of which is designed to foster antisemitism and propagate or repackage age-old antisemitic tropes.
- **Support Security for Faith-Based Institutions:** The JCRC supports increasing funding for security measures and programs to support faith-based organizations and other nonprofits at risk of hate crimes, as well as efforts to make the funding more easily accessible to these nonprofits.
- **Secure Support for Social Services:** Our Jewish agencies provide a range of support for aging adults, individuals with disabilities, victims of domestic violence, Holocaust survivors, and individuals seeking counseling and mental health services, regardless of faith, background, or ability to pay. We support expanding the social safety net to support our agencies in their work to serve all Virginians in need.
- **Protect Democracy and Voter Access:** The JCRC recognizes that protecting democracy is essential to a thriving America and a thriving Jewish community. We support laws, policies and initiatives that strengthen the infrastructure of the democratic process and that combat misinformation. Examples of such laws, policies and initiatives include civics education; poll worker recruitment, training and protection; and expanded voter access.
- **Preserve Access to Reproductive Health:** The JCRC supports legislation that ensures that Virginians have access to comprehensive health care, such as contraception and abortion, and that Virginians do not face discrimination or government overreach into their relationships with their health care providers, their family or their faith.
- **Advance Gun Violence Protection:** The JCRC supports bipartisan efforts to prevent gun violence, such as red flag laws and background checks on all purchases and transfers of ownership that keep firearms out of the wrong hands.
- **Seek Justice for Individuals and Communities:** The JCRC continues to support our long-time priorities of Fighting Poverty, Criminal Justice Reform, Immigration, Disability Advocacy, Affordable Housing, Environmental and Climate Change, Separation of Church and State, and the Virginia-Israel Advisory Board. Legislation, programs and initiatives addressing these priorities would aim to build and strengthen communities so that all individuals have the opportunities they need to thrive.

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FEDERAL LEGISLATION/FUNDING TO:

- Support emergency aid to Israel in the aftermath of the October 7th Hamas terrorist attack which massacred 1200 innocent people and kidnapped 240 civilians.
 - **Israel Security Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2024** features \$14.3 billion in critical defense spending and emergency assistance to Israel. This funding helps Israel defend herself from indiscriminate rocket attacks and prevent the conflict from escalating regionally.
- Secure the Jewish community from terrorist threats through FEMA's Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP). Since the October 7th massacre, attacks against our community have skyrocketed.
 - **NSGP** is a critical tool to protect Jewish and other faith-based nonprofits from physical threats through target hardening and other physical security enhancements. Support President Biden \$200 million request in the Supplemental Budget, and an aggregate of at least \$500 million on an annual basis.
- Combat unprecedented spike in antisemitism on college campuses. Jewish students are increasingly worried about their safety and security at school, and many are hiding their Jewish identity.
 - **Antisemitism Awareness Act**, a bipartisan and bicameral bill, requiring the Department of Education to use the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism when enforcing federal anti-discrimination laws.
- Improve the implementation and enforcement of sanctions against terrorist organizations that use innocent civilians as human shields.
 - **Strengthening Tools to Counter the Use of Human Shields Act** is critical to ensuring that sanctions extend to all entities and their supporters who instigate acts of war from behind innocent civilians.
- Provide additional resources to enhance the safety net for our nation's most vulnerable citizens which includes Holocaust survivors, individuals with disabilities, older adults, and those in dire need of support.
 - **Holocaust Survivor Assistance Program (HSAP)** to support aging Holocaust survivors and their caregivers.
 - **Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Age Adjustment Act** which would provide a pathway to greater independence for disabled individuals by allowing them to establish tax-free savings accounts for disability-related and health care expenses.