

INDIANAPOLIS JEWISH COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL
GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY
2010

Adopted by JCRC Board of Directors on February 3, 2009

The statements below reflect JCRC positions on public policy issues that will provide a foundation for our legislative advocacy in 2009. Specific positions on individual pieces of legislation will be determined after legislation is filed and the Government Affairs Subcommittee has an opportunity to review the pertinent bill(s).

LEADERSHIP - JCRC WILL ACT IN A LEADERSHIP ROLE ON THE FOLLOWING ISSUES:

Separation of Church and State

JCRC believes that the separation of church and state, embodied in the First Amendment as well as the Indiana Constitution, is a bulwark of religious liberty in the U.S. JCRC will continue to maintain its traditional support of a clear separation between church and state. JCRC will continue to oppose the moment of silence in public schools. JCRC opposes the use of taxpayer dollars to fund private and parochial school vouchers. JCRC will continue to monitor implementation of Charitable Choice provisions and work to ensure the incorporation of safeguards to protect individuals and participating organizations. JCRC will monitor the implementation of Faith-Based Initiatives to ensure the line of church/state separation is not breached. JCRC also views with concern efforts to limit religious liberties in the state.

Education

JCRC recognizes that the public school system in America is vital to our future and will support efforts to adequately fund the public schools. Additionally, JCRC will work to strengthen the quality of the public school system, including support for fully-funded full-day kindergarten and early childhood development programs. JCRC opposes vouchers and similar public funding methods for private and parochial schools.

Legal Immigrants and Refugees

JCRC reaffirms our support for a fair and humane immigration policy. JCRC opposes efforts to reduce the availability of benefits to immigrants and refugees. JCRC will work to maintain immigrant and refugee eligibility for public assistance.

Civil Rights

JCRC supports anti-discrimination measures and opposes restrictions on the basic civil rights of all American citizens. JCRC supports improving the election process to insure that all votes are counted, and that all legally qualified persons wishing to vote are given a meaningful opportunity to do so.

JCRC opposes any Constitutional amendment that does not expand the rights of the citizens of the State of Indiana, and therefore opposes any amendment to the Indiana Constitution to define "marriage."

INVOLVEMENT - JCRC WILL WORK IN COALITIONS, MONITOR, AND ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING ISSUES ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS.

Children

JCRC supports efforts to improve educational, developmental, and health care opportunities for our children. JCRC supports a strong Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) in Indiana assuring children access to consistent, quality, and affordable medical care. JCRC supports quality early childhood development programs that are safe, accessible, and affordable, including licensed and accredited child care, Head Start, pre-kindergarten, and kindergarten so that all children have an equal opportunity for success in school. JCRC recognizes the positive relationship between improving education and economic development and therefore supports raising the income eligibility level for child care assistance in order to help families secure and maintain employment opportunities, and also give children an early educational start.

Criminal Justice

JCRC supports efforts to improve the juvenile justice system and programming aimed at reducing youth violence. JCRC endorses efforts to provide greater protections for victims of domestic violence.

Economic Justice

JCRC supports humane and dignified efforts to bring all Hoosiers to a level of economic viability. JCRC supports efforts to adequately fund human services supporting low-income families and individuals, such as maintaining and/or increasing funding for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and ensuring that housing, transportation, and health and child care are safe, accessible, and affordable. JCRC supports the restoration and maintenance of Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) and Child Care Development Fund (CCDF), and encourages the leveraging of federal dollars for state-run programs where possible. JCRC also supports increasing the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), which nationally, lifts over 5 million people out of poverty each year, 2.6 million of which are children.

Elderly and Disabled

JCRC believes that the CHOICE (Community and Home Options to Institutional Care for the Elderly) and Medicaid waiver programs provide important opportunities for older and disabled Hoosiers to obtain necessary services without unnecessarily entering a long-term care facility. (JCRC is proud to have been a participant in the coalition of agencies that helped create the CHOICE program.) JCRC supports adequate funding of the CHOICE and Medicaid waiver programs, as well as the full implementation of SEA493 (2003), which will appropriately balance Indiana's long-term care service delivery system so that more Hoosiers can age safely in their own homes and at less expense. To this end, JCRC strongly supports the funding (at all levels of government) of the "NORC" (Naturally Occurring Retirement Community) demonstration project model, which enables communities to implement innovative supportive services and programs designed to help older adults "age in place" with dignity and security within their own community; and will actively seek funding (at all levels of government) for the Jewish Federation of Greater Indianapolis' own "NORC" program, Elder Friendly Communities. JCRC also supports efforts to improve assisted living facilities in the state.

Health Care

Access: JCRC recognizes the need of all Hoosiers to access affordable, quality health care services.

JCRC will monitor legislative proposals regarding health care and changes in the Medicaid program that impact low-income Hoosiers, and will support efforts to maintain and enhance the safety net for those most in need.

Prescription Drugs: JCRC supports the adoption of adequate prescription drug benefits for all Hoosiers.

Medical Research: JCRC supports new avenues of medical research that can improve the ability of physicians to treat illness and injury.

Privatization

JCRC believes that efforts to privatize state or municipal government agencies, or state-administered programs or services, must include measurable goals and outcomes and an ongoing critical evaluation process to assess both success and failure. JCRC believes that state and local government are responsible for guaranteeing that any changes to the social service system result in a net gain for those accessing services, and that the interests of Indiana's citizens and the state are protected.

Public Safety

JCRC recognizes that gun ownership is a constitutionally protected right and urges responsible gun ownership. JCRC supports enhanced enforcement of gun laws already on the books, and supports additional legislation that will increase public safety without infringing on individual rights.

Reproductive Rights

JCRC views matters of reproduction as an issue of religious and individual liberty and encourages the government to remain out of the decision-making process. JCRC will continue to support women's access to safe and legal abortion and reproductive health care services, free from intimidation or obstruction.

Tax & Government Reform

JCRC understands the need for Indiana policy makers to bring tax and fiscal relief to Hoosiers. JCRC is also aware that many educational, community, and social services are funded through varying tax levies, and administered and distributed at many levels of state and local government. Therefore, JCRC will join with many of its coalition partners to monitor all tax relief and government restructuring proposals in order to ensure that Indiana's most vulnerable citizens do not shoulder the burden disproportionately.