



קהילת בני ישראל Congregation B'nai Israel

253 Prospect Street, Northampton, MA 01060

Est. 1904

Congregation B'nai Israel Tikkun Olam Legislative Priorities Thursday, January 21, 2021

A note of introduction:

We recognize that keeping people alive, safe and healthy during this devastating pandemic are the highest priority. And we know that all of the issues listed below bear directly on the ability to achieve this priority. We also know that undoing systemic racism is and always has been equally defining in meeting the challenges we face, and that Massachusetts is no exception as it suffers some of the highest segregation rates in the nation. We name these issue areas below with the recognition that each one of them requires our attention to address racial injustice across all of our communities.

Our priorities range from broadly stated goals to specific asks, depending on the issue area and what we know is currently pending. We look forward to following up after the bill filing deadline of Feb. 19 with additional specific requests for co-sponsorship (and/or our thanks for leading!).

Our priorities include:

- **Criminal Justice Reform:** Support decarceration to reduce death and illness in prisons; ensure implementation of vaccine prioritization; further improve the police reform bill
- **Climate Justice:** Pass comprehensive climate legislation; STOP the Baker Administration's proposed rule changes that would extend renewable energy subsidies to all biomass plants and specifically \$13-\$15 million in annual tax credits to the biomass plant in Palmer
- **Economic Justice:** Bring the Fair Share Amendment to the 2nd Constitutional Convention; pass progressive tax measures for very profitable corporations and wealthy investors who have seen their wealth grow enormously during the pandemic
- **Education:** Fully fund public education K-12 and Higher Education per the Student Opportunity Act and CHERISH Act
- **Food Justice:** Address the growing food insecurity in the Commonwealth as MA has seen the highest increase in the food insecurity rate in the country during COVID-19 (47% increase overall as compared to last year, 62% increase among children).
- **Health Care:** Increase access to health care and reduce medication costs for communities of color and advance data tracking on race in the response to COVID-19
- **Housing Justice:** Protect against evictions and foreclosures; create lasting housing stability
- **Immigration Justice:** Pass the Safe Communities Act and Work and Family Mobility Act
- **Transparency:** Adopt Act On Mass' proposed rule reforms in the House to increase transparency and accountability (see <http://actonmass.org> for more information)
- **Voting:** Permanently expand absentee voting and enact other measures to increase access to voting