**Strengthening Sanctuary Alliance (SSA) Legislative/Policy Workgroup**

**Purpose, Goals, Actions, and Focus for 2022 Legislative Session**

**November 2021**

**This Work Group focuses on increasing the authentic voice of immigrants in state, national, and local policy.**

To do this, the Work Group develops working relationships with members and staff of the federal delegation, the Legislature, the Attorney General’s Office and the Offices of the Governor and Lieutenant Governor in order to inform SSA members and their allies about emerging policy developments and to influence policy proposals; links advocacy work with a broad array of human and immigrant rights organizations, especially the Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network, and their allies to marshal sentiment on behalf of preferred policies or legislative proposals; and monitors implementation of legislation affecting the immigrant community to report on programs’ impact, and policy gaps.

**For previous sessions of the Legislature, the Legislative Affairs Work Group has**:

 Connected with an ever-expanding group of immigrant-supporting organizations to learn of their work and priorities, and to give them visibility via our website, presence at SSA general membership meetings, public presentations, and other communications such as the Weekly At-A-Glance described below. These organizations include at least the Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network (WAISN), American Civil Liberties Union of Washington, Washington State Labor Council - AFL-CIO, OneAmerica, Faith and Action Network, Washington Commission on Hispanic Affairs, Columbia Legal Services, Jewish Coalition for Immigrant Justice, Latino Civic Alliance, Asian Pacific Islander Coalition, League of Women Voters, Elevate Mason County, the Washington Coalition for Police Accountability, CIELO and many others.

 Supported WAISN’s Advocacy Days, held early in the legislative session, with both volunteer and financial assistance. Advocacy Day has drawn several hundred volunteer advocates to Olympia from across the state to learn about the legislative process, and to gain comfort in advocating for their needs to their Senator/Representatives and staff in small meetings. During Covid, Advocacy Day has been virtual. The Work Group has been key to the City of Olympia City Council’s taking official action to declare Advocacy Day a special day for the city, and to welcome the statewide advocates to Olympia.

 Met with the 22nd Legislative District Delegation (Senator Sam Hunt, Rep. Laurie Dolan, and Rep Jessica Bateman who succeeded Rep. Beth Doglio) and their staff before each session to share issues on the horizon and bills being developed, to seek advice about how best to support forward progress of beneficial policies and to plan for coordinated opposition to harmful ones, and to ensure that our delegation members can be connected with authentic immigrant voices as they do their work, including the leadership they provide within the Legislature on immigrant-related issues.

 Created a popular digital mobilization tool, the weekly alert, “At-a-Glance”, to direct advocacy energy toward support for bills being considered by the Legislature at appropriate times during the session. Designed to answer the question “What can I do to help move good things along in the Legislature?” the weekly alert reported on where bills stood, what committee activity was expected, and what needed to be done by advocates, such as signing into a hearing, registering support or opposition for a bill, testifying at a hearing, writing a note or calling one’s member, etc. “At-A-Glance” served to boost the messages from WAISN and other organizations and was shared well beyond our member list. It opened the digital doorway to more detailed information about the bills, issues, and legislative background for those desiring it. SSA’s work multiplied the impact of allies’ work.

**For the 2022 Session of the Legislature, the Legislative Affairs Work Group will:**

 Meet with 22nd Legislative District members and their staff prior to or early in the 2022 Legislative Session to share intelligence about immigrants’ rights issues front and center for the session. Connect with new staff in the Governor’s office to share history, perspectives, and priorities for the legislative session as well as to suggest issue areas where gubernatorial leadership is needed. Note in all discussions any federal actions or developments that could affect the State of Washington’s immigration policies.

Recognize its volunteers’ limitations in time and energy by focusing advocacy on a limited number (5-6) of bills instead of the 20+ in the past. Allied groups are currently developing their legislative programs, so the possible focus areas are not yet fully designed, but WAISN has unfinished legislative business in two areas: Healthcare Access (particularly for the undocumented) and Unemployment Compensation (ditto).

 Unfortunately, in recognition of the excellent ’21 legislative session, opposition to some of the measures considered or passed then, has emerged; we anticipate that the Work Group will work to protect the positive advancements, such as in police accountability, from such attacks.

 Support Advocacy Day for 2022 Session with volunteers as needed, and financially with a contribution of $500 to support translation services needed for communications with legislators. Will seek City of Olympia endorsement of ’22 Advocacy Day and will engage city officials in support for policies consistent with the City of Compassion policy.

 Continue to issue the Weekly “At-A-Glance” for the bills selected for focus this session. It will offer links to other issue areas, allied groups’ legislative proposals, and background information. SSA members and other “At-A-Glance” users will have at their fingertips what they can do to advance a pro-immigrant agenda.

 Continue to deepen SSA’s contribution to statewide advocacy work on behalf of immigrants, particularly the undocumented. This contribution takes a variety of forms: participation in general meetings and issue-specific workgroups, generation and distribution of letters of support for specific policy proposals, cooperation in research projects and distribution of findings, and direct advocacy with elected officials. Underlying this is cooperation among the SSA Work Groups so that their efforts are complementary.

 Prepare itself, and SSA generally, to respond to any state or local policy activity related to the plight of people who have fled Afghanistan in the wake of the U.S. withdrawal.