



FAMILY COUNCIL

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JUNE/JULY 2017 UPDATE LETTER

DEAR FRIENDS,

“Aren't you just beating a dead horse?”

That's what a pastor's wife asked me in 1984 when she learned we decided to try a second time to pass a constitutional amendment banning public funding of abortion in Arkansas. Back then, lots of good Christians thought the abortion battle was over, and we had lost. Neither that pastor's wife nor I knew at the time, but it would take three tries for us to finally ban public funding of abortion.

We had to gather thousands of petition signatures statewide each of the three times we placed that pro-life amendment on the ballot for a vote. When the Arkansas Supreme Court removed our amendment from the ballot just before the election in 1984, lots of people gave up. But God raised up a second wave of people to gather petition signatures, and in 1986 our amendment was back on the ballot. This time we lost by just over 500 votes statewide. The loss was so devastating that even more people gave up and stopped giving their time or money. But in 1988, as soon as we decided to try a third time, God raised up a much smaller third wave of volunteers to go out and gather petition signatures. That third time we won, and today Amendment 68 banning public funding of abortions is part of the Arkansas Constitution.

I'm sure the Devil and his crowd must have been incredibly frustrated to see wave after wave of Christians rising up to fight and win that decisive, pro-life victory. In my book, the true heroes of that fight are the small, faithful band of volunteers who stayed in the fight from 1984 all the way to victory 4 years later. In fact, some of those people are still standing with me today as supporters of Family Council.

When we started, it was just a little over 10 years since Roe v. Wade was handed down, and pro-life legislation seemed to be making no major headway in America. A lot of good, pro-life Arkansans had thrown in the towel by that point. We passed the Unborn Child Amendment in November of 1988, but things did not seem to improve much. In 1989 we fought hard to pass a single pro-life bill at the Arkansas Capitol. In 1990, Arkansas' abortion numbers rose. In 1991 they climbed even higher.

President Clinton rescinded President Reagan's pro-life "Mexico City" policy that had prevented some federal funds from going to abortionists overseas. Abortion would be "safe, legal, and rare." I remember a pro-life speaker at a Focus on the Family conference telling us the pro-life battle would end soon, and society would be comfortable with a stalemate between pro-life and pro-abortion forces. I'm sure he is glad he was wrong.

We did not know it at the time, but that was the high-water mark of the abortion movement. Since 1991, the number of abortions in Arkansas has been cut in half. In the 1990s, teen girls were among those most likely to get an abortion. Today they are among those least likely. That's not because of access to contraceptives, either. Arkansas' teen pregnancy rates have remained high. While that's nothing to brag about, it shows contraceptives are not the reason teenagers are having fewer abortions.

What's behind the drastic decline in abortion? For one thing, we are building a culture of life. Abortion is unthinkable to many young people who have seen ultrasound images and know what abortion really is. I also believe much of the credit goes to our pro-life laws passed in recent years. In 2015 Arkansas passed one of the best informed-consent laws in the nation. It ensures women are given all the facts about abortion up front. Nearly 500 women chose not to have abortions last year after being given that information.

Even one abortion is too many, but we are working to save as many children as possible. This year new pro-life laws will take effect that will save even more lives. There's so much good news to report from the pro-life movement!

And now let me tell you a little more of that good news—and what we have planned for the rest of the year.

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MY THOUGHTS ON JUSTICE NEIL GORSUCH AND THE U.S. SUPREME COURT

Back in February I wrote about how brilliant the late Justice Antonin Scalia was and that Neil Gorsuch seemed like someone who would make an excellent addition to the U.S. Supreme Court. In March I signed a letter to Congress—along with about 60 other conservative leaders from across the country—supporting Neil Gorsuch’s confirmation. In April Judge Neil Gorsuch was sworn in as an associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

By all accounts, Justice Gorsuch is very pro-life, and he has a good track record when it comes to issues such as religious liberty. So what does this mean for the U.S. Supreme Court? Well, for now it means the court will largely go back to way it was before Justice Scalia passed away: Split among 4 conservative justices, 4 liberal justices, and Justice Kennedy—who often sides with the

liberals on issues like abortion and marriage. I expect we’ll continue seeing U.S. Supreme Court decisions split 5 to 4 the way they were when Just Scalia was on the court. We probably won’t lose ground, but it’s also unlikely the court will do anything significant—such as overturn Roe v. Wade or end abortion—any time soon. That’s just all the more reason to continue fighting to protect human life at the state level the way we have for more than 25 years.

Abortions Performed in Arkansas Drops to Lowest Levels Since 1977

According to a new report from the Arkansas Department of Health, 3,207 abortions were performed in Arkansas last year. While that’s still too many, it’s more than 500 fewer than were performed in 2015 and 1,000 fewer than in 2014. In fact, Arkansas’ abortion numbers haven’t been this low since 1977.

I firmly believe we are seeing the fruits of good laws passed by the Arkansas Legislature in 2015. News agencies announced early in 2015 that Arkansas was leading the nation in “anti-abortion” policies. Laws like our informed-consent and parental-consent legislation; restrictions on public funding of abortion providers; and others all helped reduce the number of abortions performed last year.

I expect that number to drop even more between now and next year. In 2016, some 573 babies were aborted by means of a dangerous abortion procedure that is now illegal thanks to a law Rep. Andy Mayberry (R – Hensley) got passed this year. The legislature closed loopholes in the state’s informed consent law—making that good law even stronger—and prohibited abortions performed due to the baby’s sex. I expect these and the other good laws passed this year will translate into even fewer abortions in the future.

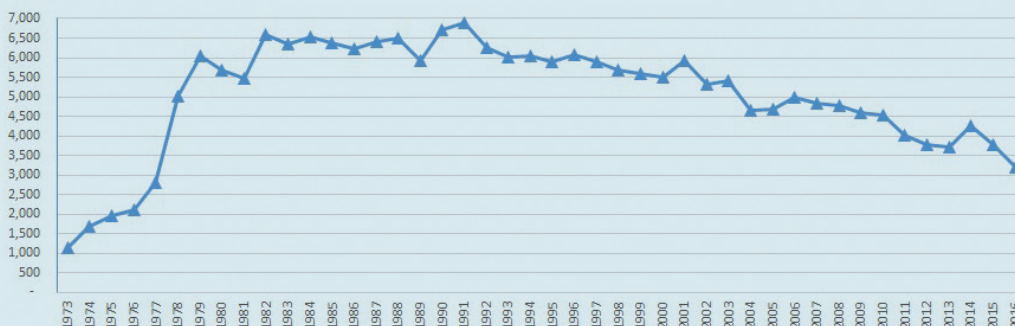
Trump Administration Expands Reagan-Era Pro-Life Policies, Cuts Funding to International Planned Parenthood Federation

“The Mexico City Policy” was created by President Reagan in 1984. It is a good rule that prevents federal family-planning funds from going to foreign non-governmental organizations (NGOs) who perform abortions or abortion counseling overseas. The policy has been rescinded and reinstated by different presidents over the past 30 years.

In May the federal Department of State unveiled its “Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance” program. This new initiative will drastically expand the Mexico City Policy to include other forms of government funding besides family planning funding—such as funding for HIV/AIDS relief, malaria, and maternal and child health. That’s approximately \$9 billion in federal aid money, altogether.

This new rule means federal aid money will go to relief organizations who agree not to do abortions or abortion counseling instead of going to abortion providers like International Planned Parenthood Federation—who stands to lose approximately \$100 million in federal funding under the new policy.

No. of Abortions in Arkansas Since 1973



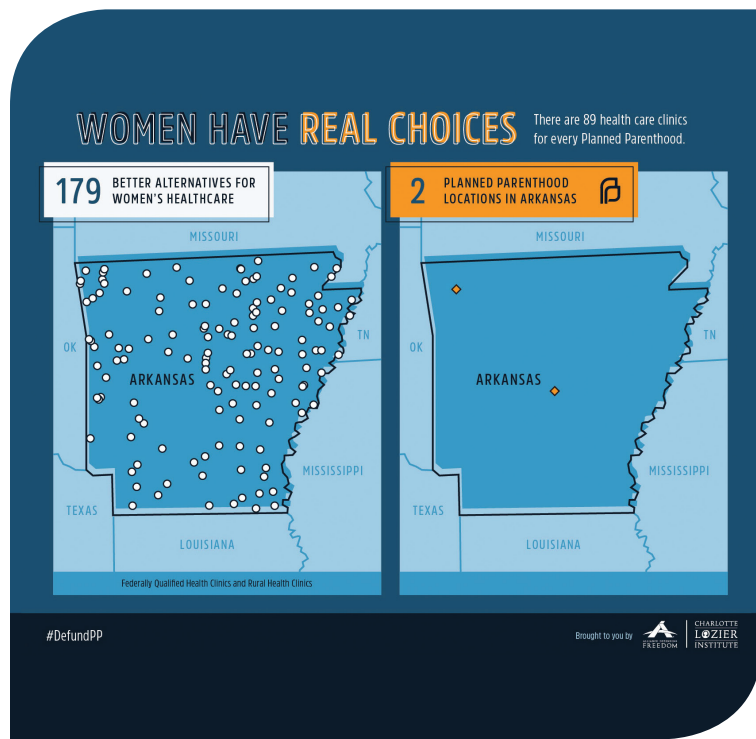
ACLU Vows to Challenge Arkansas' New Pro-Life Law

The Arkansas Legislature recently passed Act 45 by Rep. Andy Mayberry (R – Hensley). This good law prohibits certain abortion procedures in which an unborn baby is dismembered. As we have written before, this has the potential to prevent upwards of 600 abortions per year. Shortly after the bill passed, the ACLU announced it would challenge this good law as soon as possible.

Frankly, I don't know of any better use for public dollars than defending the right to life. Every time someone challenges a pro-life law, there's always a pro-life victory in the ruling. For example, when the U.S. Supreme Court issued its bad Planned Parenthood v. Casey decision in the early 1990s, many people thought that would be the nail in the coffin for pro-life laws. Instead, some of the court's findings buried in that decision paved the way for new pro-life legislation. When the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals considered Arkansas' pro-life heartbeat law—which said doctors could not perform an abortion after the twelfth week of pregnancy if a fetal heartbeat was detected—the court struck part of the law, but ruled in favor of parts that dealt with informed-consent. That actually made it easier for us to pass one of the best informed-consent laws in America in 2015.

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Pro-life work is often two steps forward and one step back: We pass really good laws; some of those laws get challenged or struck down in court; and then we are able to come back with better laws. I believe Arkansas' ban on dismemberment abortion can withstand a legal challenge, but if history is any indicator, any lawsuit the ACLU files will simply pave the way for even better pro-life laws in the future—no matter how the courts rule.



Family Council Urges Congress to De-Fund Abortion Giant Planned Parenthood

By some estimates, public funding makes up about one-third of Planned Parenthood's revenue. Coincidentally, Planned Parenthood is responsible for about one-third of the abortions in America—making them the nation's largest abortion-provider. For every Planned Parenthood clinic in America, there are at least twenty community health centers that do not perform abortions. In Arkansas, Planned Parenthood clinics are outnumbered nearly 90-to-1. There are plenty of better clinics out there the government could subsidize besides abortion clinics.

This spring we joined dozens of other pro-life leaders from around the country in signing a letter urging Congress to stop funding abortion-providers like Planned Parenthood. By redirecting public tax dollars away from abortion clinics, Congress can cut down on the number of abortions in America and ensure community clinics that provide real healthcare services receive those funds instead.

NOMINATE A CHRISTIAN PHYSICIAN FOR THE NINTH ANNUAL FAY BOOZMAN AWARD

The Arkansas Physicians Resource Council is accepting nominations for the ninth annual Fay Boozman Award this summer. In honor of the late Dr. Fay Boozman, a man of bold faith, humble love and endless optimism, this award is given to a physician who lives out Christian faith in personal life, in professional practice, and in community.

We will accept nominations for the Fay Boozman Award from Monday, June 26, 2017, through Friday, July 21, 2017. Please take time to nominate a friend, family member, or colleague who would be a worthy recipient of the Fay Boozman Award. You may submit a nomination online at www.fayboozman.com. Please call 501-375-7000 if you have questions or comments.

Federal Government Washes Its Hands of "Bathroom" Guidelines

Last year the Obama Administration issued "guidelines" that effectively said schools receiving federal funds had to let boys who claim to be girls use the girls' locker rooms, showers, restrooms, and similar facilities at school, and that colleges must house men who claim to be women in women's dormitories. This year the Trump Administration withdrew those guidelines.

Many people mistakenly believe that means the debate over showers and locker rooms is finished. Unfortunately, that's not true. In its public statement withdrawing the "guidelines," the Department of Justice said Congress, states, and local governments "are in a position to adopt appropriate policies or laws addressing this issue." In other words,

the Trump Administration is washing its hands of the matter. That means transgender activists are going to shift focus to local government. It means states like Arkansas that have no law preventing biological males from entering women's locker rooms and changing areas could face legal challenges, and local school boards will be pressured to let men in girls' locker rooms, restrooms, and so on.

More than ever, we need to keep an eye on local government. We need to know what is being discussed when our local school boards, city councils, or quorum courts meet. We also need to be prepared to offer legislation protecting women and children in Arkansas.

WE NEED YOUR HELP

You are such an important part of our work. You are helping us save the lives of unborn children through the laws we help pass and the information we share with Arkansans. We would not be able to do any of this good work without friends like you standing with us. Thank you for your support.

As we enter the summer months, I hope you will send a generous, tax-deductible donation to Family Council. Summer is always a lean time for us financially, and your support will help us as we look forward to the rest of the year. Simply fill out the enclosed response card, and mail it back with your donation. You can also give securely online at www.FamilyCouncil.org.

They say you ought to make hay while the sun is shining. The sun is definitely shining on the pro-life movement in Arkansas right now, and we plan to make as much hay as possible. State agencies are starting to write rules and regulations based on the good laws we helped pass this year. We're already looking ahead to next year's election and the 2019 legislative session. We plan to do a lot of good work in the months to come.

Thank you for standing with us. May God richly bless you and your family.

Sincerely,



Jerry Cox, President

Thank you!!

P.S. The number of abortions performed in Arkansas last year fell to the lowest levels since 1977. I believe new laws passed this year will push those numbers even lower in the future. You are helping us win the pro-life fight. That's why I hope you will send a generous, tax deductible donation today. Your support will help us as we carry on our pro-life work into the summer months. **Thank you for standing with us.**

