



**FAMILY
COUNCIL**

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**DECEMBER 2017
UPDATE LETTER**

DEAR FRIENDS,

My mother's favorite Christmas carol was, "Away in a Manger." I can still hear her singing those words, "Away in a manger no crib for a bed, the little Lord Jesus lay down his sweet head." In her voice was a love that only mothers have—a connection with a young mother Mary and her baby across the centuries. "The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay, the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay." We all feel the connection to that blessed night.

Bethlehem is a long way from a four-room house on a dirt road in Arkansas, and I doubt my mother ever thought about going there. But, for her there was that connection, a connection that I believe all of us who believe in Jesus know and feel. It's a connection to that city—that place—that lowly manger over 2,000 years ago. That connection—that love—penetrates with ease all the modern distractions and dangers that surround Bethlehem. Transcending the centuries, it fears no terrorist; it breaches the barbed wire, passes through checkpoints, and glides past troops of armed soldiers. It brings us back, not just to the manger, but to the one lying in it. Our Savior, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. We are all drawn to Him.

In 1926, Dr. James Allan Francis wrote a short essay titled, "One Solitary Life." Please join me in pondering this original version of those simple words about the Savior of the World.

One Solitary Life

A child is born in an obscure village. He is brought up in another obscure village. He works in a carpenter shop until he is thirty, and then for three brief years is an itinerant preacher, proclaiming a message and living a life.

He never writes a book. He never holds an office. He never raises an army. He never has a family of his own. He never owns a home. He never goes to college. He never travels two hundred miles from the place where he was born.

He gathers a little group of friends about him and teaches them his way of life. While still a young man, the tide of popular feeling turns against him. One denies him; another betrays him.

He is turned over to his enemies. He goes through the mockery of a trial; he is nailed to a cross between two thieves, and when dead is laid in a borrowed grave by the kindness of a friend. Those are the facts of his human life.

He rises from the dead. Today we look back across nineteen hundred years and ask, what kind of trail has he left across the centuries? When we try to sum up his influence, all the armies that ever marched, all the parliaments that ever sat, all the kings that ever reigned are absolutely picayune [worthless] in their influence on mankind compared with that of this one solitary life.

When I consider what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ, I've learned that following in the footsteps of the greatest one who ever lived will lead us into a life that is way beyond anything else.

At Family Council, by the grace of God, we passed good laws, stopped bad laws, and remained faithful to God's calling to be salt and light in some pretty dark places this year. Thank you for standing with us. Now let me tell you a little about what you and God enabled us to accomplish this year—and the big plans for 2018.

414 S. Pulaski St., Suite 2 • Little Rock, AR 72201 • 501-375-7000 • info@familycouncil.org



Family Council
President Jerry Cox

MY THOUGHTS: HERE ARE A FEW OF OUR GOALS FOR 2018

In just a few days people will be making their annual New Year's resolutions. Although they may not be "resolutions," my staff and I have a very long list of goals for 2018. Here's a snapshot of a few of the things we would like to accomplish between now and this time next year, Lord willing:

- **PRO-LIFE:** We are working with state agencies and legislators to make grants available for crisis pregnancy centers next year. Crisis pregnancy centers help women choose options besides abortion and provide valuable assistance and support to families. That's why some states have started offering grants to them. The grants are funded with federal dollars. We believe crisis pregnancy centers in Arkansas could benefit from a similar grant program.
- **VOTER'S GUIDES:** People need to vote—and vote wisely. We plan to publish voters' guides for the 2018 elections to educate voters about where candidates stand on social, moral, and economic issues.
- **PASTORS DAY AT THE CAPITOL:** In a couple of months we plan to hold our annual Pastors Day at the Capitol. This is an opportunity for pastors to minister to and pray over elected officials.
- **ARKANSAS' LONGEST-MARRIED COUPLE:** In February we plan to recognize Arkansas' longest-married couple at a special reception. If you or someone you know has been married 70 years or more, call our office at (501) 375-7000 and ask to speak with Ken Yang.
- **PERSONAL-INJURY LAWSUITS:** We're opposing SJR 8, and we plan to offer responsible reforms to reduce frivolous lawsuits and attorney's fees.
- **PASTORS AND CHURCHES:** We plan to empower churches to take a strong stand on social, moral, and economic issues.
- **EDUCATION:** We're promoting home schooling and school choice through our Education Alliance division.
- **RELIGIOUS FREEDOM:** We are promoting religious freedom, freedom of conscience, and privacy, and we're going to blunt the Human Rights Campaign's efforts to normalize the LGBTQ lifestyle.
- **MARIJUANA:** We're going to oppose any effort to legalize recreational marijuana, and we plan to help cities and counties hold elections to prohibit marijuana farms and stores.
- **GAMBLING:** We will oppose any proposed expansion of gambling by Indian tribes and casino corporations.
- **ALCOHOL:** We plan to prevent the expansion of alcohol by opposing the sale of distilled spirits at Walmart and in grocery and convenience stores.

Family Council's Greatest Hits 2017

Pro-Life Bills Passed

Passed: Protecting Babies Who Survive an Abortion. Act 392 by Sen. Gary Stubblefield (R – Branch) and Rep. Charlene Fite (R – Van Buren) protects babies who survive an abortion from being killed or denied medical treatment after birth.

Passed: Preventing the Buying and Selling of Baby Parts. Act 603 by Rep. Kim Hammer (R – Benton) and Sen. Missy Irvin (R – Mountain View) helps ensure aborted babies are respectfully buried or cremated and that their organs are not bought or sold for experimentation.

Passed: Clinic Inspections. Act 383 by Rep. Robin Lundstrum (R – Elm Springs) and Sen. Scott Flippo (R – Bull Shoals) says abortion clinics must be inspected annually. Clinics that fail inspection cannot do abortions.

Passed: Banning "Wrongful Birth" Lawsuits. Act 385 by Sen. Jeremy Hutchinson (R – Little Rock) and Rep. Aaron Pilkington (R – Clarksville) prohibits "wrongful birth" lawsuits. This prevents people from suing doctors and hospitals based on the claim a child should have been aborted.

Passed: Sex-Selection Abortion Ban. Act 733 by Rep. Charlie Collins (R – Fayetteville) and Sen. Missy Irvin (R – Mountain View) prohibits abortions performed due to the baby's sex.

Passed: Dismemberment Abortion Ban. Act 45 by Rep. Andy Mayberry (R – Hensley) and Sen. Missy Irvin (R – Mountain View) bans some abortion procedures in which an unborn baby is physically dismembered. This could lead to as many as 600 fewer abortions in Arkansas each year. We were proud to stand with our friends at Arkansas Right to Life in support of this good bill.

Family Council's Greatest Hits 2017 (continued)

Pro-Life Bills Passed (continued)

Passed: Resolution Calling for Federal Pro-Life Amendment. The Arkansas Legislature passed SJR 9 by Sen. Jason Rapert (R – Bigelow) and Rep. Bob Ballinger (R – Hindsville); this resolution calls on Congress to refer out a federal pro-life amendment effectively ending abortion.

Passed: Increased Abortion Reporting. Act 1018 by Rep. Sonia Barker (R – Smackover) and Sen. Blake Johnson (R – Corning) requires abortion clinics to notify the State Crime Lab and appropriate authorities after performing an abortion on a girl under 17. This helps investigators determine if the girl is a crime victim.



Above: Charisse Dean (left) and Jerry Cox (right) discuss legislation.

Home School Bills Passed

Passed: Simplifying the Notice of Intent to Home School. Act 635 by Rep. Mark Lowery (R – Maumelle) simplifies and clarifies the Notice of Intent to Home School and makes it easier for home schoolers to file their notices online or by mail. It also ensures local school districts do not try to force additional requirements on home school families, and it says information provided on the Notice of Intent is confidential.

Passed: Improving the “Tim Tebow” Law. Arkansas’ “Tim Tebow” law lets home schoolers participate in interscholastic activities at their local public schools. Act 592 by Rep. Mark Lowery (R – Maumelle) lets home schoolers participate in activities outside their resident school districts if both school districts agree. Act 453 by Rep. Andy Davis (R – Little Rock) lets home schoolers participate in activities at a private school within 25 miles of the student’s home if the private school is a member of the Arkansas Activities Association and agrees to let the home schooler participate. This gives home schoolers greater flexibility under the “Tim Tebow” law.

Passed: Taking Academic Courses in Public School. Act 173 by Rep. Mark Lowery (R – Maumelle) and Sen. Jane English (R – North Little Rock) lets home schoolers take academic courses at their local public schools if the school is willing to enroll them. This gives home schoolers more flexibility and opportunities.

Passed: Re-Enrollment in Public School. Home schoolers who re-enroll in public school often face discrimination. Students may be asked to repeat grades, pass final exams from public school classes, or meet other unreasonable requirements. Act 863 by Rep. Mark Lowery (R – Maumelle) requires public schools to give home schoolers who re-enroll the very same rights and privileges as public school students. It also prevents schools from denying home schoolers class credits, grade level placement, or the ability to graduate.

Marijuana Restrictions Passed

Passed: Regulations on Marijuana Smoking. Act 740 by Rep. Robin Lundstrum (R – Elm Springs) and Sen. Jason Rapert (R – Conway) enacts good, commonsense restrictions on marijuana smoking. It prohibits marijuana smoking anywhere tobacco smoking is prohibited by law, such as restaurants; around children under age 14; in the presence of pregnant women; in a motor vehicle; and around anyone who might become high from the secondhand marijuana smoke. The bill also prohibits anyone under 21 from smoking marijuana.

Passed: Restrictions on Marijuana Edibles and Dispensaries. Act 1023 by Rep. Robin Lundstrum (R – Elm Springs) restricts marijuana edibles. It limits the amount of marijuana in food or drink. It requires marijuana products to be sold in childproof packaging. It regulates who can come or go at a marijuana dispensary so that no one can be at a dispensary unless they have business there, and it prohibits people from using marijuana at a dispensary; this will help prevent dispensaries from turning into marijuana bars.

Passed: No Marijuana At School. Act 1099 by Rep. Mark Lowery (R – Maumelle) and Sen. Alan Clark (R – Lonsdale) clarifies that public schools don’t have to let students impaired by “medical marijuana” on campus. This helps schools stay drug free and protects students from anyone under the influence of marijuana.



Family Council's Greatest Hits 2017 (continued)

Bad Bills Defeated

Defeated: Unintentionally Gutting the Covenant Marriage Act. The Covenant Marriage Act of 2001 gives couples who have gone through premarital counseling the option of applying for a covenant marriage license instead of a typical license. Couples with a covenant marriage may not divorce as easily as others. H.B. 1361 by Rep. Nelda Speaks (R – Mountain Home) and Sen. Missy Irvin (R – Mountain View) would have unintentionally gutted the Covenant Marriage Act of 2001. Fortunately we were able to stop this bill.

Defeated: Making It Harder for Citizens to Amend the Constitution. HJR 1003 by Rep. Jeremy Gilliam (R – Judsonia) and Sen. Eddie Joe Williams (R – Cabot) would have made it more difficult for citizens to amend the Arkansas Constitution. It would have hurt volunteer-led efforts to amend the constitution. It would have favored wealthy, special-interest groups who can hire petition canvassers and pay for expensive advertising campaigns. We were able to defeat this proposal, but the fight lasted until the very end of the session.

Defeated: Hate Crimes Legislation. H.B. 2088 by Rep. Greg Leding (D – Fayetteville) would have enhanced pen-

alties for crimes committed because of the victim's race, color, religion, ethnicity, ancestry, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability. Laws like these give special protections to certain individuals, but they fail to protect others. Fortunately, this bill did not make any headway at the Arkansas Legislature.

Defeated: Adding Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity to the Arkansas Civil Rights Act. H.B. 1797 by Rep. Greg Leding (D – Fayetteville) would have added sexual orientation and gender identity to the list of protected classes in the Arkansas Civil Rights Act of 1993. In other states, bakers, florists, and photographers who have declined to participate in same-sex ceremonies have been accused of violating state civil rights laws. Fortunately, this bill did not make any headway at the Arkansas Legislature.

Defeated: Repealing the Intrastate Commerce Act. H.B. 2279 by Rep. Michael John Gray (D – Augusta) would have repealed Arkansas' Intrastate Commerce Act, which prevents cities and counties from adopting "civil rights" policies beyond those contained in state law. Fortunately, the bill was defeated in committee.

A Few More Highlights from 2017

Abortion Hit New Lows Last Year. Over the summer we learned two important facts: In 2016 abortion in Arkansas declined to levels we haven't seen since 1977, and teen abortion in Arkansas is at an all-time low. We look forward to those numbers dropping even more in the years to come.

Pro-Life Victories Won This Year. The Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals has handed Arkansas some big wins when it comes to de-funding abortion providers and regulating abortion clinics. Check out our November update letter for more information. You can find the letter on our website at www.FamilyCouncil.org.

Lawmakers Studying Key Pieces of Legislation Between Now and 2019. Between now and 2019, lawmakers will review bills requiring the Arkansas Lottery to budget at least 25% of its revenue for scholarships and privacy legislation requiring anyone using showers and restrooms on government property to use the facility that matches his or her biological sex. Lawmakers can research these issues, collect testimony, and present recommendations when the Arkansas Legislature reconvenes in 2019. We are glad lawmakers have agreed to look at these two issues, and we plan to be at the Capitol every step of the way.

A Few Setbacks in 2017

Despite our best efforts, a few good pieces of legislation did not pass this year. Below are some of the setbacks we encountered at the 2017 legislature.

Healthcare Conscience Bill. The legislature failed to pass H.B. 1628 by Rep. Brandt Smith (R – Jonesboro) and Sen. Jason Rapert (R – Conway). This good bill would have protected medical professionals, healthcare companies, and their employees from being forced to participate in medical procedures that violate their consciences.

Privacy Legislation. The Arkansas Physical Privacy and Safety Act by Sen. Linda Collins-Smith (R – Pocahontas), would have required anyone using public showers, locker rooms, restrooms, and similar facilities on government property to use the facility corresponding to his or her biological sex. The bill was extensively debated, but never brought up for a vote.

Government Nondiscrimination Act. H.B. 2232, the Government Nondiscrimination Act by Rep. Bob Ballinger (R – Hindsville) prevented the State of Arkansas from penalizing anyone who believes marriage ought to be the union of one man and one woman or that a person's sex is biologically-determined at birth. Unfortunately, the Governor did not support this bill, and it did not make any headway at the legislature.

American Bar Association Opposes Pro-Life Judicial Nominee

In August President Trump nominated Steve Grasz to the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals. Mr. Grasz has served in the

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Nebraska Attorney General's office, where he defended a ban on partial-birth abortions before the U.S. Supreme Court. In October a committee from the American Bar Association announced it opposes his nomination. The committee took issue with Mr. Grasz's "pro-life agenda," saying his "passionately-held social agenda appeared to overwhelm and obscure the ability to exercise dispassionate and unbiased judgment." Apparently the Bar Association believes being pro-life makes a person unfit to be a federal judge.

PASTORS DAY AT THE CAPITOL COMING IN 2018

Last February, over 200 ministers and church leaders from across Arkansas gathered in the rotunda of the Arkansas Capitol Building for prayer and worship. Our annual Pastors Day at the Capitol is one of the best things we do all year. It helps ministers fulfill the biblical mandate to pray for those in authority. It also brings a little of God's light into the dark halls of the Arkansas Capitol.

Take Action: If you are a church leader who would like to attend Pastors Day at the Capitol 2018, contact Charisse Dean at charisse@familycouncil.org or (501) 375-7000.



New Poll Shows Arkansans Overwhelmingly Pro-Life, Pro-Traditional Marriage

The University of Arkansas recently released its annual Arkansas Poll. Fifty-seven percent of Arkansans surveyed said same-sex marriage should not be recognized. Eighteen percent said abortion ought to be illegal in all circumstances; sixty-one percent said it ought to be legal only in certain circumstances. Altogether, seventy-nine percent of Arkansans believe abortion ought to be illegal or legal only in a few cases. That's great news!

Pulaski County Judge Ignores Life of Murdered Unborn Baby

Shiwana Pace of Little Rock was due to deliver her baby girl on August 27, 1999. Her ex-boyfriend had pressured her to have an abortion, but she refused. On August 26, 1999, three men brutally attacked Shiwana. They repeatedly punched and kicked her in the abdomen. Her ex-boyfriend had paid the assailants to kill Shiwana's baby. Shiwana lived, but the baby did not. However, thanks to a fetal homicide law Family Council helped pass earlier that year, the ex-boyfriend and attackers were convicted of murdering Shiwana's daughter.

In 2015, Quenton King of North Little Rock fatally shot his pregnant mistress. Last October Pulaski County Circuit Judge Herb Wright acquitted Mr. King of murdering the unborn baby, arguing prosecutors failed to show the child was alive at the time of the shooting. King eventually was convicted of murdering his mistress, but reaction to Judge Wright's decision has been strong. The State Crime Lab said it was "medically ludicrous" to say the baby died from anything besides the gunshot wound that killed the mother. Judge Wright's decision ignores Arkansas' fetal homicide law and, more importantly, the life of this unborn child.

Passing good, pro-life laws is important, but it's not enough. We also need good prosecutors and good judges.

Passing good, pro-life laws is important, but it's not enough. We also need good prosecutors and good judges. The Pulaski County prosecutor did his job, but Judge Wright did not do his. The Arkansas Constitution says a judge can be impeached for gross misconduct. I have heard rumors that a few lawmakers may try to impeach Judge Wright. Regardless, I doubt I will be voting for Judge Wright if he runs for re-election in 2020.

Help Us Find Arkansas' Longest-Married Couple!

We need your help. We plan to give an award to the man and woman in Arkansas who have been married the longest. Is there a couple in your church who has been married for more than 70 years? Consider nominating them for this award! In February we will hold a special reception in Little

Rock honoring Arkansas' longest-married couple as well as nine other couples who have been married almost as long.

Take Action: If you or someone you know may be among Arkansas' longest-married couples, contact Ken Yang at ken@familycouncil.org or (501) 375-7000.

LET'S MAKE 2018 THE BEST YEAR YET!

I'm usually the last person to leave the office on the last day of work for the year. As one-by-one staff members head for home, the office gets quieter and quieter until it's just me here alone with the computers, desks, papers, and phones that have stopped ringing. That's when I look around and think to myself, "We made it through another year. By the grace of God and through the gifts of our friends we made it." I've lost count of how many years I've sat quietly in late December and reflected on God's goodness and grace.

This year, I want you to reflect with me. I want you to know that we simply wouldn't have made it so long without such great friends and supporters from all over Arkansas. Every time I think of our success I remember the shaky handwriting of an older person on a \$25 check. I remember the doctor who walked in one Christmas and handed us a \$25,000 check. I think of everyone in between those numbers who stands with us over and over again. **Thank you for not quitting. Our success belongs to you and the glory for it all goes to God!**

We had a lot of success this year. We probably passed more pro-life laws and home school friendly laws than anyone else in the nation. We conducted media interviews and encouraged and empowered pastors to speak up, and the Action Committee let people know how their lawmakers voted on key bills. Most importantly we did our best to, as the Bible says, put on the full armor of God and having done all, to stand. We stood for righteousness in an increasingly dark world, and we have the wounds to prove it.

As we approach the close of another great year, we need your financial support. That support enables us to get the job done. If you have been especially blessed, maybe you can be like the doctor who surprised us by walking in with a \$25,000 check. If you're like lots of folks you may be more in the \$25, \$50, or \$100 range. No matter the size of the tax-deductible gift, we need your support to close out the year in the black and begin 2018 with the funds necessary to do the work that needs to be done.

During this wonderful Christmas Season my staff and I wish you and your family the very best. May you have a merry Christmas and a blessed new year!

Sincerely,



Jerry Cox, President

Thank you!!

P.S. We've had a great year. We passed a long list of good laws; we've worked hard to make sure those new laws are followed. We have big plans for next year. We're working to secure public grant money for crisis pregnancy centers. Our 2018 Arkansas Voter's Guide will help thousands of families like yours vote for candidates who best reflect their values. If you're able, I hope you will send a generous, tax-deductible gift to Family Council today. **Thank you for helping us promote, protect, and strengthen traditional family values.**