



**FAMILY
COUNCIL**

INSIDE:

—
**Protecting Innocent
Human Life
From Conception
Until Natural Death**

—
**Arkansas Ranked
Second Most Pro-Life
State in America**

—
**Casino Proposal
Would Build
Highways
By Fleecing the Poor**

—
**State Consultants
Hint at Cutting
Charitable
Exemptions,
Legalizing More
Gambling**

—
& MORE



**FEBRUARY 2018
UPDATE LETTER**

DEAR FRIENDS,

If you're like a lot of people, you may think Valentine's Day was invented by the greeting card companies to sell stuffed animals and boxes of chocolate. This time of year stores are flooded with red hearts and balloons. Haggard-looking men run frantically through the shopping aisles at the last minute each February 14, dragging oversized teddy bears behind them to the checkout stands. Lines of couples waiting for seats stretch out the doors of popular Italian restaurants. Hallmark Channel runs a marathon of feel-good TV specials. And movie theaters unveil predictable lineups of romantic comedies.

While it's easy to poke fun at Valentine's Day, the truth is there's nothing wrong with exchanging cards or flowers. For millions of people, February 14 actually is a very special holiday where they pause to show how much they love and appreciate one another. I think that's great. But did you know Valentine's Day happens to be a very old holiday? And did you know it commemorates a Christian minister who gave his life for his faith nearly 18 centuries ago?

Valentine of Rome was born around the year 226 AD. Very little is known about him for certain, except that he was a church leader in Rome and he was martyred by the Roman government around the year 269. At the time, Christians still faced persecution from the Roman Empire. According to tradition, Valentine was arrested and executed for preaching the gospel and for performing Christian marriages in defiance of Roman law. It is said that Valentine was put to death on February 14, and it is believed that Christians began celebrating the life and legacy of Saint Valentine somewhere around the year 500 by marking February 14 as Valentine's Day. Valentine's dedication to marriage is part of the reason Valentine's Day is associated with love.

While it is difficult to separate fact from fiction when studying the life of Saint Valentine, it isn't difficult to understand the importance of marriage. Marriage in ancient Rome was not held in high regard. Husbands were not expected to be faithful to their wives or their families. During the first century, things were so bad that Caesar Augustus actually had to pass laws against adultery to try to push back against the breakdown of the family. If a pagan emperor and a Christian martyr both agree that marriage is important, we ought to sit up and listen.

Today, modern researchers understand scientifically what early Christian leaders like Saint Valentine understood intuitively: Marriage is good for families and for society. In fact, a few years ago a group of experts found a four-step formula for staying out of poverty: Graduate from high school; then get married; then have children; and then stay married. If a person does those four things in that order, he or she is almost guaranteed never to live in poverty. If a person gets those steps out of order—or skips important steps like getting married—then he or she is almost guaranteed to live in poverty. Studies like this are the reason marriage has been called the unsung hero in the fight against poverty.

Family Council exists to promote, protect, and strengthen traditional family values. That's been our mission since we first started in 1989. God willing, that is a mission we will continue to carry out in the years to come. And now let me tell you a little bit about how we have been fighting for traditional family values—and about what is in store for the weeks to come.

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



Family Council
President Jerry Cox

MY THOUGHTS: PROTECTING INNOCENT HUMAN LIFE FROM CONCEPTION UNTIL NATURAL DEATH

Arkansas has some of the very best laws in the country when it comes to abortion. Last year we passed a long list of pro-life laws. Abortionists in Arkansas claim some of these laws could significantly reduce the number of abortions they do—or even force some clinics to stop doing abortions altogether. That’s why groups like Planned Parenthood and the ACLU have filed so many lawsuits against the state. But the good news is we are winning many of those legal battles. Arkansas’ unborn children are receiving more protection each year, and someday soon I believe abortion will be a thing of the past. However, I’m concerned about another aspect of the pro-life fight: The fight to protect people near the end of life.

Nationally, there has been a renewed interest in euthanasia and assisted suicide. States like Oregon, California, Colorado, and others are making it easier for doctors to prescribe poison to suicidal people with terminal illnesses. We’re also hearing horror stories about nursing facilities in many parts of the country. As nursing homes try to cut costs and maximize profits, many are deliberately reducing care. That means our sick and elderly are being allowed to suffer or die needlessly. Human life is sacred no matter the age. Being pro-life means protecting the right to life every step of the way—from conception until natural death. That means we oppose the abortion clinic that says an unborn baby is just a blob of tissue. It also means we stand up to the nursing home who treats an elderly person like they’re just taking up space.

Arkansas Ranked Second Most Pro-Life State in America

In January Americans United for Life released its 2018 Life List ranking all fifty states from the most pro-life to the least pro-life. Arkansas came in second, right behind Arizona. This is something Arkansans should be proud of. In the past, we have been as high as third or fourth place. This is the highest ranking we have ever received. Governor Asa Hutchinson and the Arkansas Legislature have taken a courageous stand protecting Arkansas’ unborn children. Abortion in Arkansas has plummeted to record lows in recent

years—especially among teenagers. Public opinion polling shows most Arkansans believe abortion ought to be either completely illegal or legal only under certain circumstances. There are only three abortion clinics left in Arkansas—and all of them claim they will have to stop doing abortions if the pro-life laws we passed last year are enforced. Given all of this, I believe Arkansas is well on its way to becoming the most pro-life state in the country.

WHERE DOES *Your* STATE STAND?

2018 AUL LIFE LIST

- | | | | | |
|-----------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Arizona | 11. Pennsylvania | 21. South Carolina | 31. Iowa | 41. Hawaii |
| 2. Arkansas | 12. Texas | 22. Idaho | 32. Delaware | 42. Massachusetts |
| 3. Oklahoma | 13. Nebraska | 23. North Carolina | 33. New Hampshire | 43. Connecticut |
| 4. Louisiana | 14. Indiana | 24. Wisconsin | 34. Alaska | 44. New York |
| 5. Kansas | 15. North Dakota | 25. Utah | 35. Wyoming | 45. Nevada |
| 6. South Dakota | 16. Ohio | 26. Florida | 36. Maine | 46. Oregon |
| 7. Mississippi | 17. Tennessee | 27. Rhode Island | 37. Illinois | 47. New Jersey |
| 8. Georgia | 18. Alabama | 28. Minnesota | 38. Maryland | 48. Vermont |
| 9. Michigan | 19. Kentucky | 29. Colorado | 39. New Mexico | 49. California |
| 10. Missouri | 20. Virginia | 30. West Virginia | 40. Montana | 50. Washington |



Planned Parenthood is Still Trying to Force Arkansas to Give It Medicaid Money

In January we wrote that the federal Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled Arkansas could cut Medicaid funds to the abortion providers like Planned Parenthood. That was a really big victory, but we've been waiting for Planned Parenthood to ask the U.S. Supreme Court to overturn the decision. Instead of going to the Supreme Court—where they very easily might lose—Planned Parenthood has gone back to U.S. District Judge Kristine Baker in Arkansas, asking her to reinstate her 2016 ruling that originally forced the state to give Medicaid money to abortion providers. In a nutshell, Planned Parenthood is trying to justify the move by throwing around a few additional arguments it didn't use during the initial round of lawsuits and court filings two years

ago. Abortionists are grasping at straws on this one. Judge Baker has ruled in Planned Parenthood's favor almost every time, but her bad rulings have consistently been tossed out by the more reasonable judges on the Eighth Circuit Court

We expect the higher courts to rule against Planned Parenthood in the months to come.

of Appeals. Given that history, Planned Parenthood might get a temporary victory from Judge Baker, but we expect the higher courts to rule against Planned Parenthood in the months to come.

State Consultants Hint at Cutting Charitable Exemptions, Legalizing More Gambling

A week before Christmas, consultants for Arkansas' Tax Reform and Relief Legislative Task Force released an analysis of the state's tax structures. The 180-page report touches on everything from motor fuel taxes to K-12 education funding. It doesn't make any final recommendation, but it contains a few elements we find troubling.

First, the report hints at cutting charitable tax exemptions. Under Arkansas law, sales to nonprofit hospitals, sanitariums, and nursing homes are exempt from state sales tax. The report says these exemptions "significantly erode the state and local tax base," and ought to be reviewed by the Arkansas Legislature. Charities and churches contribute hundreds of billions of dollars to the U.S. economy each year. Many operate on budgets that are so tight they likely would have to shut their doors if they were taxed at the same rate as for-profit corporations. But this report hints that taxing them somehow might be good for Arkansas.

Second, the report suggests gambling might bolster state tax money. The consultants point out many states are trying to increase their public funds by legalizing—and taxing—gambling. However, it's plain to see no state has successfully gambled and taxed its way to prosperity. Even Nevada's government deals with budget shortfalls. Also, the damage gambling does to communities far outweighs any tax revenue the state might get.

This report is not the final word on Arkansas' tax policies. In fact, in January the Arkansas Legislature decided to terminate its contract with the consulting company that produced this report. However, this report still could lead some to believe Arkansas might benefit from taxes on charities and by legalizing more gambling. Lawmakers should think twice before venturing down that road.

Casino Proposal Would Build Highways By Fleecing the Poor

The group Driving Arkansas Forward wants to legalize casino gambling in some of Arkansas' poorest communities. Last month they submitted a constitutional amendment to the Attorney General's office. The proposal would amend Arkansas' constitution to allow casino gambling in three counties. Supporters claim the amendment will generate tax revenue Arkansas can use to improve its highways. They want to gather petition signatures to place the amendment on the ballot this November.

I am going to put it plainly: You can't gamble and tax your way to riches. This amendment deliberately preys on the poor. The counties the amendment names as possible casino locations are some of the poorest in our state. That means our poorest neighbors will be the ones gambling—and losing—their money at these casinos. The amendment also could give wealthy casino corporations from other states a monopoly on casino gambling in Arkansas, and it taxes them at a rate that is well below average. In other words, corporations who own casinos in other states will be able to build casinos in Arkansas and pay relatively little in taxes. Exactly how is that supposed to drive Arkansas forward?

Casino gambling has been linked to poverty, bankruptcy, divorce, and domestic abuse. I sincerely doubt casinos can help improve Arkansas' roads. If they do build any roads, they will be paid for by fleecing the poor, and the best roads in town probably will be the ones leading to the casino.

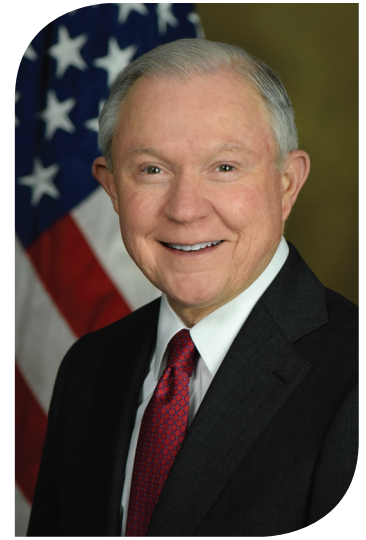
Take Action: Contact your county judge, justice of the peace, and city or town officials, and encourage each of them to oppose any efforts to bring casinos to Arkansas.

U.S. Government May Finally Enforce Federal Marijuana Laws

In the 1970s Congress passed laws against growing, selling, or using marijuana. However, during the Obama Administration, the federal government opted not to enforce anti-marijuana laws in states where medical or recreational marijuana had been legalized. That let Colorado move forward with recreational marijuana sales, and it let Arkansas pass a “medical” marijuana amendment in 2016.

Marijuana growers and dealers have flourished because federal prosecutors have looked the other way. However, in January U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions directed all U.S. Attorneys to enforce federal anti-marijuana laws the same way they would any other federal law. In other words, if a U.S. Attorney wants to, he or she can prosecute people who grow, sell, or use marijuana—even so-called “medical” marijuana. Arkansas’ “medical” marijuana amendment is writ-

ten so broadly that it might as well be a recreational marijuana amendment. Practically anyone can find a way to use marijuana under it, if they want. As a result, a lot of marijuana companies have been chomping at the bit to set up shop in Arkansas. Marijuana businesses might be slow to open now that they can be arrested and prosecuted. That could help protect Arkansans from marijuana despite the amendment passed in 2016.



U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions has directed prosecutors to enforce federal anti-marijuana laws the same way they would other laws.

WE NEED YOUR HELP

The Arkansas Legislature is about to meet for its budget session. In just a few short weeks, candidates will begin filing for office and Arkansas will be gearing up for the 2018 primaries. That means we have a lot of work to do.

Although we don't anticipate any big legislative fights, we're still going to monitor the Arkansas Legislature. We are also preparing to survey candidates for our 2018 Arkansas Voter's Guide. Since 1990, our voter's guide has been the state's leading nonpartisan source for information about where candidates stand on the issues that people care about. We are very pleased to provide such a valuable resource to the people of Arkansas.

Here are three ways you can help us today:

Pray for Us: My staff and I need your prayers. Please pray that God would guide our work and give us wisdom, and that we would be successful in the months to come. I believe 2018 is going to be a really big year, and that's why I hope all our friends will pray for us.

Spread the Word: We want to serve as many people as we possibly can. One way you can help us do that is by connecting your friends and family members with us. Encourage them to join our mailing list for free by calling our office at 501-375-7000 or visiting www.FamilyCouncil.org.

Give: If you are able, I hope you will give a generous, tax-deductible gift to Family Council. Your financial support will make it possible for us to provide services like the Arkansas Voter's Guide. You can send your gift today using the enclosed response card and return envelope.

Thank you for standing with us. Please call me if there is ever anything my staff or I can do for you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jerry".

Jerry Cox, President

Thank you!!

P.S. We're winning some major pro-life victories. Arkansas was recently ranked the second most pro-life state in America, and the federal government may start enforcing anti-marijuana laws in our state. A lot is going on, and we have a lot planned for the coming months. If you are able, I hope you will send us a generous, tax-deductible donation today to keep us in the fight for traditional family values. Thank you for standing with us.