



**FAMILY
COUNCIL**

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**JANUARY 2018
UPDATE LETTER**

DEAR FRIENDS,

Imagine this with me for a moment: A young woman in her early twenties living in a tiny apartment finds out she is pregnant with her second child. She and her boyfriend already have one child, and were not planning to have another. If she tells her boyfriend she's expecting a baby, he may leave her. She doesn't earn enough money on her own to support herself and two children. She doesn't have any relatives who will help her. What will she do?

I want you to know this is not just a hypothetical situation. For far too many women it is a grim reality. Situations like these highlight the importance of stable marriages and intact families. That is something we have talked about many times at Family Council. But situations like these also drive thousands of women to abortion clinics each year.

In 2016 more than half of the abortions performed in Arkansas were on women who had already given birth to at least one child. The overwhelming majority of these women were unmarried. Put simply, the typical woman walking into an abortion clinic on any given day in Arkansas is a single mother in her early twenties.

Over the years many women who regretted their abortions have testified that they felt trapped—like abortion was their only option. That certainly does not justify taking the life of an innocent baby, but it does shed some light on the reason so many women turn to abortion. What if we could give single moms real options besides abortion? What if they could be equipped to provide for their children? What if we gave them the tools they need to raise a family? That's where Arkansas' pregnancy resource centers come in.

Pregnancy resource centers help women and families with unplanned pregnancies. From diapers and baby food to parenting classes and adoption referrals, they offer a little bit of everything—all free of charge. These centers empower mothers to choose options besides abortion. However, they typically operate on very tight budgets and rely heavily on financial donations and volunteers for help. That's why several states have begun offering public assistance to pregnancy resource centers.

Missouri, Louisiana, Georgia, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin all offer publicly-funded grant money to pregnancy resource centers. These grants are paid for with federal tax dollars. Pregnancy resource centers are not required to accept public funding; instead, the money is made available to qualified centers who need extra financial assistance.

We are working to start a similar grant program in Arkansas within the next year or so. We are meeting with members of the governor's staff and pro-life leaders right now. There is a possibility funding for the grants will be made available during the legislature's budget session in just a few weeks.

We believe these grants will save lives by helping women choose options besides abortion. While I generally believe the government ought to spend less and cut taxes, I cannot think of a better use of public funds than protecting the lives of unborn children. That's one of our top priorities for 2018. And now let me tell you a little more about how we are winning the fight against abortion—and what we have planned for this year.

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



Family Council
President Jerry Cox

MY THOUGHTS: REFLECTING ON THREE DECADES OF PRO-LIFE WORK

It's hard to believe, but this November will mark thirty years since voters passed a state constitutional amendment generally preventing Arkansas from using taxpayer funds to pay for abortion. The Unborn Child Amendment Committee spent most of the 1980s trying to pass that amendment. In 1984 the Arkansas Supreme Court removed the amendment from the ballot. In 1986 it failed by just a few hundred votes. In 1988 we finally passed it.

I was pleased to lead the Unborn Child Amendment Committee in 1988. Shortly after the amendment passed, I learned Dr. James Dobson at Focus on the Family was looking for organizations who would address abortion and family issues at the state level. That's how Family Council began. The environment today is much different from the late 1980s. Most Arkansans now believe abortion ought to be illegal in some or all circumstances. Pro-life bills easily pass at the Arkansas Legislature. And abortion in Arkansas has fallen to record lows. Very few people would have predicted any of that in 1988. How did it happen?

After the Unborn Child Amendment passed, one of the ladies who fought against our pro-life amendment described us this way: "Those people kept coming back and kept coming back with their amendment, and eventually they wore us down and it passed." I think the lesson here is we should never give up fighting for what is right. Or, as the Apostle Paul put it some 2,000 years ago, "let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." I firmly believe we are reaping a pro-life harvest today because God has blessed our work and because so many people refused to quit fighting for what is right.

Arkansas Officially Cuts Funding for Planned Parenthood

After more than two years in court, the State of Arkansas has officially cut Medicaid funds to Planned Parenthood. In 2015 Governor Hutchinson ordered the state to quit giving Medicaid money to Planned Parenthood clinics. Following a lengthy lawsuit, the federal Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals finally said last November that the state could do that. A few weeks later, the appeals court's decision became final—meaning Arkansas could cut Medicaid funding for Planned Parenthood.

**This is a major pro-life victory.
Nobody should have to subsidize abortion
providers with their tax dollars.**

This is a major pro-life victory. Nobody should have to subsidize abortion providers with their tax dollars. National groups like Americans United for Life have been watching this court case in Arkansas closely. This could pave the way for more pro-life legislation in other states. Governor Hutchinson and Attorney General Rutledge have worked hard to ensure Arkansas does not give any money to abortion providers. I am glad we have a governor who will stand up to the abortion industry—and an attorney general who will defend the right to life in court.

A.G. Asks Eighth Circuit to Uphold Four Pro-Life Laws

Last year U.S. District Judge Kristine Baker blocked four good, pro-life laws Family Council supported and the Arkansas Legislature passed. In December the Attorney General's office asked the federal Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals to overturn Judge Baker's bad ruling and put these good laws back in place. These laws do things like prohibit abortion procedures in which an unborn baby is dismembered; prevent companies from harvesting and selling organs from aborted babies; ban abortions performed due to the baby's sex; and increase the reporting requirements for abortions performed on underage girls. Given some of the pro-life victories we've enjoyed in the Eighth Circuit, I believe there is a good possibility the court will uphold these pro-life laws.

Searching for Arkansas' Longest-Married Couple!

We need your help. Next month 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.

Right: Arkansas' monument of the Ten Commandments hours before it was destroyed.

Ten Commandments Monument Headed Back to the State Capitol Lawn

In 2015 the legislature authorized a monument of the Ten Commandments on the Arkansas State Capitol Grounds. It was placed on the Capitol lawn last June. Less than 24 hours later, a man plowed a vehicle into the monument, completely destroying it. Early last month the Capitol Arts and Grounds Commission outlined a plan for making the replacement monument more secure. Meanwhile, the ACLU plans to file a lawsuit against the state. They claim the monument is unconstitutional—even though the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled an identical monument constitutional in Texas.

Family Council supports the legislature's decision to honor the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments are one of the earliest examples of the rule of law in human history, and they have had a tremendous impact on western civilization. The Magna Carta, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights are amazing documents, but the Ten Commandments are the great-granddaddy of them all.

Fifteen Attempts Made to Legalize Recreational Marijuana in Arkansas Last Year

In 2017 Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge rejected at least fifteen requests to circulate petitions to legalize recreational marijuana in Arkansas. Every one of these proposals was vague or misleading. As we have said since we first opposed "medical marijuana" in Arkansas some 15 years ago, the end-game is—and always has been—full legalization of marijuana. We remain committed to protecting our state from marijuana.



Reports Show Arkansas' Nursing Homes High in Medication Errors

Last month the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* reported Arkansas' nursing homes rank higher in medication errors than those in surrounding states. The article focused on Ms. Linda Cooper, who died in a Conway nursing home after a nurse with a history of administering incorrect medications gave her another resident's high-dose narcotics. The Cooper family sued the facility as a result. The newspaper pointed out SJR 8—a

proposed state constitutional amendment that will appear on the ballot this November—could hamper lawsuits like the Cooper family's.

Under current law, a jury hearing a personal-injury lawsuit reviews evidence, examines the facts, and awards damages to the injured party based on what they determine is appropriate. Some people believe juries award victims too much money, so SJR 8 restricts how much juries can award. SJR 8 limits attorney's fees in personal-injury lawsuits and lets the Arkansas Legislature cap noneconomic damages at half a million dollars for an injury or death. Under current law, there are no limits; juries award damages on a case-by-case basis. SJR 8 also lets lawmakers make rules about evidence that can be used in personal-injury lawsuits, which might make it more difficult to bring some legitimate lawsuits to court.

Family Council has never opposed responsible lawsuit reforms. In 2003 we did not oppose general malpractice reforms passed by the legislature, but we did oppose a proposal that could have given an unfair advantage to nursing homes over good care for residents. Some nursing home owners simply don't want to spend the money necessary to provide quality care. They cut staff, reduce services, compromise care, and let people suffer. The possibility of a lawsuit may be all that keeps some nursing homes in line. SJR 8 removes much of that possibility. If that goes away, our elderly nursing home residents will suffer even more.

PASTORS DAY AT THE CAPITOL COMING IN 2018

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. Last year, over 200 ministers and church leaders from across Arkansas gathered in the rotunda of the Arkansas Capitol Building for prayer and worship. We are gearing up for Pastors Day at the Capitol 2018 in just a few weeks.

Take Action: If you are a church leader who is interested in attending Pastors Day at the Capitol next month, contact Charisse Dean at charisse@familycouncil.org or (501) 375-7000 for details.



Family Council Helps Lawmakers Study Protections for Rights of Conscience

Last year we worked on the Healthcare Freedom of Conscience Act at the Arkansas Legislature. This good bill lets healthcare workers opt out of procedures that violate their consciences—like abortion. Lawmakers did not pass the bill, but did agree to study it before the next legislative session. In December we brought Steve Aden, a prominent

legal expert from Americans United for Life, to the capitol. Mr. Aden testified in support of the Healthcare Freedom of Conscience Act and answered lawmakers' questions. He also met with other pro-life leaders. We hope this brings the Healthcare Freedom of Conscience Act one step close to passage in 2019.

Helping Arkansas' Pregnancy Resource Centers is One of Our Top Priorities for 2018

Pregnancy resource centers provide valuable assistance for women and families with unplanned pregnancies. Many offer everything from diapers and baby food to parenting classes and adoption referrals—all free of charge. These centers empower mothers to choose options besides abortion. Like most charities, they operate on very tight budgets and rely heavily on financial donations and volunteers for help.

The federal government gives states grant money to help families—especially pregnant women and single mothers. Some state legislatures have started offering that money

to pregnancy resource centers. We want to create a similar program in Arkansas.

We are working with state officials and with our pro-life friends to create publicly-funded grants that Arkansas' pregnancy resource centers may be eligible to receive. The grant money would help centers provide clothes for tiny babies and counseling or other resources for young women. This is one of our top priorities for 2018. We hope Arkansas' pregnancy resource centers will be able to start applying for this grant money in the near future.

WE NEED YOUR HELP

We just wrapped up a very successful year, and we are hitting the ground running in 2018. Your support will let us accomplish a lot in the coming months. Here are three things you can do right now to help us:

Pray: We need all the prayer we can get as we head into a new year.

Tell Your Friends About Us: Help us find new friends who share our mission of promoting, protecting, and strengthening traditional family values.

Give: If you are able, I hope you will give a generous, tax-deductible donation. We always try to stretch every dollar as far as it will possibly go. Your financial support will help us more than you know.

Thank you for your friendship and support. It is always so good to hear from you. Please call me if there is ever anything my staff or I can do for you.

Sincerely,



Jerry Cox, President

Thank you!!

P.S. We've won some major pro-life victories in court in the past few weeks. Our top priority right now is creating a grant program to help fund pregnancy resource centers. We're also searching for the couple in Arkansas who has been married the longest, and we're preparing for Pastors Day at the Capitol next month. Your support makes our work possible. Thank you for standing with us.

