



A Few **MILESTONES** *From the Past Thirty Years*

This year we'll be sharing different memories and accomplishments from Family Council's past as we celebrate 30 years in ministry. Here's a look at a few milestones—particularly from the first decade or so that Family Council was in operation:

1. Passed Our First Bill in 1989

The very first bill we ever passed wasn't a partial-birth abortion ban or an informed consent law. It was a pro-life, parental notification law—a law requiring abortionists to notify a girl's parents if they performed an abortion on an underage girl. I remember talking to a gentleman many years ago who was floored when he walked to his mailbox to find a medical bill from an abortion facility waiting for him. The facility had performed an abortion on his teenage daughter without even bothering to tell him, and then they sent him the bill. A school nurse can't give a teenager an aspirin without getting parental permission ahead of time, but back then Arkansas law let abortionists perform surgical abortions on young girls without even telling their parents. Our parental notification law passed in 1989 helped lay the groundwork for much of our future pro-life legislation.

2. Passed the Covenant Marriage Act of 2001

The Covenant Marriage Act of 2001 was one of the first and one of the few laws Arkansas has ever passed to address our state's alarming divorce rate. The law gives couples the option of getting a covenant marriage license as opposed to a normal marriage license. To get a covenant marriage, couples must first go through premarital counseling. Couples with a covenant marriage generally cannot divorce as easily or quickly as couples with a normal marriage license. Overall, this helps prevent unhealthy marriages from occurring, and it encourages couples to reconcile their differences rather than opting for divorce. Family Council worked with Governor Huckabee and members of the Arkansas Legislature for several years to pass this good law, and we finally were successful in 2001.

3. Stopped Attempts to Deny Food or Water to Nursing Home Residents

Throughout the 1990's nursing homes and their lobbyists tried repeatedly to pass legislation making it easier to deny food or water to terminally ill or unresponsive residents. We successfully defeated these efforts, and we passed proactive legislation requiring healthcare professionals and caregivers to give food or water to any patient who requests it.

4. Distributed Millions of Nonpartisan Voter's Guides in Print and Online

Since 1990 we have published millions of copies of our Arkansas Voter's Guide. In 1994 we set a record, printing and shipping 600,000 guides. Two years later we broke that record, distributing 750,000 guides. In 1998 we broke that record again, with 820,000 guides. In 2006 we moved the Arkansas Voter's Guide online, where even more Arkansans can take advantage of it, and we still routinely print and ship anywhere from 60,000 – 200,000 copies of the voter's guide during an election season. Over the years countless voters and candidates have told me how important the Arkansas Voter's Guide has been to them. We survey the candidates on a wide variety of issues that Arkansans care about, and we publish their survey responses in print and online so that voters can know where their candidates stand before heading to the polls. Publishing our very first Arkansas Voter's Guide in 1990 was one of the best decisions we've ever made.

5. Stopped LGBT “Hate Crimes” Legislation

The state legislature passed the Arkansas Civil Rights Act of 1993 nearly 26 years ago. At the time, many activists wanted to use that law to make sexual orientation a protected class just like race or national origin. We successfully defeated those efforts. As a result, Arkansas has not endured as much fallout as other states in the wake of same-sex marriage and other bad court rulings. In other states, civil rights laws with protections for homosexuals enacted in the 1990s have been used to target bakers, florists, photographers, and wedding chapel owners who do not want to participate in a same-sex ceremony.

6. Defeated a Fatally-Flawed Effort to Rewrite the Arkansas Constitution

Many Arkansans today don’t even know it, but in the 1990s there was a legislative effort to rewrite the state’s constitution. At the time, the plan was for a handful of state legislators to draft a revised Arkansas Constitution that ultimately would be referred out for approval. The effort threatened to undermine all of our pro-life and pro-family legislation—including the constitutional amendment I helped pass in 1988 prohibiting public funding of abortion in Arkansas. Family Council led a successful campaign against the effort to rewrite the state constitution, and lawmakers ultimately abandoned it.

7. Promoted Abstinence-Based Sex Education

In 1997 we began a vigorous effort to promote abstinence-based sex education in Arkansas. Martha Adcock, our staff attorney at the time, was nationally recognized for her service as chairman of the Governor’s Steering Committee on Abstinence Education. The publicly-funded plan for reducing unwed births developed by her committee became one of the top three programs of its kind in the nation. As a result, out-of-wedlock births in Arkansas declined during that time.

8. Launched the Education Alliance

In 1998 we launched the Education Alliance. This division of Family Council seeks to promote, protect, and strengthen home schooling. Our goal is to improve education for all Arkansas’ children. We were able to serve on Governor Huckabee’s public education task force in the 1990s, and coordinated home school activities statewide. Over the past 17 years, the Education Alliance has secured several pieces of legislation that have made it easier to home school in Arkansas, and has provided parents with information on everything from how to start home schooling to how to apply for college. As a result, home schooling in Arkansas has flourished.

9. Launched the Physicians Resource Council

In 1998 we launched the Physicians Resource Council, a division of Family Council designed to give a platform to pro-family doctors. In 1999 and 2001 the PRC successfully lobbied the legislature to outlaw a popular date-rape drug and championed legislation prohibiting human cloning and embryonic stem cell research in Arkansas.

10. Conducted Countless Media Interviews

From the MacNeil/Lehrer Report of the 1990s to Rachel Maddow of today, and from the New York Times to the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, we’ve been interviewed or quoted by just about every major news outlet that reaches Arkansas. I think the only interview requests I’ve ever turned down were from Aljazeera and the ultra-liberal Arkansas Times. We’ve been able to serve as a voice for truth in print, on television, over the airwaves, and on the Internet. As a result, our messages about biblical principles and family values have reached households throughout Arkansas and across the nation.

