



**FAMILY
COUNCIL**

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**JAN/FEB 2019
UPDATE LETTER**

DEAR FRIENDS,

Sometimes life is like being washed down a raging river. It's all you can do to keep your head above water. We've all had seasons of life like that, but let me tell you about mine.

In the spring of 1985 I lost my teaching job. That was the same month Doris quit her job to be a stay at home mom with the birth of our first son, David. This was God's way of launching me into the pro-life movement, because I immediately went to work for the Unborn Child Amendment Committee, a pro-life effort to get enough petition signatures to put an amendment on the ballot and pass a law prohibiting taxpayer-funded abortions. Of course there was that little matter of having to raise all of my salary. Voters finally passed the amendment in 1988, and today Amendment 68 still prevents taxpayer-funded abortions. It had been an extremely hard three-year struggle. That summer of 1988, I didn't know it, but what already felt like being swept down a river was about to feel like being washed over a waterfall.

Just as we entered the throes of the political campaign to pass Amendment 68, we received a dreadful phone call that my dad had been killed in a head-on collision with a drunk driver. Campaigns are hard enough, but dealing with my dad's death in the middle of it was very hard. In the middle of our sorrow, we received the happy, but sort of scary news that Doris was pregnant with our third child. In the spring we would have a four-year-old, a two year old, and a newborn! In the meantime, I took the step of faith to learn how to lobby the Arkansas Legislature. It was a crash course as I worked to pass my very first pro-life bill in January 1989. The biggest obstacles were a liberal governor named Bill Clinton and a legislature full of machine politicians. By the grace of God, we passed the bill and Governor Clinton signed it. Then, just as our third child was being born, my grandmother passed away, and the long planned closing of the pro-life campaign occurred.

Life could have taken any number of turns, but I had this leading to start a multi-issue pro-family organization. At the same time, Focus on the Family and Dr. James Dobson announced plans to help organizations like I envisioned get started. They helped with advice, but we had to raise every dime of financial support. In June of 1989, we gathered at the home of King and Anne Crow, and we launched Family Council. I've never looked back, but funding was hard to come by. Still 1989 brought one more blow. My father-in-law had a serious stroke. My mother-in-law moved in with us for about four months while he was in rehab. He finished rehab just before New Year's and that's how we closed 1989.

In addition, to all these major life changes, there were the usual challenges of life like broken down cars, kids with ear infections, replacing our home's central cooling system, and keeping up with things at church. But God saw us through every step of the way. When I look back, I wonder how we survived those 18 months, but at the time the challenges didn't seem that big. More than ever, I can see that it was a big dose of God's grace that got us through.

Over the past 30 years, a lot has changed since, but one thing that hasn't changed is our commitment to promoting, protecting, and strengthening traditional family values. And now let me tell you a little more about how we've been doing that—and about some of the incredible work we have planned for 2019.

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Family Council
President Jerry Cox

MY THOUGHTS: THIRTY YEARS OF PRO-FAMILY WORK

How is it even possible I've been doing this work for 30 years? That's a question I asked the other day. It just doesn't seem like there's any way that it's been a full 30 years since I started Family Council.

It really does seem like only yesterday that I flew out to California to meet with Dr. James Dobson and other leaders at Focus on the Family about joining a network of family policy councils. Dr. Dobson envisioned 50 organizations doing on the state level what Focus on the Family did on the national level.

Family Council's mission always has been and always will be the same: We promote, protect, and strengthen traditional family values. Sometimes we do that by fighting abortion. Sometimes we do that by promoting religious liberty. Sometimes we do that by opposing suicide and euthanasia. Whether it's helping home schoolers, protecting senior citizens, or defending traditional marriage, there are lots of ways to fulfill our mission, but the mission is always the same. We want to make Arkansas a better place to live, work, and raise a family. That's what we did from 1989 to 2018, and that's what we plan to do in 2019 and beyond.

A Few of Our Goals for 2019

The Arkansas Legislature is meeting at the Capitol in Little Rock right now. Here are just a few of our goals for the coming months:

Make Arkansas the Most Pro-Life State in America:

Arkansas is currently the second-most pro-life state in America, according to Americans United for Life. We have a package of pro-life legislation that we believe will make Arkansas the most pro-life state in the country, if it's passed. I've met with elected officials about these bills, and I believe we can pass most or all of them. We look forward to working with our friends at Arkansas Right to Life and in the Arkansas Legislature to save unborn children from abortion in 2019.

Bring a Thousand Home Schoolers to the Capitol:

In February our home school division, the Education Alliance, will host Home School Day at the Capitol. A thousand home schoolers will descend on the Arkansas Legislature bringing homemade desserts for their state representatives and senators. Students will tour the Capitol, attend legislative committees, learn about state government, and meet elected officials. This is a great way to help home schoolers make a good impression on our lawmakers. To many people, home schooling is a vague concept. Home School Day at the Capitol helps show legislators that home schoolers are just like everyone else, and they're willing to come to the Capitol in droves, if they need to.

Hold a Church Service in the Capitol Rotunda:

Can you imagine what it would be like if God's people prayed and sang worship songs in the halls of government? I can, because I've witnessed it annually these past few years. Pastors Day at the Capitol is one of the best events we host all year. We bring ministers, church leaders, and elected officials together in the Capitol Rotunda for a time of wor-

ship, prayer, fellowship, and preaching. It's an opportunity to celebrate religious liberty and the unity of the Body of Christ. It's also an opportunity to meet with and pray over state lawmakers. The Arkansas Legislature can be a pretty dark place sometimes, and legislators can feel isolated. Pastors Day at the Capitol helps bring a little of God's Light and Truth into those dark halls.

Educate and Equip Citizens:

We want to help Arkansans understand the legislation that their lawmakers are going to consider in the coming weeks. Our team is ready to review all 2,500 of the bills we expect the Arkansas Legislature to file between now and this spring. We're going to identify all the good bills and all the bad bills we can find—bills that help or hurt Arkansas' families and family values. Our plan is simple: Tell Arkansans about these bills, help the good bills pass, and defeat the bad bills. We want to bring the values of Sunday morning church into the halls of government, and we want to help everyday citizens have a voice at the Arkansas Capitol.



Legislation We Plan to Pass in the Coming Weeks

By the time this letter reaches, we hope to have legislation filed at the Capitol that does the following:

Prohibits “Medical” Marijuana Advertising. In some states it’s practically illegal to advertise marijuana, but not in Arkansas. We need to prohibit marijuana advertising to prevent marijuana companies from using the same predatory marketing tactics that tobacco companies used 30 years ago.

Prohibits Marijuana Edibles. In other states, kids routinely land in the emergency room after mistakenly eating candy or cookies infused with marijuana. These products look so much like ordinary food that it’s often impossible to tell them apart. Marijuana edibles often contain extremely high concentrations of THC—the active ingredient in marijuana—making it very easy for people to accidentally overdose on marijuana. We’re working on a bill that will prohibit marijuana edibles and protect Arkansans from the problems they cause.

Require Abortionists to Wait 72 Hours Before Performing an Abortion. Arkansas currently has a very good informed-consent law that requires abortionists to wait

48 hours before performing an abortion on a woman. This gives the woman two days to weigh all of her options and consider whether or not she should have an abortion. State reports show this law has saved hundreds of lives in the past two years. Letting women know they have options besides abortion—and giving them plenty of time to pursue those options—works. We’re drafting a bill that will expand Arkansas’ current waiting period from 48 hours to 72 hours.

Increase Educational Choices for Home Schoolers. We plan to work with our friends in the Arkansas Legislature to introduce bills that will expand home schoolers’ access to special education programs and make it easier for home schoolers to take advantage of concurrent credit and dual enrollment programs offered through colleges and universities.

Protect Healthcare Workers’ Rights of Conscience. No healthcare professional should have to promote to pay for things like abortion counseling or other “services” that are morally objectionable. We plan to introduce legislation that will protect every healthcare worker’s rights of conscience.

A Quick Glimpse of Some Legislation Already in Play

Here’s a quick look at some notable legislation that has already been filed at the legislature.

S.B. 2: Prohibiting Abortion of Babies With Down Syndrome. S.B. 2 by Sen. Trent Garner (R – El Dorado) prevents doctors from aborting unborn children who have Down Syndrome. Recent medical advancements have made it easier for doctors to test for Down Syndrome during pregnancy. If an unborn child tests positive for Down Syndrome, he or she typically is aborted. News reports over the past few years have highlighted the decline of Down Syndrome in countries like Iceland, because most babies with Down Syndrome are aborted prior to birth. Here’s the truth: People with Down Syndrome can live healthy, productive lives. In fact, people with Down Syndrome arguably are more likely to report feeling happy and satisfied with their lives than people without Down Syndrome. S.B. 2 prevents abortionists from killing an unborn child simply because he or she might have Down Syndrome. This is a good bill, and Family Council supports it.

S.B. 3: Expanding Reporting Requirements for Botched Abortions. Arkansas has some excellent laws on the books when it comes to abortion reporting. Doctors have to give the state information like when, where, and how an abortion was performed, how far along the woman’s pregnancy was, and so on. That information has helped us assess which pro-life laws Arkansas needs to pass, and has made it possible for us to gauge how effective we’ve been at stopping abortion in Arkansas. However, Arkansas law doesn’t require abortionists to tell the state about any complications arising from abortion. Abortion carries a number of risks, including hemorrhage, shock, sepsis, and death. Too

many women in Arkansas have been sent to the emergency room by abortion complications. S.B. 3 by Sen. Trent Garner (R – El Dorado) requires abortion facilities to report complications from abortion. The information required by this good bill will help shine a light on botched abortions and make it easier for us to implement better pro-life legislation in the future.

H.B. 1150: Making It Easier to Use Marijuana in Arkansas. Arkansas’ so-called “medical marijuana” amendment already makes it easy for practically anyone to qualify to use marijuana, but apparently that isn’t good enough. H.B. 1150 by Rep. Doug House (R – North Little Rock) adds a laundry list of qualifying conditions to the amendment—including ADHD, emphysema, COPD, and chronic insomnia. In other words, H.B. 1150 lets people with lung disease smoke marijuana, and it lets parents give marijuana to their hyperactive children. You can’t make this stuff up. Family Council has opposed marijuana in Arkansas for more than a decade, and we still oppose any expansion to Arkansas’ current marijuana laws. Marijuana needs to be restricted—not expanded.

Check out FamilyCouncil.org to find breakdowns of legislation like this, and make sure you sign up for our email list to receive regular updates from us regarding the Arkansas Legislature. Call our office at (501) 375-7000 or email info@familycouncil.org if you have any questions.



Right: Gov. Asa Hutchinson takes the oath of office at a joint session of the Arkansas Legislature on January 15.

Looking for Arkansas' Longest-Married Couple

In just a few weeks we will honor Arkansas' ten couples who have been married the longest. Do you know some-

We need all nominations by February 1!

one who has been married more than 70 years? Call our office at (501) 375-7000 or email Ken Yang at ken@familycouncil.org. We need all nominations by February 1, so don't wait. Nominate someone for Arkansas' Longest-Married Couple today!

JOIN US FOR PASTORS DAY AT THE CAPITOL

Pastors Day at the Capitol is coming on Thursday, February 28. This is one of the best things we do all year. Ministers and church leaders will gather with elected officials for a time of prayer and worship in the Rotunda of the Arkansas Capitol Building. Preachers will proclaim the Word of God and pray over our state legislators. This is a wonderful opportunity that you won't want to miss. Pastors Day at the Capitol is completely free, but please let us know you plan to attend so we can be ready to welcome you. To RSVP, or for additional information, call our office at (501) 375-7000 or email Charisse Dean at charisse@familycouncil.org.

WE NEED YOUR HELP

We have our work cut out for us over the next few months. We have a long list of good bills we want to file and pass. I've already heard rumors that someone at the Arkansas Legislature may file a bill to legalize physician-assisted suicide or extend special protections to people based on their sexual-orientation or gender-identity. If that happens, then we will have some intense battles to fight. **We cannot do this alone.**

I hope you will pray for me and my team every day as we head into the 2019 legislative session. I also hope you will send a generous, tax-deductible donation to help support our work, if you are able. Your gift will let us protect the lives of unborn children, promote home schooling, honor marriage, and defend religious freedom. It will help us make Arkansas a better state to live, work, and raise a family. It will make an impact for generations to come. There aren't many places where you can turn a donation into lives saved or liberties defended. Family Council is one of those places. If every person reading this letter gave \$50, we would have more than enough funding to cover all of our expenses and accomplish our goals for the 2019 legislative session.

Thank you for standing with us as we fight for traditional family values and work to make Arkansas a better state to live, work, and raise a family.

Sincerely,



Jerry Cox, President

Thank you!!

P.S. Family Council is celebrating 30 years of service in 2019! We're reflecting on some of our milestones from the past three decades. We're also gearing up to make Arkansas the most pro-life state in America, and we're preparing to review every one of the 2,500 bills we expect lawmakers to file between now and April. In a few weeks we will honor Arkansas' longest-married couples at a special reception in Little Rock. Your support is vital to our work. That's why I hope you will pray for me and my team in the coming weeks. I also hope you will send a generous, tax-deductible donation, if you are able. Thank you for standing with us!

