



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

We're sharing different memories and accomplishments as Family Council celebrates 30 years in ministry. Here's a look at a few milestones from the past three decades:

1. Defeating Outcomes-Based Education

Before Common Core and No Child Left Behind, there was Outcomes-Based Education, or "O.B.E." for short. Instead of simply teaching kids how to read, write, and cipher, O.B.E. focused on feelings and self-esteem. One person joked that the program focused more on how students felt about math than on actually teaching them math. O.B.E. also gave radical activists a foothold in the education system. Because O.B.E. focused on much more than just traditional academics, a lot of people who favored sexual promiscuity and homosexuality saw O.B.E. as a way to influence school children. By and large we were able to defeat O.B.E.—and its successors—in Arkansas, but it was a fight that lasted several years.

2. Defeating Dr. Joycelyn Elders' Contraceptive Programs

In the late 1980s and early 1990s Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton and Dr. Joycelyn Elders tried time and again to distribute contraceptives through Arkansas' public schools. In theory, contraceptives were supposed to protect teens from unplanned pregnancy and sexually-transmitted diseases. In practice, though, that just doesn't happen. Arkansas' teen birth rates and abortion numbers both remained high during that time. And even if contraceptives could provide 100% protection from STDs, they can't protect anyone from the effects of sin and a broken heart. That's why Family Council successfully opposed efforts to use state taxpayer dollars to pay for contraceptives in public schools throughout the 1990s.

3. Defeating Efforts to Fund Contraceptives with Tobacco Tax Money

Governor Mike Beebe's administration decided to resurrect the old debate about distributing contraceptives in public schools with state taxpayer money in 2009. His signature legislative plan—the state's tobacco tax increase—earmarked money for contraceptives and family planning in public schools. We were able to work with our friends on the legislature's Joint Budget Committee to amend the state budget to omit this funding.

4. Passing a Complete Ban on Human Cloning

In 2003 we helped pass Act 607 that prevents cloning of human beings, including human embryos. At the time, only two other states had passed a complete ban on human cloning. In the late 1990s and early 2000s scientists were fixated on cloning—and then killing—human embryos to harvest their stem cells for medical research. Laws like these had a tremendous impact on biomedical research in America. Today researchers aren't as interested in embryonic stem cells. Most favor adult stem cells, because they aren't controversial and they have been used to develop several medical breakthroughs. Laws like Arkansas' helped promote that shift in science.

5. Banning Partial-Birth Abortion—Twice!

Abortion is barbaric, but partial-birth abortion is especially grisly. That's why we passed two laws banning partial-birth abortion in Arkansas. Governor Mike Huckabee signed the first one in 1997. Abortionists in Little Rock challenged Arkansas' law, and the case eventually made its way to the federal 8th Circuit Court of Appeals, where it ultimately was struck down. A few years later, however, Congress passed a federal ban on partial-birth abortions. That law was challenged in court—and upheld. In 2009 we followed up with a state partial-birth abortion ban that was similar to the federal law. It passed the Arkansas Legislature, and has been on the books in Arkansas for nearly a decade since then.

6. Guaranteeing Food and Water to the Terminally Ill

In 2003 we helped pass a law ensuring terminally ill patients will be given food or water when they request it—even if a family member or doctor has ordered food or water to be withheld. The law was prompted by a case in Arkansas in which a comatose woman who was not being given food or water woke up and asked the hospital staff, “Can I have a hamburger?” Her question threw the facility into a frenzy, because her chart said she wasn’t supposed to be given anything to eat or drink. At the time, Governor Huckabee joked that if someone wakes up from a coma to request a hamburger, the only question you ought to ask is, “Mayonnaise or mustard?” We were able to pass a law protecting Arkansans from being starved to death.

7. Getting Our First Website

In the early 1990s a friend of mine told me about this new invention called “the World Wide Web.” He assured me we needed a website and that he could build one for us. We got our website at the very beginning of the .com boom—before Focus on the Family even had one. Since then technology has changed a lot. Traditional websites have given way to social media platforms, and smart phones and tablets have replaced PCs and laptops. But getting that first website was an important milestone. It taught us important lessons about the value—and the power—of technology.

8. Defeating Multiple Attempts to Abolish the Electoral College

Liberals in large cities and on the east and west coasts would like to diminish the influence of smaller states in presidential races. One way to do this is to nullify the Electoral College. In 2007 and 2009 legislation was filed awarding Arkansas’ six electoral votes to the presidential candidate who won the nationwide popular vote. We stopped both of these proposals by working with our friends in the legislature and at Farm Bureau and the Chamber of Commerce.

9. Defeating Multiple Efforts to Ratify the Equal Rights Amendment in Arkansas

In 1972 Congress referred the Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution to the states for ratification. The amendment sounds straightforward: It prohibits discrimination under the law on the basis of sex. In practice, though, sex-based discrimination has been addressed by state and federal law and court rulings, and the amendment’s vague language could be twisted to force taxpayers to fund abortion. Supporters have been working for nearly fifty years to get enough states to ratify the amendment to add it to the U.S. Constitution. In 2007, 2009, and 2011 we defeated multiple efforts to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment in Arkansas.

10. Passing Two of the Strongest Informed-Consent Laws in the Nation

In 2001 we worked with former Rep. Jim Magnus (R – Little Rock) to pass the Woman’s Right to Know Act of 2001. This law was a first of its kind in Arkansas. It required abortionists to give a woman seeking an abortion important information about abortion first. Before this law went into effect, a doctor could perform an abortion on a woman without so much as telling her his name, much less all the health consequences she might experience or that there are agencies and organizations that help women with unplanned pregnancies. The law also contained safeguards to protect women from being forced to have an abortion. In 2015 we worked with Rep. Robin Lundstrum (R – Elm Springs) to replace this good law with an even better one—the strongest informed-consent law for abortion in the nation. The 2015 law ensures women are given all the facts about abortion—including its consequences, risks, and alternatives—and it requires abortionists to wait at least 48 hours before performing the abortion. Hundreds of women have decided not to have an abortion after receiving this information. According to official state reports, this good law has saved 731 babies from abortion since 2016.

