



FAMILY COUNCIL

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**JUNE/JULY 2020
UPDATE LETTER**

Dear Friends,

Earlier this afternoon (June 2) Luke McCoy and I finished mounting boards over the windows of our office building in downtown Little Rock.

Our office sits two blocks east of the state Capitol Building—immediately behind the Democratic Party Headquarters. The past three nights there have been protests on the streets around our office. At times things have turned violent and destructive. Most of the buildings around ours have had windows broken. The Arkansas Pharmacist Association building located behind us was set on fire. The damage to buildings in the area between the Capitol and Main Street was worse than the news reported.

In the past six months it feels like things have gone from bad to worse. In January there were wildfires in Australia and conflict with Iran. In February we heard rumors about a strange disease in China. In March and April that disease caused a worldwide lockdown that triggered a global recession. Just as things began to lift in May, the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis touched off a series of protests and riots everywhere from sprawling cities to small towns.

I'm sure the situation will look very different by the time this letter reaches you. I hope that things will have improved by then. In the meantime, I want to share a few thoughts.

First, Family Council is still hard at work. Our team largely has been working remotely since March 20. As a result, the unrest around our office building hasn't affected our ability to accomplish our mission.

Second, this is a time when believers should come together and earnestly pray for our country. God may or may not be punishing us for our sins by allowing all of these bad things to happen to us, but it's foolish to think we don't need Him right now.

Third, there's a lot of good news to share. Abortion in Arkansas is near record lows. Hundreds of children were saved last year by a single bill we helped pass in 2015. Pro-lifers are winning the fight to protect unborn babies in Arkansas.

And now let me tell you a little more about that good news—and how you can be part of our work.



The Democratic Headquarters in downtown Little Rock was damaged during protests on the night of May 31.



Our office building immediately behind the Democratic Headquarters.

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MY THOUGHTS: NOT LETTING COVID-19 SLOW US DOWN

Our team has not let the coronavirus outbreak slow us down. We've been in constant communication with public officials, ministers, pro-life leaders, and others during the pandemic. Besides doing our part to help others, we've also been busy drafting legislation and gearing up for our 2020 Arkansas Voter's Guide this November.

But I would be lying if I said the outbreak hasn't affected us at all. Normally in the spring we see some donations come in as people receive tax refunds from the government. For us, April and May are a time when we travel to meet with friends and supporters before summer activities take over. Our home school office usually hosts high school graduations for home schoolers while my team and I plan out the rest of our year.

A lot of those activities—including some of our fundraising and networking activities—got sidelined by social distancing and state health guidelines this spring. We had to postpone our home school graduations until later this summer. We haven't been able to travel and speak to church groups or local gatherings like we normally would. All of that has taken a toll on us.

Fortunately, I believe we will come through all of this stronger than ever. I trust that God will continue to bless and multiply our work. I also trust that good friends like you will remember us and continue to support us financially, as you are able.

Abortion in Arkansas Sinks to 43-Year Low

On June 1 the Arkansas Department of Health released its annual report on abortion in Arkansas. The report shows there were 2,963 abortions performed in the state last year. While that's nothing to celebrate, that's the lowest number of abortions we've had since 1977. In fact, it's been 43 years since the number of abortions performed in Arkansas was less than 3,000.

For perspective, in 1991 there were 6,889 abortions performed in Arkansas. One out of five of those abortions was performed on teenagers that year. Even as recently as 2014 there were more than 4,200 abortions in Arkansas. Over the years, our abortion numbers have plummeted—especially among teenagers.

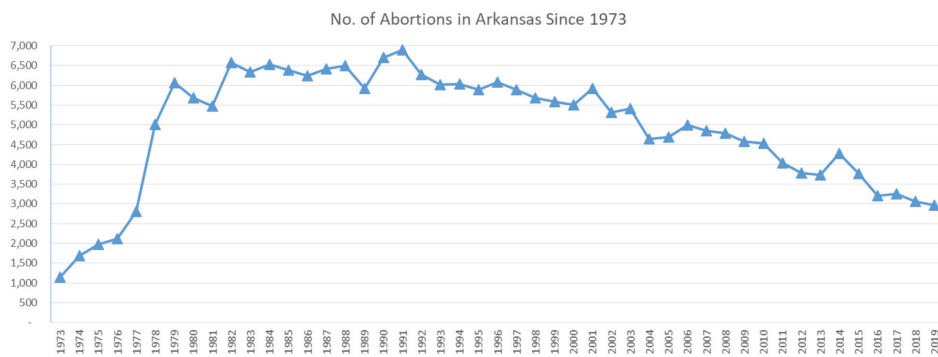
Today, Arkansans are overwhelmingly pro-life. Public opinion polling shows most Arkansans believe abortion ought to be either completely illegal or legal only under certain circumstances. In the past five years the Arkansas Legislature has enacted more than two dozen good, pro-life laws. These reports from the Department of Health simply go to show that all of that pro-life work is paying off.

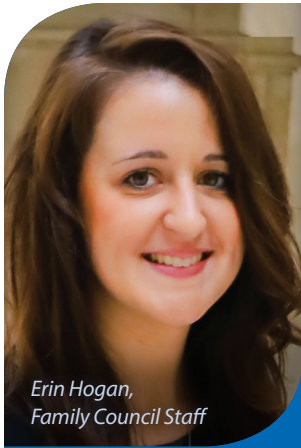
This Law Has Saved 1,759 Unborn Children Since January of 2016

In 2001 we worked with former state Rep. Jim Magnus (R–Little Rock) to pass the Woman's Right to Know Act. At the time, the bill was revolutionary, because it required abortionists to give women vital information before performing an abortion. Before this bill passed, a doctor could perform an abortion on a woman without so much as telling her his name, much less giving her information about abortion's complications.

In 2015 we worked with Rep. Robin Lundstrum (R–Springdale) to pass a new and improved informed-consent law. This new law requires abortionists to give women all the facts about abortion up front—including information about abortion's risks, consequences, and alternatives. The law also requires doctors to give women 72 hours to weigh their options before having an abortion.

Last year, an estimated 508 women chose not to have abortions after receiving the information required by this one law. As I told Rep. Lundstrum, you would be hard pressed to pass any law that would save 500 lives, but this one has. All told, we estimate the 2015 Woman's Right to Know law has saved the lives of 1,759 unborn children. That's simply amazing! Laws like this one are part of the reason that abortion in Arkansas has plummeted to a 43-year low.





Erin Hogan,
Family Council Staff

GROUP PROMOTES DO-IT-YOURSELF ABORTIONS

By Erin Hogan

In May, I attended a webinar about “self-managed” abortion where a woman can obtain abortion pills online to take at home, not via an abortion facility. The webinar was sponsored by the radical pro-abortion group Reproaction. There was an obvious push for normalizing abortion at home, even after the attending doctor explained the complications and side-effects and the potential for a failed abortion.

Feticide laws were also discussed, and one speaker frustratingly alleged that conservative lawmakers target minorities and create racial-profiling with pro-life laws. Their frustrations at abortion restrictions across the country were evident.

Abortion advocates continue to try and make abortions more accessible and reveal their hypocrisy as they do so. As technology advances, abortionists probably will work to find ways to make it easier for women to purchase abortion drugs online and have abortions at home. This is an issue our office is monitoring closely, and we hope to come up with legislation that will address it in the future.

NWA Planned Parenthood Facility Closed a Year Ago

July 25 will mark one year since the Planned Parenthood facility in Fayetteville shut down following its landlord’s decision not to renew the abortionist’s lease. Over the past twelve months, we have heard rumor after rumor that Planned Parenthood might have secured a new facility in the Northwest Arkansas area, but so far Planned Parenthood has not opened a new clinic. Meanwhile pregnancy resource centers in Northwest Arkansas have served more women than usual over the past year. As a result, women in Arkansas are choosing life, and unborn babies are being saved from abortion. That’s something to celebrate.

Eighth Circuit, Federal Judge Both Hand Arkansas Pro-Life Victory During Pandemic

On Good Friday the State of Arkansas ordered Little Rock Family Planning Services to stop performing elective surgical abortions while the COVID-19 outbreak continued. The abortion facility responded by filing a lawsuit against the state. Although the abortionists initially received a favorable ruling from U.S. District Judge Kristine Baker in Little Rock, a three-judge panel from the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals ultimately decided that Arkansas had the power to restrict surgical abortions during the pandemic. A different federal judge later ruled that Arkansas can require abortionists to obey state health directives during the pandemic.

In its 24 page ruling, the Eighth Circuit said Judge Baker abused her discretion and made a serious error in letting abortionists continue with business as usual during the coronavirus outbreak. The ruling actually spelled out questions that need to be answered when considering whether or not an abortion restriction is constitutional. That is going to help us craft better pro-life laws in 2021 and beyond.

COVID-19 Reveals Arkansas Was Preemptive on Telemedicine Abortions

In 2013 our pro-life friends at Arkansas Right to Life and elsewhere said Arkansas needed a law to prohibit telemedicine abortions where abortionists prescribe abortion-inducing drugs like RU-486 via webcam. At the time, a lot of people thought that was ridiculous. Who had ever heard of a doctor prescribing abortion drugs from a video chat? However,

Abortionists have not been able to prescribe abortion drugs over the phone or via webcam in Arkansas.

Arkansas Right to Life and pro-life lawmakers were able to pass legislation effectively prohibiting doctors from prescribing abortion drugs over webcam. Family Council was glad to support these efforts.

In the wake of COVID-19, doctor’s offices around the country shut their doors and moved to “telemedicine” only. Many patients could not see a doctor in person. They had to visit with their physician over the phone or via video call on their smartphone. Abortionists in some states seized this as an opportunity to push abortion drugs. They offered abortion consultations and prescriptions over webcam or telephone. Planned Parenthood, in particular, ramped up promotion of its “telehealth” programs. However, abortionists have not been able to prescribe abortion drugs over the phone or via webcam in Arkansas. That’s thanks to laws that pro-lifers have implemented over the past few years. All of this underscores that Arkansas has been very forward thinking when it comes to abortion.

Family Council Staff Members Provide Evidence in Arkansas Abortion Lawsuit

Luke McCoy and Charisse Dean from our staff were in front of the surgical abortion facility and Planned Parenthood almost every day earlier this spring during the COVID-19 shutdown. Because they were at the surgical abortion facility so much, they were able to provide Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge's office with evidence when abortionists sued the state amid the COVID-19 outbreak. Luke and Charisse's photographs and testimony helped the A.G.'s office defend the state against abortionists and the ACLU.

In his sworn testimony, Luke McCoy noted that on April 8 and 9 he observed several cars from out-of-state at the abortion facility, lots of patients coming and going at the facility, and a lack of social distancing on the part of the staff. All of that, he said, was concerning. Ordinarily, we don't photograph people and vehicles at abortion facilities, because we never want to be accused of trying to intimidate others. However, Luke and Charisse both photographed vehicles with out-of-state license plates at the abortion facility, and those photographs—along with Luke's testimony—were used in the lawsuit over whether or not abortionists have to follow the same rules as everyone else during a pandemic.



Family Council staff members were able to provide photos like this one to state officials earlier this spring.

When the Eighth Circuit ruled in the case, they noted that people were coming to Arkansas from out-of-state and that social distancing wasn't possible at a busy abortion facility—two points Luke and Charisse helped prove. I'm sure Attorney General Leslie Rutledge and her team would have done a fine job without Luke's and Charisse's help, but I'm glad they were able to provide the State with evidence it could use in federal court.

Siloam Springs City Board Rejects Public Drinking Proposal

A proposal to legalize public drinking throughout a large portion of downtown Siloam Springs was soundly defeated at a city board meeting last May. Six board members voted against the proposal; only one voted for it. Act 812 of 2019 by Sen. Trent Garner (R-El Dorado) and Rep. Sonia Barker

(R-Smackover) lets cities create "entertainment districts" where alcohol can be carried and consumed publicly on streets and sidewalks. The proposed ordinance would have permitted public drinking throughout much of downtown Siloam Springs. When it was first proposed, we were told the ordinance almost certainly would pass. However, city officials heard overwhelmingly from their constituents, and most of the people did not want public drinking in Siloam Springs. When it was all said and done, the city opted not to legalize public drinking.

Public drinking hurts neighborhoods and families. That's why Family Council remains firmly opposed to public drinking anywhere in Arkansas.

As we have said time and again, public drinking is a scourge on the community. It raises serious concerns about drunk driving and public safety. Public drinking hurts neighborhoods and families. That's why Family Council remains firmly opposed to public drinking anywhere in Arkansas.



A Message From Lt. Governor Tim Griffin About China

Imagine for a moment, if you would, the following scene: In a remote Chinese village, a long-awaited package arrives. Dozens of villagers, most of whom are poor and hungry, gather anxiously around the boxes. As soon as the first box is opened, pandemonium breaks out: people begin screaming with excitement and jostling for position to move closer to the package and reach for its precious contents. Upon grabbing one of the items in the box, a thin middle-aged man presses it against his face and begins to weep. A woman standing close by holds hers up in the air, exclaiming to her fellow villagers "This is what we have needed the most!" as she bursts into tears of joy. The rest of the villagers join them in rejoicing. What was this precious cargo? Was it a vaccine carrying the cure for a deadly virus? Was it boxes of food to feed to the poor and starving villagers? No, it was the first box of Bibles that newly converted Chinese Christians had ever received. The reality is, you don't have to imagine this scenario. A similar event was captured on video and you can watch it on YouTube. Unfortunately, this reflects the reality of life in Communist China.

China is the world's largest country. With a population of over 1.4 billion, it has over four times the population of the United States. Most Chinese are either non-religious or adhere to the religious traditions of their ancestors like Confucianism or Taoism. A significant minority, around 15 percent, are Buddhist. Christianity was first introduced in China in the early 1800's with the arrival of Italian Jesuit missionaries, but since the late 1970s, Protestant Christianity has gained in popularity. For decades, the number of Christians in China has grown by around an average of 10 percent each year. Today, tens of millions of Chinese consider themselves Christian. The Chinese Communist Party claims there are approximately 30 million Christians in China, but independent experts suggest those numbers actually range somewhere between 60 million and 115 million.

Being a Christian in China certainly isn't easy. While China claims to protect religious liberty, the reality is a very different story. Churches are required to register with the state, at which point church leaders receive "training" to instruct them on how to conform their doctrine to the dictates of the Chinese Communist Party. The Communist Party also places surveillance cameras inside churches to prevent unauthorized teachings. In the Zhejiang province, the government removed more than 1,000 Christian crosses from church buildings. For obvious reasons, this has led to a large underground Christian community in China. Its members face close surveillance by the government. The online sale of Bibles is illegal, and Christmas celebrations are banned in many areas of the country. Many Christians are forced to meet in secret to escape persecution from the Communist government.

Being a Christian in China isn't just difficult; it can be hazardous to your health. The Communist Chinese government is extremely repressive, making China one of the most dangerous places in the world to be a Christian. The Chinese government jails Christian pastors and churchgoers alike. Preaching the gospel can lead you to be charged with "inciting subversion," a crime punishable by up to fifteen years in prison.

The Communist Chinese also shuts down churches that dare to operate without government approval. *The New York Times* reported that in 2018, the Communist Chinese Party demolished The Golden Lampstand Church in Shanxi Province with dynamite. The church was home to 50,000 Christian worshipers. In late 2018, the Early Rain Covenant Church in the City of Chengdu was shut down by the government. Over a hundred of its church members were arrested, including pastor Wang Yi and his wife. *The New York Times* reported that the remaining members were "asked by the authorities to sign letters stating they no longer believed in Christianity." The Guangzhou Bible Reformed Church was closed by the government twice in a span of three months. The British newspaper *The Guardian* quoted the church's pastor, Huang Xiaoning, saying: "The Chinese Communist Party wants to be the God of China and the Chinese people. But according to the Bible only God is God. The government is scared of the churches."

So what is our responsibility as Christians? First, we are called to pray. As Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians, "Pray without ceasing." James 5:16 tells us that "The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective." Our brothers and sisters in China need our prayers, as do those who are risking their lives to spread the Gospel in Communist China. We also need to speak out collectively. The mainstream media almost never shine a light on the plight of religious minorities around the world, particularly Christians. Many within our own American churches are completely unaware of the things I've described in this letter. We have to do a better job of spreading the truth, which is why I'm proud to partner with the Family Council as they launch their China Watch initiative to bring awareness to the plight of Christians in Communist China. Lastly, Christians should call their elected officials to communicate the importance of this issue to them. The Chinese Communist Party will never respect the rights of Christians on their own; they will have to be pressured and prodded until they relent. In this effort, Arkansas Christians must support our Christian brothers and sisters serving God in China.



Lieutenant Governor Tim Griffin

Here Is What We Have Planned From Now Until December 31

We are already halfway through 2020. We have a lot of plans from now through the rest of the year. Here's a snapshot of a few of the things we hope to accomplish:

- **Draft Legislation.** We need to gear up for the 2021 legislative session. I have told my staff that I would like for us to have all of our bills drafted by the end of this summer. These bills will do things like strengthen rights of conscience, protect unborn children, improve home schooling in Arkansas, and prevent boys who claim to be female from competing in girls' high school sports. We already have drafted several of these bills, and we plan to continue that project in the coming months.
- **Survey Candidates.** We plan to survey candidates for the 2020 Arkansas Voter's Guide this summer, and we will publish their survey responses in print and online this fall. Arkansans need to know where their candidates stand on important issues, and our voter's guide helps make that possible.
- **Fight Gambling.** Efforts are underway to legalize casino-style gambling machines across Arkansas. We plan to block those efforts.
- **Oppose Recreational Marijuana.** Arkansas' medical marijuana amendment is so open-ended that

practically anyone can buy and smoke marijuana. However, some people still are working to fully legalize recreational marijuana in Arkansas. We plan to block any attempt to further legalize marijuana.

- **Oppose Public Drinking.** We plan to continue opposing efforts to legalize public drinking in Arkansas. We have worked with citizens who oppose public drinking in different communities this year, and we plan to continue those efforts in the coming months. We may not be able to stop public drinking at every turn, but I think we can continue to keep it from inundating Arkansas.
- **Promote Home Schooling.** Our home school office, the Education Alliance, serves home schoolers every day. The home schooled students our office has helped over the years have gone on to become community leaders, business executives, military officers, teachers, ministers, and parents. Home schooling does more than give kids a good education. It produces leaders and shapes a better culture.
- **China Watch.** COVID-19 taught us a painful lesson about how what happens on the other side of the planet can upend our lives. Watch for our regular updates written by experts on the dangers emerging from China.

WE NEED YOUR HELP

I know this may not be a great time to ask for a donation, but if you are able to help us, I hope you will send a generous, tax-deductible gift to Family Council today. Because of friends like you, we've been able to accomplish a lot of really great work in Arkansas. With your faithful support, I believe we can do even more in the months and years to come.

It's been an unusual year so far. There's a lot of uncertainty in the world. However, I am confident that your prayers, your financial support, and your friendship can help us do a lot of good. Enclosed with this letter is a response card and return envelope you can use to send your donation today. You can also give securely online at FamilyCouncil.org.

Thank you for your generous friendship and support. It's so good to know we have friends like you. Please let me know if there is anything my staff or I can do for you.

Sincerely,



Jerry Cox, President

Thank you!!

P.S. I want to tell you about some really good news in Arkansas. The number of abortions performed last year fell to levels our state hasn't seen since the 1970s. Right now there are nearly 1,800 children who are alive because of one pro-life law that we supported in 2015. The Eighth Circuit recently dealt abortionists in Little Rock a serious blow, and we expect other pro-life victories in the future. We're winning the fight to protect unborn children. None of these victories would be possible without your faithful support. Thank you for standing with us.