



**FAMILY  
COUNCIL**

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**OCTOBER 2020  
UPDATE LETTER**

## *Dear Friends,*

In October of 1967 a man crawled into a deep, dark cave near Chattanooga, Tennessee. He was a tall, gaunt figure wandering into the pitch blackness. By earthly standards, he was a failure. He had wrecked his marriage and his career. As far as he could remember he had broken nearly every promise he had made, and he had let everybody down who loved him. In a drug-induced stupor, he decided all that was left for him to do was to crawl deep inside that cave and die alone, where nobody would ever find him. His name was Johnny Cash.

Johnny Cash had been one of the most celebrated country music singers of the 1960s, but drugs and alcohol had taken their toll. In different interviews he described how during that period of his life he began to lose his voice. He took amphetamines to stay awake while touring, drank to calm his nerves before going on stage, and then took depressants to help him sleep afterwards. It was a "vicious cycle," he later said. By October of 1967 he had been banned at the Grand Ole Opry, he had stopped writing music, and he had canceled concert after concert. He was finished. Johnny Cash crawled into Nickajack Cave to meet Death. Instead he met Jesus.

In his 1997 autobiography, Cash described how he gradually became aware of the presence of God as he lay on the cold floor deep inside the dark cave.

I thought I'd left Him [God], but He hadn't left me. I felt something very powerful start to happen to me, a sensation of utter peace, clarity and sobriety... There in Nickajack Cave I became conscious of a very clear, simple idea: I was not in charge of my destiny. I was not in charge of my own death. I was going to die at God's time, not mine.

Miraculously, Johnny Cash crawled out of the cave. At the entrance he found June Carter waiting for him with a basket of food. She said she had felt like something was wrong, and she had followed him. Later, on the drive back to Nashville, Cash said he was ready to give his life to the Lord. The following month he responded to an altar call at a Baptist church that he and June attended.

To be fair, Johnny Cash's testimony is so incredible that many people don't believe it. Did he exaggerate about what happened to him at the cave? I can't say. What I think is undeniable is that Johnny Cash's life never was the same. He got off drugs, married June Carter, and began writing music again. He started a weekly variety show on ABC. He devoted one episode to gospel music despite many in the television and music business thinking that was a bad idea. In another episode, he invited the Rev. Billy Graham on the program. Johnny and June appeared onstage with Billy Graham many times—including at the 1989 crusade in Little Rock. In his final years Johnny Cash recorded a long list of classic hymns and old spirituals. After Cash's death in 2003, country music singer Kris Kristofferson said one thing that made Johnny Cash a force to be reckoned with was that he did what he believed was right even when it meant putting his fame and fortune on the line. It's hard to stop a man with that kind of resolve.

Johnny Cash's life is a good reminder of what God can do with a person who is committed to Him and won't back down. At Family Council, we try to have that same kind of unconquerable resolve. We want to stand up for what is right even when it isn't popular and even when other people say it's going to hurt our finances or our political influence. I've had people tell me I can't afford to take a stand for some things. Frankly, I don't think we can afford not to stand up for what is right. And now let me tell you a little more about how we are taking a stand in Arkansas—and how you can stand with us.

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Family Council  
President Jerry Coyne

## MY THOUGHTS: WE NEED GOD, CHURCH, AND FAMILY NOW MORE THAN EVER

The statistics being published in the wake of the coronavirus aren't good. Divorce rates in the U.S. surged by 34% during the first four months of the pandemic this year, according to data collected by Legal Templates. Newlyweds were among those hit particularly hard. Pandemic stress, unemployment, and quarantine were among the reasons generally cited for the uptick in separations and divorces.

Some denominations are concerned that church attendance could drop by as much as a third in the wake of the pandemic. Churches are reopening, but people who got used to watching church online—or skipping church altogether—this year may not come back. In some states churches are having to fight hard simply to meet at all in the wake of the pandemic, and a few have been forced to take their state and local officials to court.

If ever there were a time our country needed God, it's right now. If ever there were a time our community needed functional families, it's right now. And if ever there were a time that we needed stable marriages, it's right now. Jim Daly at Focus on the Family recently said that many of the problems we're seeing in America can be traced back to the breakdown of the family.

I would like to encourage you: Take your family to church. Give your tithes and offerings. Be deliberate about building strong ties with your loved ones the rest of this year. And encourage your friends to do the same. We need those influences now more than ever.

## President Trump Names Sen. Tom Cotton Among Possible Supreme Court Picks

With the passing of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, all eyes now turn to the U.S. Supreme Court. By the time you read this, President Trump may have already nominated someone. Just days before Justice Ginsburg died following a lengthy battle with cancer, President Trump released a list of 20 potential U.S. Supreme Court nominees. Among those named as possible picks for the court is U.S. Senator Tom Cotton from Arkansas. Following the president's announcement, Sen. Cotton released a statement, saying, "I'm honored that President Trump asked me to consider serving on the Supreme Court and I'm grateful for his confidence. I will always heed the call of service to our nation. The Supreme Court could use some more justices who understand the difference between applying the law and making the law, which the Court does when it invents a right to an abortion, infringes on religious freedom, and erodes the Second Amendment."

In his remarks, President Trump said the 20 individuals he named would be jurists in the mold of the late Justice Antonin Scalia, Justice Clarence Thomas, and Justice Samuel Alito. The Trump Administration has made several judicial nominations that impact Arkansas—including U.S. District Judge Lee Rudofsky and Eighth Circuit Judges Steve Grasz

and David Stras. Judge Grasz was one of the three judges in August who unanimously decided to unblock four pro-life laws Arkansas passed in 2017; the laws currently are not being enforced pending a hearing before the entire Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals. U.S. Supreme Court justices get a lot of attention, but district courts and appeals courts arguably have more influence, because they issue many more rulings than the Supreme Court. Judicial nominations made today will impact this nation beyond our lifetimes. That's something we all ought to keep in mind.



President Donald J. Trump, Senator Tom Cotton,  
and Senator David Perdue, August 2, 2017

## Trial Over Arkansas' Ten Commandments Monument Delayed

Over the summer a federal court in Little Rock opted to postpone the trial in the lawsuit over Arkansas' monument of the Ten Commandments. The delay was due to disruptions caused by COVID-19. U.S. District Judge Kristine Baker will hear the case sometime this fall.

The story surrounding Arkansas' Ten Commandments marker reads a little like a bad soap opera. In 2015 Sen. Jason Rapert (R – Conway) sponsored a law authorizing a monument of the Ten Commandments on the Arkansas State Capitol Grounds. The 6,000-pound granite monument was paid for with private funds, and it was placed on the Capitol lawn on June 27, 2017. Less than 24 hours later, a man plowed a vehicle into the monument, completely destroying it. The man who drove his vehicle into the monument was found unfit to stand trial due to mental illness.

The Ten Commandments monument was rebuilt and replaced on the Capitol grounds in April of 2018—this time with heavy-duty bollards around it for protection. However, not long afterward, the American Humanist Association, the Freedom From Religion Foundation, and the Satanic Temple all filed legal challenges to have the monument removed from the Capitol lawn.

**Frankly, there just shouldn't be anything controversial about putting up a monument that honors the Ten Commandments. Here are three reasons why:**

- Arkansas' monument of the Ten Commandments is identical to one the U.S. Supreme Court ruled constitutional in Texas in 2005.
- Historians have long recognized the Ten Commandments as one of the earliest examples of the rule of law in human history, and they have helped shape the laws in countries around the world—including America.
- The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled it's constitutional to acknowledge religion's influence and legacy on history and society.

There's simply no reason to remove Arkansas' monument of the Ten Commandments—either with a car or with a court order. The Arkansas Attorney General's office is working hard to defend the state against the lawsuit by these atheist organizations, and I believe ultimately the state will win this case in federal court.



## Family Council Steps Up After School Tells Parents It Can Offer Pregnancy Tests, Contraceptives Without Consent

In August the Highland School District in Sharp County distributed parental consent forms to families for the school's health clinic. State law lets local school boards establish school-based health clinics that can serve students, but the clinics must get parental-consent before treating children.

However, the parental-consent form that the Highland School-Based Health Clinic sent families in August had fine print at the bottom of the page that said, "Arkansas law does not require parental consent in certain situations

**The truth is Arkansas law could not be any clearer on this point. School-based health clinics need parental-consent before treating students.**

including the examination and treatment of STDs [sexually-transmitted diseases] and examination and diagnosis of pregnancy, and family planning services." One mother who read the fine print was appalled to learn that the school might offer these "services" to her daughter without her consent. She shared her concerns with others who forwarded them to us.

**The truth is Arkansas law could not be any clearer on this point.** School-based health clinics need parental-consent before treating students. When it comes to family planning services, state law says parental-consent for contraceptives must be specific, in writing, and recorded in the student's record.

Family Council worked very hard on this issue in the 1990s. In fact, it was one of the most challenging fights we ever faced. Then-Gov. Bill Clinton and Surgeon General Dr. Joycelyn Elders wanted to set up school-based health clinics that would teach comprehensive sex education and distribute contraceptives to students without so much as telling the parents, much less getting parental-consent. Fortunately, we were able to stop those efforts. Unfortunately, some school administrators just don't know about these laws that have been on the books for many years.

We have shared all of this with state officials who are working to fix the problem at the school-based clinic in Highland. Hopefully it will be resolved by the time this letter reaches you.

## China's Rise Threatens Safety of Arkansans

By U.S. Senator Tom Cotton (R – Arkansas)

China's rise is the greatest threat to the safety of Arkansans and all Americans. Over the past year, we've seen the damage that China can do to us. After all, it was China's deception and cover-up that led to the Wuhan virus pandemic. Every life that was lost, every person who suffered, and every job that was lost ultimately goes back to the lies and failures of China's Communist Party (CCP).

I've stood up to China's Communist leaders, and in retaliation they've sanctioned me and threatened my family. As a United States Senator, I can handle this. Truth is, there's not much China can do to me. I wasn't planning on taking my next vacation to Beijing.

But the harm that Chinese Communism is doing to its own people and the rest of the world is deadly serious, and we need to wake up to it.

Consider what China is doing to the Uyghurs who live in far-western China. Right now, a million Uyghurs are suffering in concentration camps, where they're being "re-educated" and subjected to forced sterilization and abortions. China claims to have ended the worst abuses of its barbaric one-child policy long ago, but that was just another lie. You may have seen the shocking images of hundreds of Uyghurs—blindfolded, bound, and shaved—herded onto trains by Chinese Communist enforcers. These are scenes that could've come straight out of the 1940s, but they're happening today in one of the world's most powerful countries.

China's persecution of Christians is not new, but it's getting worse. The Communist government has shut down countless underground churches and forced the churches that remain to declare their loyalty to the Communist Party. Last December, Chinese Pastor Wang Yi was sentenced to nine years in prison merely for being a Christian leader. That kind of brutality is intended to intimidate others into staying silent. The message is clear: if you dare to spread the Gospel, you'll be punished, too.

China's Communist Party is even attacking the Bible itself, deleting passages that contradict China's "core socialist values" in so-called "official" translations. It's little exaggeration to say that the CCP is trying to transform Christianity in its own, godless image, with Chairman Mao in the place of God Himself.

What's worse, China's Communist influence is already felt here in the United States, where the CCP has significant and growing influence on our culture. Hollywood studios are changing their movies to appease the CCP's censors: it happened in the recent *Top Gun, Red Dawn 2*, and even in kids' movies like *Abominable*.

Most recently, Disney filmed the live-action *Mulan* in the very region of China where the Uyghurs are being repressed. Disney even offered "special thanks" in the

film's credits to the CCP bureau in charge of the concentration camps. This level of complicity in evil is a new low for a once-great American company. Just a couple years ago, Disney lectured the State of Georgia for passing laws that protect unborn babies from being killed by abortionists. That pro-life law apparently was too much for Disney to handle—but it's just fine with Communist genocide if it allows Disney to make a buck.

The CCP also has spied on our college campuses for decades. The Department of Justice has revealed that China has an explicit strategy to exploit American scholarship programs to steal important technology that can be used to build their military and repress their own people. Numerous Chinese spies have been arrested for stealing technology on orders from Beijing.

China endangers America in many other ways, too. China has been the primary source of the fentanyl that has killed thousands of Arkansans during the opioid crisis. Its military, the People's Liberation Army, is harassing its neighbors like Taiwan and India, as well as our brave sailors and airmen in the Pacific. And experts estimate that more than two million American manufacturing jobs were lost to China over the past several decades.

What can be done about the China threat? First, we need to acknowledge the problem. We need leaders who recognize that Chinese Communism is our greatest national security threat and aren't afraid to say it. Too often, politicians are more concerned with being politically correct and winning applause from the media than they are with calling out right and wrong. Many are even corrupted by Chinese influence and cash. Second, we need to build on the great work that President Trump has started. President Trump has stood up to China since day one. Just last year, he signed my legislation to sanction Chinese drug dealers for shipping fentanyl to the United States. Third, we need to punish China for the way it treats Christians, Uyghurs, and other minorities. And when companies like Disney kowtow to China, they should pay a steep price. We can make that happen.

China's a real threat, but I believe Arkansans and Americans can rise to the challenge. I urge you to vote for leaders who recognize this menace and who will stand up and fight for the country before it's too late.



U.S. Senator Tom Cotton is a military veteran. He has served as the junior United States Senator from Arkansas since 2015.

## Arkansas Lottery's Priorities Still Out of Whack

Since the day it sold its first lottery ticket in September of 2009, the Arkansas Lottery's priorities have been completely out of whack. It over-spends on prizes for lottery players, budgets very little for college scholarships, and

**It over-spends on prizes for lottery players, budgets very little for college scholarships, and preys on the poor and desperate.**

preys on the poor and desperate. Here are a few examples of what we're talking about.

- **Most of the Money Goes to Prizes.** Even though the lottery is supposed to fund college scholarships, very little money actually goes to students. Only about 17% of the lottery's revenue goes to education. For perspective, the average state-run lottery spends about 30% of its revenue on education. Roughly 70% of the Lottery's income is doled back out in prizes to players. Meanwhile, the typical state-run lottery spends somewhere around 60% of its revenue on prizes. The Arkansas Lottery could provide millions of dollars more in scholarships if it spent an average amount on prizes and an average amount of scholarships.
- **The Lottery Wants Casino-Style Gambling—Even Though Arkansas Doesn't Need It.** The Arkansas Lottery saw a huge surge in ticket sales during the COVID-19 pandemic, and that surge has continued throughout the summer. Our team analyzed the numbers, and found lottery revenue spiked around the time Arkansans began receiving stimulus checks and unemployment from the federal government. Despite record sales over the spring and summer, Lottery officials have indicated that they want to roll out casino-style games like Keno to improve lottery revenue. But the Arkansas Lottery is making plenty of money without these games. Why would we want to expand gambling any further in Arkansas?
- **The Lottery Constantly Rolls Out New Scratch-Off Tickets.** Every month the Arkansas Lottery rolls out five new scratch-off tickets. The games are part of the Lottery's ongoing strategy to prop up lottery ticket sales by offering players a steady stream of new gambling. Many of these scratch-off tickets sell for \$10 or \$20 each, and they entice players with terrible odds on huge jackpots. Scratch-off tickets are tied to gambling problems; some experts have dubbed them "paper slot machines." However, the Arkansas Lottery relies very heavily on them for tens of millions of dollars in revenue every month.

## Family Council Spots Accounting Error That Released Public Funds to Planned Parenthood

From time to time Family Council's team reviews financial data published by the State of Arkansas. In August, one of our team members spotted \$12.82 the Department of Human Services paid to Planned Parenthood via Medicaid. The money stood out, because in 2015 Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson directed the state to sever all ties with Planned Parenthood and stop giving the abortion giant Medicaid money after undercover videos revealed top officials from the organization discussing the sale of body parts harvested from aborted babies.

We did a little more research and found the state paid Planned Parenthood \$35.28 in Fiscal Year 2020 and \$48.04 in Fiscal Year 2018. That isn't very much money, but we decided to ask around about it. After looking into the matter, state officials discovered what appeared to be an accounting error that had caused federal Medicaid funds to be routed to Planned Parenthood via the state. From what we can tell, the federal government probably intended to give the money to Planned Parenthood, but it wasn't supposed to pass through the Arkansas government to get there. DHS promptly fixed the error to ensure the State of Arkansas has no part in paying money to the nation's leading abortion provider.

Before Governor Hutchinson took office, the State of Arkansas paid hundreds of thousands of dollars to Planned Parenthood every single year. In Fiscal Year 2013, for example, the state gave more than \$338,000 to Planned Parenthood—primarily through Medicaid and taxpayer-funded grants. In April of 2015 the Arkansas Legislature passed Act 996 by Sen. Gary Stubblefield (R – Branch) and Rep. Robin Lundstrum (R – Springdale) prohibiting the state from awarding grants or contracts to abortion providers and their affiliates. The following August Governor Hutchinson directed the Department of Human Services to terminate its Medicaid contract with Planned Parenthood.

We're very grateful to Governor Hutchinson's administration for its commitment to de-funding abortionists. While \$12.82 may not seem like much to some people, it's absolutely vital that the state do everything it can to keep taxpayer dollars out of the hands of abortionists.



## Make Your City or County a Sanctuary for the Unborn

Would you like to declare your city or county a sanctuary for the unborn? Family Council has boilerplate language that city boards and quorum courts can use to do just that. The language is based on a resolution the Springdale City Council passed last year. It opposes abortion and affirms the community's commitment to protecting the unborn. Ordinances like these are an easy way that communities can stand up for what is right. You can request a free copy of the language by calling our office at (501) 375-7000 or emailing [info@familycouncil.org](mailto:info@familycouncil.org). We will send you a copy of the ordinance to take to your city or county officials.

You can request a free copy by calling our office.

## THERE'S STILL TIME TO ORDER VOTER'S GUIDES!

The 2020 Arkansas Voter's Guide is here! We are distributing thousands of copies of the guide across Arkansas ahead of the November General Election. We survey the candidates on issues like abortion, education, and taxes, and we publish their survey responses in print and online. Because our guide doesn't favor one candidate over another, churches are free to share it with their members. **You can request free copies of the Arkansas Voter's Guide by calling our office at (501) 375-7000 or visiting [ArkansasVotersGuide.com](http://ArkansasVotersGuide.com).** Let us know how many copies of the guide you want, and we will ship them directly to you.

## WE NEED YOUR HELP

We're making big plans for the coming months. Here's a brief look at a few things we have planned from now through the spring of 2021:

- Distributing Thousands of Voter's Guides.
- Stopping Sex-Changes On Children and Protecting Doctors and Hospitals That Object to Performing Sex-Change Surgeries.
- Establishing Hundreds of Pro-Life Sanctuary Cities and Counties in Arkansas.
- Keeping Boys Out of Girls' Sports.
- Opposing Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide.
- Stopping Hate Crimes Laws.

You can read more about these projects—and many more that I don't have room to list—on the flyer enclosed with this letter. As you can see, we have big plans for the coming months. That's why I hope you will send a generous, tax-deductible gift to help us, if you are able. I will appreciate any gift you can give at this time.

Thank you for standing with us. It's always so good to know we have friends like you who believe in our mission. Let us hear from you sometime. **My staff—David, Luke, Lisa, Erin, Ken, Charisse, Doris, and I—always enjoy hearing from our friends around the state. Please let me know if there is ever anything we can do for you.**

Sincerely,



Jerry Cox, President

*Thank you!!*

**P.S. Enclosed with this letter is a statement we are encouraging ministers, lay leaders, and elected officials to sign opposing hate crimes legislation in Arkansas. If you are in leadership in your church or community, you can sign it and send it back to us. Encourage your pastor and any other leaders you know to sign it as well.** A list of everyone signing this statement will be published in the coming weeks. We are busy distributing thousands of copies of the Arkansas Voter's Guide. There's still time to order guides free of charge for your family or church by calling our office at (501) 375-7000. I hope you appreciate the exclusive essay from U.S. Senator Tom Cotton about the threats that China's communist party poses. Please remember to pray for me and my staff. Thank you for standing with us!