



FAMILY
COUNCIL

inside:

—
**Mark Lowery Was a
True Champion for
Homeschooling in
Arkansas**

—
**New Toolkits are
Here to Help You**

—
**ACLU, Tech
Companies Work to
Block Social Media
Safety Act in Court**

—
**Hemp Companies
Sue to Block
Arkansas From
Banning Delta-8 THC**

—
& MORE

SEPTEMBER 2023
UPDATE LETTER

Dear Friends,

Before I started school, books were in short supply at our house. For as long as I can remember, we always had a Bible. I had one or two "Golden Books." I especially liked the one about Roy Rogers and the mountain lion. I can even remember when we got our first dictionary. Then one day a six-volume set of books called *The Child's World* came in the mail. I hadn't learned to read, but those books were amazing. I memorized the pages. They focused on plants, animals, science, history, geography, and fun stories of childhood. There were Aesop's Fables and stories about men like Abraham Lincoln and their great deeds. There were lots of pictures and nursery rhymes. One of my favorites was the legend of Robert the Bruce and the Spider. My mother read it to me over and over again. I could just imagine that spider trying and trying again and again until he succeeded.

Scottish legend says that during the winter of 1306, Robert the Bruce, King of Scots, hid in a cave on an island off the coast of Scotland. Bruce had suffered disaster and defeat in his war against the English Crown, and he was forced to sit in gloomy darkness while waiting for circumstances to improve. Legend says Bruce watched a spider try to spin a web across the top of the cave door. Again and again the spider fell to the ground. Each time it fell, the spider climbed back up to the ceiling of the cave to start over with its web until it finally succeeded. Bruce drew inspiration from the spider's perseverance and decided to keep fighting for Scotland. Eventually he was able to lead his army to victory. Robert the Bruce is sometimes credited with coining the phrase, "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again."

Isn't it strange how some things just stick with us—how they become a part of who we are without us knowing it? Looking back, I guess that determined spider did that with me.

In 1984 I began my journey down the pro-life path. I was off from teaching high school for the summer, so I worked with Rob Shafer and others to gather signatures to place a proposed state constitutional amendment on the Arkansas ballot to prevent public funding of abortions. We gathered the necessary signatures, but the Arkansas Supreme Court removed the amendment from the ballot two weeks before the election. I went back and taught high school at Pulaski Academy for another year.

Rob Shafer and others decided to mount another petition drive to gather petition signatures and place another proposed state constitutional amendment on the ballot to prevent public funding of abortions. I left teaching and joined that effort full-time in the spring of 1985. We gathered enough signatures to place the pro-life amendment on the November 1986 General Election ballot. When the ballots were counted, we failed by a little over 500 votes statewide.

Some people told us to quit. One person told us to "stop beating a dead horse." But we decided to try a third time. By then, I was directing the effort along with my friend Ed Nenonen. So, once again, we gathered enough signatures to put the ban on public funding of abortions back on the ballot for another vote. Most people thought we were going to fail. But in November 1988 we won, and Amendment 68 is in our state constitution today.

Not long after the amendment passed, I received a letter in the mail along with a generous donation to our work. It was from Bishop Andrew McDonald with the Diocese of Little Rock. He commended our work and then he began to reference the legend of Robert the Bruce and the spider that would not quit. He compared us to the spider. He had no idea how much his words meant to me personally.

So when I see a spider web, I sometimes remember those days when my mother read to me. She had no idea that those stories of men and great deeds in those simple books would be woven into the tapestry of my life and be bearing fruit for a lifetime. I want you to know that I'm thankful for the beautiful tapestry God has woven into your life as well. Thank you for your faithfulness in standing with us—a few of you since 1984. May God bless your faithfulness. Now let me tell you what's been going on lately.

Mark Lowery Was a True Champion for Homeschooling in Arkansas

By Jerry Cox, Family Council President

On July 26 Arkansas Treasurer Mark Lowery passed away at the age of 66. Before being elected as State Treasurer, Mark served in the Arkansas House of Representatives. Mark Lowery was a true champion for homeschooling. Legislation he sponsored over the years not only helps current homeschoolers, but it will help generations of homeschoolers yet unborn. Below is a list of just a few good laws that Mark Lowery sponsored at the legislature. Some of them Mark had to try again and again before they passed into law.

- Act 1469 of 2013, Arkansas' "Tim Tebow" law letting homeschoolers participate in interscholastic activities at public schools.
- Act 635 of 2017 making it easier for homeschoolers to file their Notice of Intent to Home School online or by mail.
- Act 592 of 2017 letting homeschoolers participate in interscholastic activities outside their resident school district if both school districts agree.
- Act 453 of 2017 amending the state's "Tim Tebow" law by letting homeschoolers participate in interscholastic activities at any private school within 25 miles of the student's home if the private school is a member of the Arkansas Activities Association and agrees to let the homeschooler participate.
- Act 173 of 2017 letting homeschoolers take courses at their local public schools if the school is willing to enroll them.
- Act 863 of 2017 requiring public schools to give homeschoolers who re-enroll in school the very same rights and privileges as public school students and generally preventing a school from denying a homeschooler appropriate class credits, proper grade level placement, and the ability to graduate.
- Act 429 of 2019 preventing schools from charging homeschooled students extra to take concurrent credit courses for college credit.
- Act 430 of 2019 making it easier for homeschooled students to access academic courses offered through the local public school system.
- Act 820 of 2021 prohibiting public schools in Arkansas from engaging in transactions with abortion providers.
- Act 623 of 2021 making it easier for a student to withdraw from a public school to homeschool.

Mark's commitment to his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was evident in the legislation he sponsored and in his statesmanship as a public servant. Something that I have thought about Mark since his passing is that Mark Lowery always was glad to eat lunch with us in the cafeteria at the Arkansas Capitol Building. I know that sounds like a small thing, but the capitol can be a lot like a junior high school. Some people worry about where they sit, who they're seen with, and how it makes them look. They want to be part of the "cool" crowd—and Family Council isn't very "cool." That means other lobbyists and elected officials sometimes act like they're afraid to be seen talking with me or my staff. In all his years of public service, Mark never did that—not even once. That's one reason I consider Mark a true and faithful friend. I know I'll miss seeing him at the capitol. We need more elected officials like Mark Lowery.



Above: Treasurer Mark Lowery (left) speaks at Home School Day at the Capitol alongside Jerry Cox.



Above: An Arkansas State Police honor guard stands by Treasurer Lowery's casket in the Capitol Rotunda.

New Toolkits are Here to Help You Exercise Religious Freedom, Promote Decency, and Affirm Sanctity of Human Life!

Family Council is pleased to unveil three new toolkits you and your family can use to exercise religious liberty, promote decency, and affirm the sanctity of human life in your community. These toolkits are available to anyone in Arkansas free of charge. They are one of the ways we help Arkansans stay “in the arena” in our state. Here’s a quick overview of each of the new toolkits we are offering.

Our Pro-Life Communities Toolkit. In June Family Council released a newly revised toolkit designed to give citizens the resources and information they need to enact a Pro-Life Resolution in their community.

Arkansas law lets cities, counties, and other political subdivisions of the state pass resolutions affirming that they are Pro-Life. That means, for example, a local school board could pass a resolution declaring the school district to be pro-life. Right now nearly half the state’s population lives in a pro-life city or county. In the coming months we plan to expand the number of pro-life communities in Arkansas. You can download a free copy of our pro-life resolutions toolkit at FamilyCouncil.org. Call our office at (501) 375-7000 for additional information.

Our Faith in School Toolkit. Family Council is pleased to release a toolkit designed to help students, parents, and teachers exercise their religious liberties in public schools. Our Faith in School Toolkit outlines common misconceptions about the free exercise of religion at school, and it tells how communities can encourage appropriate religious expression at school. The toolkit covers topics such as the Day of Prayer for Arkansas Students, Bring Your Bible to School Day, released time for religious study during school hours, and more. You can download a free copy of our Faith in School Toolkit at FamilyCouncil.org. Call our office at (501) 375-7000 for additional information.

Our Library Toolkit. More and more, we hear about public libraries and school libraries in Arkansas placing sexually explicit books on their shelves and hosting offensive events like Drag Queen Story Times. Our library toolkit explains steps that communities can take to protect themselves from this type of activity. You can go to FamilyCouncil.org or call our office at (501) 375-7000 to learn more.



ACLU, Tech Companies Work to Block Social Media Safety Act in Court

Tech giants and the ACLU are working in court against Arkansas’ Act 689, the Social Media Safety Act of 2023. This good law by Sen. Tyler Dees (R – Siloam Springs) and Rep. Jon Eubanks (R – Paris) requires major social media companies to use age verification to ensure minors do not access social media platforms without parental consent. The law contains protections for user privacy. A social media company that violated the law could be held liable. Governor Sanders signed Act 689 into law following its passage at the Arkansas Legislature last spring.

On June 29 the trade association NetChoice filed a lawsuit in federal court in Arkansas on behalf of its members—which include social media giants like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, SnapChat, Pinterest, and TikTok. The lawsuit alleges that Arkansas’ Social Media Safety Act is unconstitutional and should be struck down. On July 14 the ACLU of Arkansas filed an amicus brief also claiming Act 689 is unconstitutional.

News reports have highlighted time and again how social media giants serve teens what some experts call “a steady diet of darkness” online. Despite employing tens of thousands of content moderators, TikTok’s algorithm inundates teenagers with videos promoting eating disorders, self-harm, and suicide. In May the U.S. Surgeon General issued a health advisory warning that adolescents who spend more than three hours a day on social media run twice as much risk of developing depression and anxiety. The problem is the average teenager spends three and a half hours per day on social media—and many spend more time on it than that. The surgeon general’s advisory called on policymakers to strengthen social media safety standards and limit social media access in ways that make it safer for children. That’s what Arkansas’ Social Media Safety Act does. We believe courts ultimately will agree and uphold this good law as constitutional.

The Social Media Safety Act narrowly passed in the Arkansas Senate, but it enjoyed strong support in the House, as seen in this photo of the vote taken on April 5, 2023.



Hemp Companies Sue to Block Arkansas From Banning Delta-8 THC

On July 31, a group of cannabis companies filed a federal lawsuit to block the State of Arkansas from banning Delta-8 THC. Delta-8 THC is a mind-altering substance made from cannabis, and Arkansas law does not adequately prohibit it. That's why legislators passed Act 629 of 2023 by Sen. Tyler Dees (R – Siloam Springs) and Rep. Jimmy Gazaway (R – Paragould). Act 629 is a good law that prevents Delta-8 THC from being manufactured via industrial hemp—or cannabis—in Arkansas.

Last year the U.S. Food and Drug Administration issued a strong warning concerning the dangers of Delta-8. Among other things, the FDA found Delta-8 THC products are being marketed in ways that may appeal to children and that put public health at risk. The FDA and Poison Control Centers documented more than 2,000 reports of health complications from Delta-8 between December 1, 2020, to February 28, 2022.

Now companies that profit from Delta-8 THC are suing to block Act 629. According to the lawsuit, the companies working to overturn Act 629 in court are:

- Smoker Friendly, a Colorado company that operates 58 stores selling Delta-8 in Arkansas.
- Sky Marketing, a Texas company that sells substances like Delta-8 wholesale in Arkansas.
- Bio Gen LLC, a Fayetteville company that farms industrial hemp.
- Drippers LLC, a company that sells Delta-8 THC and other cannabinoids. According to its website, Drippers operates stores in Greenbrier, Cabot, Hot Springs, El Dorado, and Benton.

It should not come as a surprise that companies who profit from Delta-8 THC in Arkansas are suing to keep Delta-8 legal. Act 629 of 2023 is a good law that protects Arkansans from dangerous drugs. We believe courts will recognize that fact and ultimately let the state enforce it.

Fayetteville Judge Blocks Part of State Law Protecting Children From Explicit Library Material

In July U.S. District Judge Timothy Brooks blocked two sections of Act 372 of 2023—a good law that generally prohibits giving or sending a child harmful material that contains nudity or sexual activity. The law also eliminates exemptions for libraries and schools in the state's obscenity statute, and it clarifies how library patrons can work to remove objectionable material from a library's catalog. Act 372 was slated to take effect August 1, but in June a coalition of libraries in Arkansas led by the ACLU filed a lawsuit against it. Judge Brooks' preliminary injunction prevents the State of Arkansas from enforcing Section 1 and Section 5 of Act 372.

People are deeply troubled by obscene and inappropriate children's books that some librarians have placed on the shelves of their local libraries.

Section 1 of Act 372 makes it a Class A misdemeanor to give or send a child harmful sexual material that contains nudity or sexual activity. Section 5 of Act 372 clarifies how library patrons can work to remove objectionable material from a library's catalog. The ruling did not affect Sections 2, 3, 4, and 6 of Act 372, which eliminate exemptions for schools and libraries in the state's obscenity statute, address inappropriate material in public school libraries, and permit the disclosure of certain library records.

Family Council has heard repeatedly from people who are deeply troubled by obscene and inappropriate children's books that some librarians have placed on the shelves of their local libraries. Some of the librarians who testified publicly against Act 372 last spring signaled that they want

to be free to share obscene material with children at a library. That simply isn't right. Act 372 is a good law that will help protect children in Arkansas. We believe higher courts will recognize that fact and ultimately uphold this law as constitutional.



Left: Sen. Dees presents Act 629 prohibiting Delta-8 THC in committee on March 14. The law narrowly passed at the Arkansas Legislature.

Most American Say It's "Morally Wrong" to Change Genders: New Gallup Poll

In June pollsters at Gallup released a poll that showed a growing majority of Americans believe it is "morally wrong" to change genders, and most agreed athletes should compete according to their biological sex rather than their gender identity. Gallup has tracked public opinion on transgender issues for some time now. The poll shows the percentage of Americans who say it's morally wrong to change genders rose from 51% in 2021 to 55% this year. Meanwhile, the percentage who said it's "morally acceptable" to change genders fell from 46% to 43%. A staggering 69% of Americans said athletes should compete based on biological sex instead of gender identity. Gallup found the numbers do not break clearly along party lines between Democrats and Republicans, either. It seems plenty of people in both parties believe that it's wrong to change genders.

All of this goes to show Arkansas' laws track with public opinion. Act 461 of 2021 by Sen. Missy Irvin (R — Mountain View) and Rep. Sonia Barker (R — Smackover) helps protect fairness in women's sports by preventing male student athletes from competing against girls in women's athletics at school. Act 461 has never been challenged in Arkansas. In January a federal district court upheld a similar law in West Virginia as constitutional.

In 2021 the Arkansas Legislature overwhelmingly passed the Save Adolescents From Experimentation (SAFE) Act. The SAFE Act is a good law that protects children in Arkansas from cross-sex hormones, puberty blockers, and sex-reassignment surgeries. However, the law has been tied up in court since the summer of 2021.

This year the Arkansas Legislature passed Act 274 by Sen. Gary Stubblefield (R — Branch) and Rep. Mary Bentley (R — Perryville). This good law lets a child who undergoes a sex-change procedure sue the healthcare provider who performed the procedure if the child suffers any physical, psychological, or emotional injury as a result. The law also includes informed-consent requirements for sex-change procedures.

The fact that public opinion seems to be shifting on the transgender issue is huge. It underscores that Arkansas' laws preserving fairness in women's sports and protecting children from sex-change procedures reflect the will of the people.



Above: Family Council President Jerry Cox visits with Capitol Police following passage of the SAFE Act in the Senate Public Health committee on March 22, 2021. As a precaution, officers helped Family Council staff avoid pro-LGBT protesters cursing and hurling obscenities at people who supported the SAFE Act.

A.G.'s Team Files Appeal in SAFE Act Lawsuit

Over the summer, Arkansas Attorney General Tim Griffin's team appealed to the federal Eighth Circuit to let the state enforce the Save Adolescents From Experimentation (SAFE) Act. The SAFE Act is a good law the Arkansas Legislature overwhelmingly enacted in 2021. It protects children in Arkansas from sex-change surgeries, puberty blockers, and cross-sex hormones. Unfortunately, the law has been tied up in court since 2021. A federal judge in Little Rock blocked the state from enforcing the SAFE Act last June.

The SAFE Act is a good law built on medical science and commonsense. Sex-change surgeries and procedures can leave children sterilized and scarred for life. Researchers do not know the long-term effects puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones can have on kids. That is why many experts agree that subjecting children to sex-change procedures is experimental, at best.

In 2021 a major hospital in Sweden announced it would no longer give puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones to kids. Last year the U.K.'s National Health Services closed its Tavistock gender clinic that gave puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones to children for many years. Many families have indicated their children were subjected to sex-reassignment at that clinic despite an obvious lack of scientific evidence in favor of the procedures and inadequate mental health screenings for children with gender dysphoria. And last year the U.S. Food and Drug Administration finally added a warning label to puberty blockers in America after biological girls developed symptoms of swelling in the brain.

As we have already said, public opinion is shifting, and most Americans say it's morally wrong to change genders. With all of this in mind, it's clear the SAFE Act is good legislation that protects children. Family Council is confident that higher courts will recognize that fact and uphold this good law as constitutional.

Left: Rep. Robin Lundstrum discusses Act 461 protecting fairness in women's sports during a press conference at the capitol on February 25, 2021.

Family Council Hosts Video Conference About Gender Dysphoria With Journalist

In July Family Council hosted a virtual prayer meeting with *The Christian Post's* senior investigative journalist Brandon Showalter. Brandon has researched and written about the transgender movement, and he spoke with dozens of lawmakers and Family Council supporters about the gender-identity crisis that many children in America face. Our team is pleased to host video meetings with special guests each month. **If you would like to join us for future meetings like this one, give us a call at (501) 375-7000.**



See You at the Pole is September 27

See You At the Pole 2023 is happening Wednesday, September 27. This is a day when students across the nation will gather around the flagpoles for a time of public prayer outside of normal school hours. See You At The Pole provides students with an opportunity to exercise their constitutional rights, pray for their schools, and live out their faith—all at the same time. Many churches work with students to host special events in conjunction with See You At The Pole. **To learn more, visit syatp.com.**



Above: Family Council staff members (right) watch the unveiling of Arkansas' Ten Commandments Monument on the west side of the Arkansas Capitol Complex.

Trial in Ten Commandments Monument Lawsuit Set for October 16

The lawsuit over Arkansas' Ten Commandments Monument will go to trial in October. In 2015 the Arkansas Legislature passed a measure authorizing a privately-funded monument of the Ten Commandments on the State Capitol Building grounds. The monument is identical to one the U.S. Supreme Court ruled constitutional at the Texas Capitol Building some years ago.

Shortly after Arkansas unveiled its monument on the west side of the Capitol Complex, atheist groups and the Satanic Temple joined together in a lawsuit to have it removed from state grounds. After languishing in court, the case now is scheduled to go to trial in Little Rock on Monday, October 16, 2023.

As we have said many times, there shouldn't be anything controversial about a monument honoring the significance of the Ten Commandments. 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 laws in countries around the world. Arkansas' monument simply commemorates that legacy.

Bring Your Bible to School Day is October 5!

Thursday, October 5, is national Bring Your Bible to School Day. This is a day for students across the country to exercise their First Amendment rights by bringing copies of God's Word with them to school. It's also an opportunity for students to discuss their faith and share the gospel with their friends outside of class time. Bring Your Bible to School Day is a movement sponsored by our friends at Focus on the Family. Last year, 877,353 students took part in this amazing event! If you don't have a student in public school, there still may be ways you or your church can help Bring Your Bible to School Day be successful. **Visit BringYourBible.com to learn more.**



Join In Prayer for Arkansas Students Later This Month

In 2021 the Arkansas Legislature passed Act 902 designating the last Wednesday of September as a Day of Prayer for Arkansas Students. This is a special day set aside for every citizen in the state to lift up all of our students, teachers, faculty, administrators, and educators.

Many communities may be unaware that the Day of Prayer for Arkansas Students is approaching. We want to spread the word to make this day a success. The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education is required to notify public school districts of the day of prayer. You can let your pastor know and notify your school board, superintendent, principal, or teachers. If the school has any Christian clubs such as FCA, notify the faculty sponsor or member of the group—and remember to pray for students in private school and those who home school. Our students need our prayers. Let's make sure we take time to pray for them. **Visit DayOfPrayerAR.com to learn more!**

Did You Know Public Schools are Supposed to Observe a Minute of Silence Every Day?

While teachers may not be able to lead public school students in prayer before class, did you know that public schools are supposed to observe one minute of silence every morning? In 2021, the Arkansas Legislature passed Act 959 requiring public school students to observe one minute of silence each school day following the Pledge of Allegiance. Most states have passed similar laws as well. During the one minute of silence, each student may reflect, pray, meditate, or engage in any other silent activity that is not likely to interfere with or distract other students.

Of course, that's not to say that all prayer must be silent at school. The U.S. Constitution protects voluntary prayer at public schools, provided that prayer does not interfere with class time. Students can gather to pray silently or aloud at school any time when students have free time to gather and speak about anything else. **If you would like to learn more about school prayer, check out our free Faith at School Toolkit at FamilyCouncil.org or call our office at (501) 375-7000.**

State Board of Education Writes Rules for LEARNS Act

On July 13, the Arkansas Board of Education released emergency rules for the LEARNS Act's Education Freedom Accounts—part of the state's new school choice program that lets students use public dollars to obtain an education. The Education Freedom Accounts are the financial accounts Arkansans use to pay for education expenses under the LEARNS Act. The first phase of the LEARNS Act is underway right now, and state funding may be available for eligible students who fall into one or more of the following categories: Students coming from the Succeed Scholarship Program, students who are disabled or homeless, a current or former foster child, the child of a parent on active military duty, enrolled the previous year in an "F" school or "level 5" district, or a student who will be enrolling in Kindergarten for the first time. Some homeschooled students who meet these criteria may be able to use LEARNS Act money to attend a private school part-time this year. The board's emergency rules were temporary, and the board issued them to make the Education Freedom Accounts available before the beginning of the school year. A set of permanent rules governing the program has also been released and will take effect this fall, after the general public and Arkansas' lawmakers have had an opportunity to provide input on them.



Assistant Director
David Cox

From Woke to Broke: Bud Light Ousts Itself as Nation's Number-One Beer

By David Cox, Family Council

This year Bud Light single handedly managed to overthrow itself as America's number-one beer. As many people know by now, Anheuser-Busch has been dealing with a P.R. disaster and plummeting sales since last April, when the company sent transgender social media influencer Dylan Mulvaney a novelty can of Bud Light with

Mulvaney's picture on it. Mulvaney posted a TikTok video of himself dressed like Audrey Hepburn showcasing the Bud Light can on April 1. That video prompted backlash and boycotts from Bud Light drinkers nationwide.

As marketing disasters go, the Bud Light fiasco is somewhere between the Ford Pinto and New Coke. Executives at Anheuser-Busch generally pleaded ignorance about Mulvaney receiving a beer can with his photograph on it, but clearly someone with a lot of decision-making authority in the marketing department thought it was a good idea. The company's half-hearted backpedaling afterwards successfully offended both its customers and the LGBT community. In July data analysts at the outlet *Union* found Bud Light sales at bars and restaurants had dropped significantly in

North and South Carolina, New York, New Jersey, Texas, and elsewhere. Anheuser-Busch's stock fell, and beer brands like Miller and Coors pulled ahead of Bud Light.

To be clear, none of this is intended to endorse alcohol. A few pundits actually have tried to dismiss the situation as a temporary setback ginned up by evangelical Christians who decided to boycott Bud Light. There are evangelicals who drink beer—right or wrong—but not enough to put this much hurt on Anheuser-Busch's bottom line. The company is facing irreversible damage to one of its most iconic brands because some of its core customers—Bud Light drinkers—are tired of corporate, pro-LGBT pandering. Disney, Target, and other companies have made headlines for encountering similar backlash this summer. Ironically, when companies face this sort of pushback, they tend to blame the customers for being "transphobic" rather than take responsibility for their business decisions. All of that ought to show how out-of-step these corporations are with everyday Americans. As one person put it, this proves that the "silent majority" is real when it comes to the transgender issue. Or as a friend of mine said more plainly, "That's what happens when you mess with someone's beer."

Share of Adults Who Have “Never Married” Rises in Arkansas: Census Bureau Data

A rising share of adults in Arkansas have never married, according to data from the U.S. Census Bureau. The bureau's 2010 American Community Survey found that 17% of men and 13% of women ages 35-44 reported having never married. By 2021, those percentages had increased to 24% of men and 18% of women ages 35-44. Similar increases were seen among other age groups as well. Overall, married Arkansans dropped from 51% of the population in 2010 to 49% in 2021.

It's tempting to assume couples are just living together instead of getting married, but data analysts at Pew Research have found that doesn't quite explain what's happening. This summer, Pew Research found the share of 40-year-olds in America who have never married has risen to record levels nationwide. At the same time, Pew discovered that as of 2022, only about one-in-five of “never-married” adults ages 40 to 44 were living with a romantic

partner. People seem to be either delaying marriage or simply skipping marriage—and relationships—entirely. That's a problem, because research has shown time and again that healthy marriages are good for everyone—men, women, children, and society as a whole. There simply is no substitute.

Realistically, we all know some marriages end in divorce for different reasons, and there are people who would like to marry but struggle to find a spouse. The point is our culture does not seem to value marriage. That's where churches can step in. Christians need to understand that God created marriage, and when couples face challenges, churches can be there to help. The decline in marriage in Arkansas may be a signal that now is the time for churches to renew their commitment to promoting and fostering healthy marriages in our state.

State Finishes Awarding \$1 Million to Pregnancy Help Organizations for FY23, Prepares to Award Another Million in FY24

In June the Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration finished awarding \$1 million in grant money to nearly two dozen pregnancy help organizations across the state. Last year the Arkansas Legislature passed an appropriation measure budgeting \$1 million for publicly-funded grants to organizations like crisis pregnancy centers, maternity homes, adoption agencies, and social services agencies that provide material support to women with unplanned pregnancies. The funding was approved before

the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, but it was part of our long-term strategy to eliminate the demand for abortion in Arkansas. Pregnancy resource centers and similar organizations give women real options besides abortion. That's why a growing number of states provide these organizations with public funding. This year lawmakers voted to renew the \$1 million in grant funding for pregnancy centers in the next budget cycle. That is going to continue to do a lot of good in Arkansas in the coming months

The Satanic Temple Places Pro-Abortion Billboards in Arkansas

The Satanic Temple has placed billboards in Arkansas claiming “abortions save lives.” The billboards arrived in August as the Satanic Temple and Lamar Advertising Company—

which owns billboard space throughout Arkansas—filed paperwork in federal court announcing they had “resolved” a lawsuit between them.



In 2020 the Satanic Temple proposed four billboard designs that falsely claimed The Satanic Temple's “religious abortion ritual averts many state restrictions” on abortion and that “abortions save lives.” The group reportedly wanted Lamar Advertising Company to place the billboards near

(continued on following page)

Left: One of the billboards visible near I-30 in Little Rock. It gives a web address explaining how to obtain abortion drugs in New Mexico, and it clearly states the billboard is “Paid For By The Satanic Temple.”

The Satanic Temple Places Pro-Abortion Billboards in Arkansas *(continued)*

pregnancy resource centers in Arkansas. Lamar Advertising Company understandably rejected the billboard designs for being “misleading and offensive.” The Satanic Temple sued Lamar in federal court as a result. On August 8, attorneys for the Satanic Temple and attorneys for Lamar jointly said the dispute had been resolved and asked the federal court in Fayetteville to dismiss the case.

Attorneys for Lamar Advertising Company did not respond to our request for comment on the situation. Family Council assumes when the attorneys write that the issue has been “resolved,” they mean Lamar decided to let the Satanic Temple place misleading, offensive, pro-abortion billboards in Arkansas after all. The billboards advertise “Free Religious Abortion Care,” and they provide an address for a website that tells visitors how to get abortion drugs in New Mexico. In Arkansas, abortion is prohibited except to save the life of the mother, and it is a crime to mail or deliver abortion drugs into the state.

Abortion doesn’t “save lives”—it ends lives. Abortion takes the life of an unborn baby, and it hurts women. The Satanic Temple has no business making these outrageous, pro-abortion claims on billboards in Arkansas.

Public School Students Will Learn About Adoption Thanks to This Good Law

In August a new law took effect that will help teach public school students about adoption. Act 637 of 2023 by Sen. David Wallace (R — Leachville) and Rep. Joey Carr (R—Blytheville) requires public schools to provide one hour of education regarding adoption awareness to students in grades 6–12 at the beginning of each school year. This will help educate students about adoption and foster care

**Promoting adoption and foster care
is good for children and families.**

in Arkansas. Promoting adoption and foster care is good for children and families, and it is one way we can reduce the demand for abortion. Arkansas Right to Life was the lead pro-life proponent of Act 637, and Family Council was proud to support their efforts. Now that Act 637 is in effect, we look forward to the State Board of Education and the public schools around the state implementing this good law. **Take Action: Make sure your local public school district is offering an hour of adoption education each school year in grades 6–12!**



405 Women Traveled From Arkansas to Kansas for Abortions Last Year

Last year the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, and abortion became prohibited in Arkansas except to save the life of the mother. In June the State of Kansas released its annual abortion statistics. The data shows that the number of women who traveled from Arkansas to Kansas for abortions rose from 74 in 2020 to 405 last year. Even though hundreds of women from Arkansas traveled out of state for abortions last year, reports from the Arkansas Department of Health indicate there were hundreds of women who chose not to have abortions thanks to Arkansas’ pro-life laws.

All of this underscores the importance of two measures the Arkansas Legislature passed earlier this year. The first was Act 622 by Sen. Scott Flippo (R – Bull Shoals) and Rep. Lane Jean (R – Magnolia) appropriating \$1 million in grant funding for pregnancy resource centers. This money will help give women in Arkansas real options besides abortion. That makes it less likely they will travel out of state for abortion. Family Council was proud to support this good legislation.

The second measure was Act 559 by Sen. Missy Irvin (R – Mountain View) and Rep. Lee Johnson (R – Greenwood) clarifying that a physician must perform an ultrasound before referring a woman to an abortionist. This will help restrict doctors who refer women to abortionists out of state, and it will let women see an ultrasound image of their unborn child. Statistically, women are less likely to have an abortion after seeing an ultrasound and hearing their unborn baby’s heartbeat. Arkansas Right to Life was the lead pro-life proponent of this good law, and Family Council was proud to support their efforts.

WE NEED YOUR HELP, BECAUSE YOU AND I ARE “IN THE ARENA” TOGETHER IN ARKANSAS

One of the reasons I sent you this letter is because there's so much Family Council plans to do over the next six to twelve months, and there's so much you can do to make a difference in your community. That's why I wanted to tell you about new toolkits that our team has put together just for you. That's also why I've included a flier that outlines our vision and goals for the future.

On April 23, 1910, Theodore Roosevelt famously said these words:

It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly ... who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.

Sadly, there's no shortage of pundits who criticize people for attempting things that they themselves would never dream of trying. A few months ago someone asked me why Family Council doesn't do more to call out legislators who file bad bills. To be clear, we write a lot about legislation—good and bad—when lawmakers file it, but the focus is on the legislation—not the sponsor. Family Council's mission isn't to criticize. **We are “in the arena”—and you're in it with us.**

Obviously, we can't do any of this without good friends like you. That's why I hope you will give a generous, tax-deductible donation today if you are able. Your gift will empower us to be “in the arena” in Arkansas together.

Thank you for your friendship and support. I know there is no shortage of good organizations that you could support. My staff and I never take it for granted that you choose to stand and work alongside us. Please don't hesitate to call if there is anything we can do for you.

Sincerely,



Thank you!!

Jerry Cox, President

P.S. It's September, and there's so much Family Council plans to do in the coming months. We have new toolkits that I am excited to share with you. We've recently revamped our Pro-Life Communities toolkit to better help Arkansans pass resolutions affirming that their communities are Pro-Life. We also have our Faith in School toolkit that will help parents, students, teachers, school board members, and communities respect and exercise religious liberty at public school. And we have our new library toolkit intended to help citizens address inappropriate material and inappropriate events at public libraries in their communities. Your generous support makes all of this work possible. Thank you!!



About Us: Family Council is a conservative, Christian non-profit organization based in Little Rock, Arkansas. Jerry Cox founded Family Council in 1989 in association with Dr. James Dobson and Focus on the Family. Our mission is to promote, protect, and strengthen traditional family values. We educate and equip families and churches to make Arkansas a better place to live, work, and raise a family, and we lobby lawmakers and elected officials on important issues that matter to families. Our work is funded by generous supporters all over Arkansas.
