



Caning of Charles Sumner, cartoon by John L. Magee, public domain

Dear Friends,

Sometimes it feels like our government is broken and civil discourse in America is dead. But it's worth remembering that on May 22, 1856, U.S. Congressman Preston Brooks used a walking cane with a gold head to attack U.S. Senator Charles Sumner on the floor of the U.S. Senate chamber. One hundred sixty-eight years later, history books record the attack as "the caning of Charles Sumner" or the "Brooks-Sumner Affair."

At the time the debate over slavery and abolition had been growing more and more heated in America for nearly 100 years. Even before the country declared its independence in July of 1776, Americans had seriously disagreed over slavery. As the nation entered the 1800s—and countries like England began prohibiting slavery and the slave trade—the issue became even more controversial. By the 1850s, violence over slavery and abolition had begun to break out in places like Kansas Territory.

As things grew increasingly contentious across the country, conversations began to break down in Washington. In congress, abolitionists and slavery-supporters delivered fiery speeches publicly shaming each other and attacking one another's character. So naturally it did not take long for things to turn violent among congressmen.

Senator Charles Sumner was a Republican abolitionist from Massachusetts. In a speech, he heavily criticized one of his colleagues—Senator Andrew Butler from South Carolina—for supporting slavery. After the speech, members of congress encouraged Butler's cousin, U.S. Rep. Preston Brooks, to avenge the attack—so that is what he did. On May 22, Congressman Brooks beat Sen. Sumner with a cane in the Senate chamber. Traumatic brain injuries from the attack forced Sen. Sumner to rest and recuperate for the next two and a half years.

After the attack, Rep. Brooks was convicted of assault and fined \$300, but he didn't serve jail time, and he was re-elected to the Senate that year. In 1858, one of Brooks' pro-slavery colleagues in the congress tried to choke abolitionist Congressman Galusha Grow for insulting him during an argument on the House floor. Newspapers in the north and the south took sides in these fights, painting congressmen as either martyrs or instigators, depending on which side of the debate the newspapers sided with.

The argument over slavery in Congress was partly about principles, partly about politics, and partly about pride. Some congressmen understood how evil slavery is, and they genuinely opposed it on principle. Many supported or opposed slavery because their constituents back home opposed or supported it. For them, it was a matter of politics. But some made the fight deeply personal. That's where pride—and violence—came into play.

Nearly 200 years later there are lessons we can learn that apply to us today—especially when it comes to issues like abortion: Divisions in our country aren't anything new. Some people stand on principle, but others are motivated by politics. And we're all susceptible to pride. At Family Council, we've always made it a goal to stand on principle. Now let me tell you a little more about how we have been trying to do that in Arkansas, and about how you can stand with us.



inside:

**The Lord Raises Up
a Standard Against
Evil in Arkansas**

**State Has Awarded
Nearly One Million
Dollars to Pregnancy
Centers in FY 2024**

**Lawsuit Filed to
Block Arkansas Law
Protecting Students
From CRT, Explicit
Sexual Material**

& MORE



Executive Director Jerry Cox

My Thoughts: The Lord Raises Up a Standard Against Evil in Arkansas

By Jerry Cox, Executive Director

Isaiah 59:19 tells us that when evil comes in like a flood, the Lord will raise up a standard against it. In February a couple of pro-life leaders in central Arkansas talked to us about feeling a strong conviction that we ought to pray against the abortion amendment vying for the 2024 ballot. As they discussed the idea, one of the members of our team summarized their idea by saying, “You mean you want to organize a campaign to pray the abortion amendment away?” With that, the 2024 Pray Away Campaign was born.

For the past 60 days or so, Arkansans have consistently prayed against the abortion amendment as part of this campaign. In April, one of the Pray Away Campaign organizers described

how each day God seemed to do something new in leading pro-lifers to pray against abortion. I firmly believe those prayers have made a difference in the fight against the Arkansas Abortion Amendment this year. On April 28 Family Council joined with churches across the state as part of a Day of Prayer for Arkansas. This was a special day set apart to pray for our state. I’m very pleased that we were able to be part of this initiative.

If you would like to know more about how you can join the Pray Away Campaign or other prayer initiatives in the state, give us a call at (501) 375-7000 or visit ARDayOfPrayer.com.

General Assembly Convenes for Budget Session, Considers \$2M Appropriation for Pro-Life Work in Arkansas Next Year

On April 10, the Arkansas Legislature convened for its 2024 budget session. The session lasts 30 days—so by the time this letter reaches you, things (hopefully) will be wrapping up at the capitol.

On April 11 Sen. John Payton (R – Wilburn) filed S.B. 64 providing \$2 million in state funding for pro-life pregnancy help organizations that promote maternal health and provide women with options besides abortion between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025. If passed, the measure would provide increased funding for organizations that help women and families.

In 2022 Family Council worked with the legislature and the governor to secure \$1 million for pregnancy centers. This funding provided grants to more than 20 pregnancy help organizations. Last year we worked with lawmakers to renew this funding. This grant money has gone to good organizations across the state that give women and families real assistance when faced with an unplanned pregnancy.

S.B. 64 would make improvements to the grant program. It would increase state funding from \$1 million per year to \$2 million. This would put Arkansas’ funding on par with other states.

The bill also clarifies that “pregnancy help organizations” include nonprofit organizations that promote infant and maternal wellness and reduce infant and maternal mortality by doing any of the following:

- Providing nutritional information and/or nutritional counseling;
- Providing prenatal vitamins;
- Providing a list of prenatal medical care options;
- Providing social, emotional, and/or material support;
- Providing referrals for WIC and community-based nutritional services, including but not limited to food banks, food pantries, and food distribution centers.

The measure includes language preventing state funds from going to abortionists and their affiliates. Now that abortion is prohibited in Arkansas except to save the life of the mother, we need to support women and families with unplanned pregnancies, and we need to promote infant and maternal wellness. This grant funding does that. If passed, it would provide women in Arkansas with actual, pro-life options and support—meaning they are less likely to travel out of state for abortion. And it helps fund pro-life organizations who are promoting infant and maternal wellness in Arkansas.

More than 50 pregnancy help organizations serve thousands of women in Arkansas. S.B. 64 would enable them to do even more in our state. **Look for more information about S.B. 64 and the status of the pregnancy center funding in our next update letter—or go to FamilyCouncil.org to see the latest.**



State Has Awarded Nearly One Million Dollars to Pregnancy Centers in FY 2024

This fiscal year, the State of Arkansas has awarded nearly one million dollars to pregnancy resource centers that support women and families with unplanned pregnancies. Act 622 of 2023 by Sen. Scott Flippo (R – Bull Shoals) and Rep. Lane Jean (R – Magnolia) authorized \$1 million in state-funded grants for crisis pregnancy centers, maternity homes, adoption agencies, and social services agencies that provide material support to women with unplanned pregnancies. This grant funding provides women and families with alternatives to abortion.

The measure directs the Department of Finance and Administration to distribute the state-funded grants to these pregnancy help organizations by June 30, 2024. To date, the State of Arkansas has successfully distributed \$972,961.07 to 26 pro-life organizations in Arkansas. That's virtually all of the funding. This money will have a tremendous, pro-life impact in Arkansas. We look forward to working with Arkansans to continue supporting pregnancy resource centers in the future.



Stephanie Nichols, Chief Legal Counsel and Director of Family Council's Arkansas Justice Institute

So-Called "Health Exception" in Arkansas Abortion Amendment Allows Barbaric Killing of Full-Term Children in Womb

By Stephanie Nichols, Chief Legal Counsel and Director of Family Council's Arkansas Justice Institute

Proponents of the "Arkansas Abortion Amendment" claim it is necessary to protect the health of women in Arkansas. The amendment permits unrestricted abortion in all 9 months of pregnancy when a physician thinks "continuation of a pregnancy will create a serious risk of substantial impairment of a major bodily function of a pregnant female." "Major bodily function" is then defined to include "functions of

the immune system...bladder, respiratory, [and] circulatory...functions"; among other things. However, all of these systems are typically impacted in a normal pregnancy, with some effects particularly pronounced in the third trimester.

Arkansans should note that the wording of the amendment does not draw any distinction between long-term and temporary impairments of bodily functions. There is also no requirement that the "serious risk of substantial impairment" be life-threatening. In other words, the "health exception" that allows unrestricted abortion in all nine months of pregnancy is big enough to drive a truck through.

Don't fall for the deception. Arkansas law already provides exceptions to its abortion prohibitions in cases of life-threatening medical emergencies and in cases of treatments for ectopic pregnancies or when a D&C is needed after a miscarriage. There is also a "catch-all" provision providing a defense to any physician who "provides medical treatment to a pregnant woman which results in the accidental or unintentional injury or death to the unborn child." In other words, there is no charge of abortion where a physician acts to provide medical treatment to benefit the pregnant woman without the goal of producing death for the unborn child.

And for pregnancies that are farther along, I encourage every Arkansan to think through a scenario we are all familiar with: A friend, acquaintance, or relative is pregnant, and a major health problem, like preeclampsia, means that the pregnancy should not continue because it could otherwise pose a risk to the mother's life. At this point, what is the solution? The solution is inducement of labor and delivery or a C-section—not abortion. With a post-viability baby, the baby and mother can both be cared for with the goal of both living and thriving. This is the reason we invest tremendous resources in NICU facilities in our state. There is no reason to kill a baby within the womb—particularly when delivery rather than abortion is possible.

Make no mistake—this abortion amendment would absolutely change who we are as a state. It may start with abortion, but it doesn't end there. Whether or not we value human life changes how we view each other, how we treat each other, and whether we are willing to stand in the gap and serve those in need and in desperate situations. The cul-

The "health exception" that allows unrestricted abortion in all nine months of pregnancy is big enough to drive a truck through.

ture of death also begins to infect medicine, and we begin to let lives slip away without adequate treatment. Or we begin to push assisted suicide as the solution to depression, homelessness, and economic problems—as Canada is now doing. We are better than this as a state and people. I hope every Arkansan makes the effort to become educated about the true impact and far-reaching consequences of adopting the Arkansas Abortion Amendment. Then, please share the truth with your friends and family members so that we can continue to be a state that values and protects life.

Hillary Clinton Endorses Arkansas Abortion Amendment

On Good Friday former presidential candidate Hillary Clinton endorsed a proposal to write abortion into the Arkansas Constitution. A group called Arkansans for Limited Government is working to place the Arkansas Abortion Amendment on the November ballot. The measure would write abortion into the state constitution, and it would prevent the Arkansas Legislature from restricting abortion during the first five months of pregnancy—allowing thousands of elective abortions every year and paving the way for taxpayer-funded abortions in Arkansas.

On March 29, Hillary Clinton issued statements on social media asking people to support the Arkansas Abortion Amendment. Clinton's statement said,

People everywhere deserve the ability to make deeply personal decisions about their health for themselves.

Today, you can help women in Arkansas exercise their reproductive rights by supporting the Arkansas Abortion Amendment.

Join me in standing with them.

Clinton's statements also linked people to a website for Arkansans for Limited Government where they could learn more about supporting the abortion amendment.

However, it's worth pointing out that across Arkansas oppo-

sition is growing against the abortion amendment. Campaigns that have organized against the amendment include:

- Arkansas Right to Life
- Family Council Action Committee
- Choose Life Arkansas, which is made up of pro-life leaders from across the state.
- NWA Coalition for Life, which includes pro-life leaders from the Northwest Arkansas area.
- The Arkansas Committee For Ethics Policy
- The Catholic Diocese of Little Rock
- Stronger Arkansas, which includes leaders from Gov. Sanders' administration
- Stop Abortion On Demand Amendment, which includes Arkansas legislators and other leaders

You can learn more about the campaign against the abortion amendment by visiting FamilyCouncilActionCommittee.com.

Hillary Clinton endorsed the Arkansas Abortion Amendment on March 29. Clinton was the 2016 Democratic nominee for President of the United States (File photo from 2009).



Assistant Director David Cox

Here's The One Thing That Most Voters Can Agree On

By David Cox, Assistant Director

There's one issue that the vast majority of Americans agree on. Can you guess what it is? Is it American exceptionalism? No. Is it the value of free speech and the freedom to assemble? Not quite. Maybe it's that every human being has innate value and dignity? Nope. The one conviction that cuts across party lines and unites both the Right and the Left is that our 2024 presidential candidates are too old to serve another four years in office.

In all fairness, voters have often expressed concerns over the age of their candidates. A nominee could be "too old"—like Ronald Reagan in 1984—or "too young"—like Bill Clinton in 1992. **But in April, National Review summarized the 2024 polling data this way:** "Earlier this year, an ABC news poll

found that an astounding 86 percent of Americans think Biden is too old to serve another term. For perspective, 81 percent of Americans have positive feelings about Thanksgiving, and 78 percent have positive feelings about Christmas and Mother's Day."

Let that sink in for a moment. There's more unity over this issue than over Christmas and Mother's Day. It isn't just President Biden's age either. The same ABC poll found 62% of Americans also believe Trump is too old to serve a second term.

To be clear, there are millions of my fellow Americans who genuinely support President Biden or President Trump, and I want to be respectful of those Americans. But statistically speaking, if you stand in front of a crowd and say, "Our presidential front-runners are too old to serve another term in office," about 60%–80% of the people in the crowd will agree with you. There's a sense among many people that neither of these men may have the physical strength, the mental clarity, the emotional capacity, or the basic longevity to faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States until January 20, 2029. **I heard one person sum up the situation by joking, "I feel like my candidates are about to go to prison or the nursing home."**

It's been said that in a democracy, people get the government they deserve. If most of us are dissatisfied with our options for president this November, we ought to ask: "Why are *these* the candidates we deserve?"

Lawsuit Filed to Block Arkansas Law Protecting Students From CRT, Explicit Sexual Material

A federal lawsuit filed on March 25 would block the State of Arkansas from enforcing a section of the 2023 LEARNS Act protecting public school students from Critical Race Theory and explicit sexual material at school. The LEARNS Act is a comprehensive education law enacted last year. The law deals with issues such as Critical Race Theory, teacher salaries, public school employment, early childhood care, and protecting elementary school children from inappropriate sexual material at school. It also provides a blueprint for implementing a voluntary school choice program that would make it possible for students to receive a publicly-funded education at a public or private school or at home.

The federal lawsuit specifically challenges Section 16 of the LEARNS Act, which does the following:

- Section 16 requires the Arkansas Secretary of Education to review all policies to be sure that indoctrination—including critical race theory—is prohibited and that no public school employee or public school student is required to attend training or orientation that is based on Critical Race Theory or other prohibited indoctrination.
- Section 16 requires each public school to implement a child sex abuse and human trafficking prevention program that is age appropriate and complies with Arkansas Department of Education standards.
- Section 16 prohibits sexual material in classroom instruction before fifth grade. This includes instruction regarding sexual intercourse, sexual reproduction, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

Under Section 16 of the LEARNS Act, sex education is prohibited in Kindergarten and early elementary school. In later grades, sex education must be conducted according to other state laws—including other Arkansas laws that prohibit explicit, “comprehensive” sex education. Altogether, Section 16 makes significant improvements to Arkansas sex education laws.

The lawsuit focuses on the LEARNS Act’s effect on AP African American Studies at Central High School in Little Rock. However, the lawsuit asks the federal court to declare Section 16 of the LEARNS Act unconstitutional and block the State of Arkansas from enforcing it. If a federal court blocked all of Section 16 as the lawsuit requests, that presumably would include the parts of the law protecting public school students from explicit sexual material in the classroom.

One of the reasons Family Council supported the 2023 LEARNS Act was that the law protected students from inappropriate material in the classroom. Passing those protections was a huge success. This lawsuit would be a serious step backward.

John Stonestreet is president of the Colson Center for Christian Worldview.



TikTok and Teens

By John Stonestreet and Jared Hayden, Colson Center for Christian Worldview

Congress is considering banning the Chinese government-controlled social media platform TikTok. For some, this ban is about national security. For others, it’s about the safety and sanity of our children.

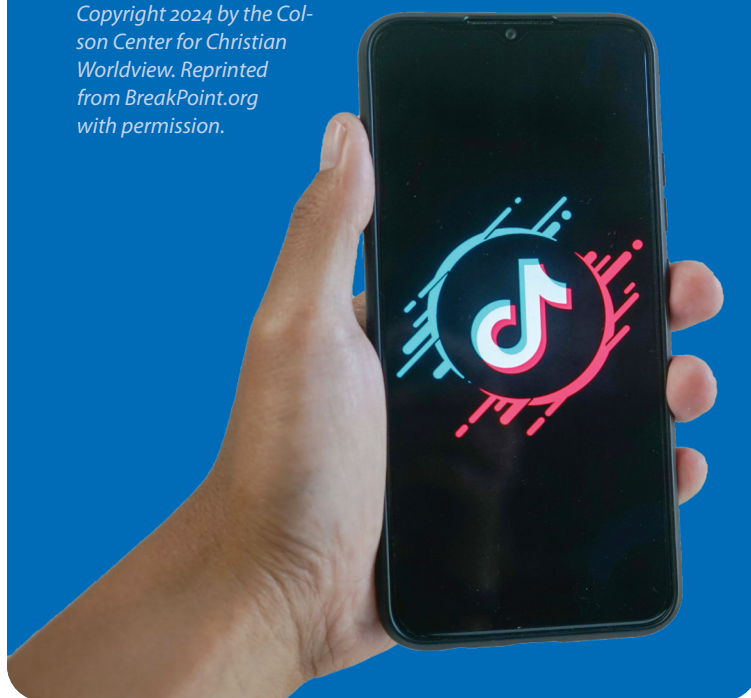
Today, nearly half of all teens use social media “almost constantly.” Sixty-three percent of them use TikTok, making it the second most used social media platform behind YouTube.

Some claim that banning TikTok could lead to catastrophic consequences for teens’ mental health. For many teens, according to one Twitter user, “TikTok is their identity.” In other words, they’re addicted, so losing it could lead to mental distress.

Such an abrupt shift may certainly cause distress, but social media has long fueled anxiety and depression. As Jean Twenge has noted, teens who spend more time behind screens are at a higher risk for depression.

Thankfully, teens are more than their online personas, likes, follows, or friends. They are embodied persons whose happiness and wholeness depend on living in the real world. Any effort to help them do that is a step in the right direction.

Copyright 2024 by the Colson Center for Christian Worldview. Reprinted from BreakPoint.org with permission.



Family Council Supports Arkansas Department of Education Rules Protecting Student Privacy

In April the Arkansas Department of Education accepted public comments on new rules protecting the physical privacy of public school students. Last year Gov. Sanders signed Act 317 protecting privacy in public school locker rooms, showers, restrooms, changing areas, and similar facilities. The law requires public schools to designate

Boys and girls deserve privacy when they shower, sleep, change clothes, or use the restroom at school or on a school trip.

these facilities for “male” or “female” use. It also addresses sleeping accommodations for students on overnight school trips—something that has been a serious problem for students in other states.

The Department of Education’s rules act as executive policies to help ensure Arkansas’ public schools are properly following Act 317. As Family Council told the Department

of Education in April, boys and girls deserve privacy when they shower, sleep, change clothes, or use the restroom at school or on a school trip. These state rules written in accordance with Act 317 will protect the physical privacy and safety of public school students. That’s why we fully support the rules and look forward to their implementation.



Deputy Solicitor General Asks Federal Court to Let Arkansas Protect Kids From Sex-Change Procedures

On April 11 the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals in St. Louis heard oral arguments in a lawsuit over whether or not Arkansas can protect children from sex-change procedures. The arguments took place at an en banc hearing of all the judges on the appeals court.

In 2021, lawmakers in Arkansas overwhelmingly passed the Save Adolescents From Experimentation (SAFE) Act. The SAFE Act is a good law that prevents doctors in Arkansas from performing sex-change surgeries on children or giving them puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones. Unfortunately, the SAFE Act has been tied up in court for more than two years, and a federal judge in Little Rock has blocked the state from enforcing the law. However, federal appeals courts have let similar laws go into effect in Tennessee, Kentucky, and Alabama.

During oral arguments, Arkansas Deputy Solicitor General Dylan Jacobs told the court:

This case is about whether the constitution compels states to allow life-altering gender transition procedures to be performed on minors. Two courts of appeals [the Sixth and Eleventh Circuit Courts] analyzing the same claims at issue here have held that it does not... Arkansas’ law does not discriminate based on sex, it does not discriminate based on

transgender status, and it does not run afoul of any parental rights.

Sex-change surgeries and procedures can leave children sterilized and scarred for life. Researchers do not know all the long term effects these procedures can have on children, but a growing body of scientific evidence shows children should not be subjected to sex-change procedures, puberty blockers, and cross-sex hormones. Files leaked

The SAFE Act is a good law that prevents doctors in Arkansas from performing sex-change surgeries on children or giving them puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones.

from the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) organization reveal that medical professionals performing gender-transitions on kids have been fully aware that these procedures can lead to lasting regret and painful complications. The files show some of these complications—like cancerous liver tumors—may even be life-threatening. **The SAFE Act is good legislation that protects children. We believe our federal courts will recognize that fact and uphold this law as constitutional.**

Marijuana Industry Hiring Canvassers for Petition Drive in Arkansas

In March and April, marijuana supporters began posting job listings for paid petition canvassers to circulate the

The measure effectively legalizes recreational marijuana by drastically expanding Arkansas' existing medical marijuana amendment.

Arkansas Medical Marijuana Amendment of 2024. The amendment legalizes marijuana in Arkansas by further enshrining it into the state constitution. The measure effectively legalizes recreational marijuana by drastically

expanding Arkansas' existing medical marijuana amendment. It would let current marijuana growers and sellers have a monopoly over Arkansas' future marijuana industry, and it would let people grow and use marijuana at home. Local communities would not be able to regulate marijuana, and the Arkansas Legislature would be unable to change the amendment. Family Council has found information on social media indicating marijuana petition canvassers are collecting signatures at marijuana dispensaries in Arkansas. Supporters of the measure say they want to collect 95,000 signatures from registered voters by July 5, 2024, to qualify for the 2024 General Election ballot.

Marijuana Legalization Tied to Crime, National Security Concerns in Other States

Marijuana legalization is causing serious concerns when it comes to crime and national security in other states. When California, Oregon, Colorado, and others began legalizing marijuana, many people believed it would eliminate illicit marijuana and stop the black market. However, that simply has not been the case.

For example, in March authorities in Oklahoma seized millions of dollars worth of illegal marijuana at an illicit grow site—despite the state having very lax marijuana. Law enforcement described it as a problem “that plagues all of Oklahoma.” The illegal grow site reportedly was owned by a corporation out of Arkansas. According to Tulsa’s KJRH News, the “current property owner used the former property owner’s name to get a fraudulent license to grow marijuana.”

Since legalization, Oregon has been inundated with illegal marijuana grown and processed on an “industrial-scale.” In

2022 authorities in Oregon told lawmakers that human trafficking is a major problem tied to the state’s illegal marijuana industry. California’s Department of Cannabis Control seized more than \$312 million in illegal marijuana last year—again, despite the state permitting marijuana.

These illegal marijuana operations have actually raised national security concerns. The Associated Press has reported that foreign drug cartels have moved illegal marijuana operations into Oregon. CBN News reported in October that Chinese investors with “suitcases full of cash” are illegally buying U.S. farmland in Oklahoma to grow black market marijuana. CBS News reported last year how Chinese investment is driving illegal marijuana production in Oklahoma and elsewhere across the country. **Arkansas Congressman Rick Crawford joined a letter to U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland earlier this year expressing concern “regarding Chinese nationals and organized crime cultivating marijuana on United States farmland.”** The letter revealed these Chinese nationals may even have connections to foreign government interests like the Chinese Communist Party.

All of this comes as a proposed marijuana amendment is vying for the 2024 ballot in Arkansas. Arkansans for Patient Access—a group backed by members of the marijuana industry—received certification in February to collect petition signatures to place a marijuana amendment on the November ballot. The group has until July 5 to gather nearly 91,000 signatures from registered voters. These reports raise serious questions about what could happen to Arkansas if the state goes the same route as California, Oklahoma, Oregon, and others that have legalized marijuana.

You can learn more about marijuana and other issues affecting Arkansas by visiting FamilyCouncil.org.



We Need Your Help

We are nearly halfway through the year, and there is no shortage of good work to do right now. This past spring Family Council distributed thousands of voter's guides ahead of the March primaries. We plan to do the same thing this fall ahead of the November General Election. We're also working to support pregnancy resource centers in Arkansas, oppose abortion, fight marijuana, equip churches and ministers, and help Arkansans make their voices heard. We can't do this without you. That's why I hope you will make a generous, tax-deductible donation today, if you are able. Your support will help us take a stand for traditional Christian values in Arkansas. **Please remember to pray for me and my team as well, and if you are ever in downtown Little Rock, give us a call and stop by the office. We would welcome the opportunity to visit with you.**

Sincerely,



Jerry Cox, President

Thank you!!

P.S. Thank you for your friendship and support! We never take it for granted that you stand with us. We wouldn't be here without friends like you. Please let me know if there is ever anything we can do for you and your family.



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.
