



# Arkansas CITIZEN

MAY 2025



*Left: In 2019, Hettie Lue Brooks attended Pastors' Day at the Capitol, sponsored by Family Council.*

## **Dear Friends,**

On Wednesday, April 2, at 7:30 p.m. I received a text message. It read, "Just wanted to let you know that Hettie went to be with Jesus about 5 o'clock this afternoon."

In silence, I handed my wife, Doris, my phone. As she read the text out loud, the realization that it was true swept over me and my eyes filled with tears. My first thoughts were, "Our tears are for us, not for Hettie."

Most people who will read this letter don't know who Hettie Lue Brooks is, and there aren't enough words for me to tell her story that lasted almost 95 years. From their homes in Hot Springs, she and her husband, Don, their children, and their grandchildren have done more to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ and make disciples than any family I have ever known. Brookhill summer camp, Christian Ministries Church, a private Christian academy, their ministry in Belize, Hettie's conferences for women, and the Hot Springs Women of Prayer are just a few that come to mind. There are many more!

Not only was Hettie a driving force in launching these and other ministries, she was a driving force in sustaining them—some for over 60 years. I am reminded of the passage in Psalms that refers to the tree that is planted by the water that bears fruit in season. Hettie had lots of seasons, and they all produced good fruit. Imagine the thousands of children who came to Christ at Brookhill summer camp alone. Our four sons each went to Brookhill, and two worked at the camp. Hettie made a lasting impact on them. In fact, you couldn't meet Hettie and not be changed. My oldest son, David, said Hettie is the only person he has ever known who could correct you and make you feel good about it. Hettie made everyone around her better—more like Jesus.

For forty years, Hettie led a city-wide women's prayer group called Hot Springs Women of Prayer. That's where I take my staff when we really want to be prayed for. Almost every time my staff and I have attended that prayer meeting Hettie would tell the story of her vision forty years ago that one day, there would be a Christ-centered organization that would go to the State Capitol and work in the political arena for the Christian worldview. I have often wondered if Family Council would even exist if God had not impressed on people like Hettie to pray. When Hettie and her prayer warriors laid hands on my team and me and prayed for us this past January, I didn't know it would be the last time. It won't be the same without her.

Put simply, Hettie Lue Brooks was my hero. On my office wall is a 16" x 20" framed photograph taken at the State Capitol on Pastors' Day. About 200 church leaders assembled on the steps for the picture. At the front of that photograph is my staff and me, and right there beside me is Hettie with a huge smile on her face.

Even though Hettie has moved on up to Heaven, I can still hear her voice of encouragement. I can still see her bright smile. I can still sense the enthusiasm we all felt every time she was around. Years ago, when Mike Huckabee was governor, Hettie called him. They had been friends for years. The governor immediately took her call. Her encouraging words gave Mike such a spiritual lift that a staff member overheard Governor Huckabee say, "Hettie, you can call me anytime," and I'm sure she did. But not only did she have a direct line to the Governor, I believe she had a direct line to God. I can only imagine how she celebrated when she arrived in Heaven. And I'm still reminded that our tears are for us—not for her.



## **inside:**

Here are Some of  
Family Council's  
Greatest Hits from the  
2025 Legislative Session

At the Eleventh Hours,  
Lawmakers Pass Fetal  
Education Legislation

& MORE



Executive Director Jerry Cox

## Here are Some of Family Council's Greatest Hits from the 2025 Legislative Session

By Jerry Cox, Executive Director

A year ago, Family Council's team began meeting to discuss what we wanted to accomplish during the 2025 legislative session. When lawmakers began pre-filing legislation last November, we were ready to begin promoting good laws, opposing bad ones, and offering laws of our own.

**Looking back, I can honestly say that 2025 was a great legislative session, and I am proud of everything that Family Council accomplished.**

No one on our lobby team serves in the legislature, so none of us gets to vote on laws. Arkansas' legislators deserve credit for passing good bills and voting against bad ones. But Family Council still helps secure passage of good laws by sending one of the best teams of lobbyists in the nation to the Arkansas Capitol and by informing and equipping everyday voters across the state to make their voices heard. **You helped us accomplish so much at the capitol this year that it's hard to know where to begin, but here are a few of Family Council's greatest hits from the 2025 legislative session.**

### Helping Lawmakers Pass One of the Best Pro-Life Laws in the Nation.

In 2019, Arkansas passed Act 180 saying that if the U.S. Supreme Court ever reversed *Roe v. Wade*, abortion in Arkansas would be prohibited except to save the life of the mother in a medical emergency. On June 24, 2022, the court overturned *Roe*, and within hours Arkansas' attorney general had signed an order saying Act 180 was in full effect. Since then, two things have become clear: First, even though Arkansas' abortion law is very well written, many doctors and hospitals do not fully understand it or are afraid they could be prosecuted under it for providing certain medical treatments to a pregnant woman. And second, some of the language in the 2019 law needed to be tightened to be sure that an abortionist could not somehow justify elective abortions.

In January, Family Council, Arkansas Right to Life, pro-life lawmakers, and pro-life attorneys from around the nation came together to discuss how to fix this problem. After several weeks of planning and discussion, we eventually came up with H.B. 1610 by Rep. Robin Lundstrum and Sen. Jimmy Hickey. This good bill clarifies the definition of "medical emergency" in Arkansas' abortion law. It closes possible loopholes in the law by saying that a doctor can't perform an abortion if there are other ways to save the

mother's life. It also clarifies the legal protections for doctors who treat pregnant women—that way an E.R. doctor or nurse doesn't have to worry about being prosecuted if an unborn child accidentally dies while a woman is receiving emergency medical treatment.

**It took months of planning, discussion, and work, but H.B. 1610 is one of the most important pro-life laws Arkansas has ever enacted, and it's one of the best in the nation.** It passed with overwhelming support at the Arkansas Legislature, and Gov. Sanders has signed it into law as Act 387 of 2025. Family Council deeply appreciates Rep. Lundstrum, Sen. Hickey, our friends at Arkansas Right to Life, National Right to Life, the Alliance Defending Freedom, Americans United for Life, and various pregnancy resource centers around the state for making this good law possible. We especially want to recognize Senate Health Committee Chair Missy Irvin who played a key role in the passage of this good law. This good law that clarifies Arkansas' abortion law negates most of the false claims made by supporters of last year's proposed amendment to enshrine abortion in our state constitution.

### Standing Up for Home Schoolers.

One of our top priorities for this year was making sure no legislation was passed that would hurt home schooling in Arkansas. Since 2020, home schooling has grown to more than 30,000 students statewide, and more than 10,000 have applied for Education Freedom Account funding to help pay for their education under the LEARNS Act. Our state laws should not restrict home schoolers' freedoms, and home schoolers who want to take advantage of the Education Freedom Accounts should not be held to a different standard than private school students. We were able to work with our friends to discourage any laws that hurt home schoolers. S.B. 625 by Sen. Breanne Davis and Rep. Keith Brooks amended the LEARNS Act and placed certain limits on EFA spending. **EFA money is supposed to help families pay for a good education for their children, but some providers have used the funding as an excuse to raise their prices. That hurts everyone—even families who are not participating in the Education Freedom Accounts.**

S.B. 625 reduces EFA vendor fees, and it places some spending restrictions on extracurricular activities, PE courses, fine arts, music, STEM, and field trips. These are areas where home schoolers have experienced the most price increases in the past year. Cutting vendor fees and capping certain costs will encourage educational providers to keep

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Above: Our good friend, Gene Mills (left), from Louisiana Family Forum came to Little Rock in March to testify in committee about the harm Louisiana has suffered as a result of drugs made from industrial hemp.



Above: Jerry Cox testifies in support of H.B. 1713 to improve Arkansas' ballot initiative process in the House State Agencies Committee on March 12.

## Here are Some of Family Council's Greatest Hits (continued)

their prices down. We were able to work with our friends at the Arkansas Department of Education and the governor's office to amend S.B. 625 to be sure it restricts fees without placing any undue burdens on home schoolers.

We were also able to work with Sen. Dan Sullivan and Rep. Stephen Meeks to secure passage of S.B. 547 to eliminate a provision in state law that says home schoolers must live within 25 miles of a private school in order to participate in extracurricular activities at that school. S.B. 547 will help further expand extracurricular and interscholastic opportunities for home schooled students. The bill did not receive a lot of attention, but that's OK, because it's still a good law that is going to help home school families. We appreciate Sen. Sullivan, Rep. Meeks, and our friends in the legislature working with us on this good measure.

### Defeating Recreational Marijuana and Kratom.

This year lawmakers filed several bills legalizing forms of recreational marijuana in Arkansas. Marijuana and other illicit drugs are a multibillion dollar industry, and we're seeing what happens when an industry like that makes campaign contributions, hires lobbyists, and brings its power and influence to bear on lawmakers. H.B. 1722 by Rep. Jeremiah Moore and S.B. 455 by Sen. Joshua Bryant would have legalized drugs like THC made from industrial hemp. H.B. 1578 by Rep. Aaron Pilkington would have legalized intoxicating drinks containing THC made from industrial hemp. And S.B. 534 by Sen. Greg Leding would have legalized the drug kratom. These bad bills would have legalized drugs that are harmful and dangerous. Fortunately, we were able to work with our friends in the legislature, the Arkansas Attorney General's office, the Arkansas Department of Health, the Arkansas Faith and Ethics Council, and others to defeat these bad measures. We were also able to support S.B. 533, a good bill by Sen. Tyler Dees and Rep. Jimmy Gazaway that helps prohibit drugs made from hemp. More than ever, il-

licit drugs are a scourge on our communities. Arkansans must work together to protect our families.

### Securing \$2 Million in Funding for Charities that Help Women with Unplanned Pregnancies.

With the passage of H.B. 1202, Arkansas earmarked another \$2 million for grants to pregnancy help organizations in 2025 and 2026. The grant money goes to pregnancy resource centers, adoption agencies, and similar charities that help women with unplanned pregnancies. The grant money also can be used to promote maternal and infant wellness in Arkansas. Since 2022, Family Council has worked closely with the governor, the legislature, and pro-life groups to make this funding available year after year. One of the best things Arkansas can do to help women and unborn children is to support pregnancy resource centers. We appreciate Rep. Lane Jean (R – Magnolia) and the members of the Joint Budget Committee who worked with us to pass this good legislation.

### Providing Accountability and Transparency to the Initiative Process.

Arkansas' ballot initiative process has become the opposite of what it was intended to be. Instead of giving people a way to work together to make their own laws, it has become a tool that wealthy corporations and liberal activists can misuse and abuse. Ballot measures are often long, confusing, misleading, or poorly written, and special-interest groups hire canvassers to aggressively collect signatures to place measures on the ballot. This year Family Council helped secure passage of nine good laws that provide better transparency and accountability to the ballot initiative process. One law in particular—Act 602 by Rep. Ryan Rose and Sen. Mark Johnson—requires ballot measure summaries to be written clearly at or below an eighth grade level. That law will do a lot to stop special interests from trying to trick people into voting for their measures.

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*Above: Dr. Ronnie Floyd speaks to ministers and elected officials at Pastors' Day at the Capitol 2025. Family Council sponsored this outstanding event through its Church Ambassador Network initiative.*



*Above: On February 26, home schoolers from across the state gathered at the capitol to hear from lawmakers and watch the legislative process in action.*

## Here are Some of Family Council's Greatest Hits *(continued)*

### Bringing Ministers and Church Leaders to the Capitol.

On March 6, ministers and church leaders from across Arkansas gathered for Pastors' Day at the Capitol. Family Council and its Church Ambassador Network initiative sponsored this excellent event. This year we got to hear from Dr. Ronnie Floyd as well as different ministers and elected officials. Pastors' Day at the Capitol gives church leaders an opportunity to worship in the capitol rotunda and pray over the state's policymakers—and it's one of the best things we do all year. Plenty of groups and organizations come to the capitol each week, but none of them gather for prayer and worship like we do. We appreciate everyone who took time to join us for this special event.

### Supporting Good Legislation by Our Friends.

Family Council has many friends in the Arkansas Legislature and at different organizations who want to pass good laws, and we are always happy to help them where we can. Our friends and Arkansas Right to Life worked with Rep. Jimmy Gazaway to write and pass H.B. 1551, a good law that makes it a crime to secretly give abortion drugs to a pregnant woman without her knowledge or consent. Rep. Mary Bentley and Sen. Clint Penzo drafted H.B. 1180, the Baby Olivia Act, to make it possible for public school students to see a high-definition ultrasound video of an unborn child and learn about fetal development. After filing H.B. 1180, Rep. Bentley asked if we would support it, and we told her we would be happy to. Erin Hogan on our team testified for H.B. 1180 in the Senate Education Committee. After the Senate Education Committee rejected H.B. 1180, Sen. Breanne Davis filed S.B. 450 as an alternative fetal education bill. We were glad to join with Rep. Bentley and Sen. Penzo to support that good bill as well.

### Hosting Home School Day at the Capitol 2025.

On February 26, more than a thousand home schoolers, pol-

icymakers, and elected officials gathered for Home School Day at the Capitol. Home schoolers heard from Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders, Lt. Governor Leslie Rutledge, Attorney General Tim Griffin, Secretary of State Cole Jester, State Auditor Dennis Milligan, State Treasurer John Thurston, State Land Commissioner Tommy Land, and others. Rep. Cameron Cooper presented a special resolution in the Arkansas House of Representatives recognizing and honoring home schooling across the state. Home School Day at the Capitol gives home school families the opportunity to gather with one another, meet legislators, watch committee meetings, and tour the capitol. We want to thank everyone who helped make this event so successful.

### Strengthening Arkansas' Protections for Religious Freedom and Rights of Conscience.

This year Family Council worked with our friends in the state legislature to pass two really good laws upholding religious freedom and safeguarding medical rights of conscience. H.B. 1615 by Rep. Robin Lundstrum and Sen. Gary Stubblefield will ensure that religious organizations and religious individuals are not penalized for living out their deeply held religious convictions. Over the years, wedding venues, bakeries, photography studios, florist shops, and others have been dragged into court simply because their owners wanted to operate according to their deeply held convictions. Nobody should be forced to choose between their religious convictions and their livelihood. H.B. 1615 will help prevent the government from burdening the free exercise of religion in Arkansas.

And S.B. 444 by Sen. Kim Hammer and Rep. Lee Johnson strengthens the healthcare workers' rights of conscience law Arkansas passed in 2021. Among other things, this good bill adds whistleblower protections for healthcare

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## Here are Some of Family Council's Greatest Hits *(continued)*

workers who learn about unethical behavior, and it helps protect all medical professionals from having their rights of conscience violated.

### Passing a First-of-Its-Kind Law to Affirm Religious Liberty at Public Schools.

Family Council worked closely with Sen. Mark Johnson and Rep. Alyssa Brown to pass one of the most unique religious freedom laws in America. Act 400 of 2025, the Religious Rights at Public School Act, affirms public school students' and teachers' religious liberties at school. **Right now, Arkansas' public school teachers and students have a lot of religious freedom at school, but the laws, amendments, and court rulings protecting their rights are spread out across state and federal law, constitutional amendments, and court rulings.** Act 400 does not create any new rights, but lists most of those rights and liberties in one place, and it requires public schools to give that list to students and teachers every year. The school administrators like this law, because it helps answer a lot of questions people have about religious liberties at school, and we like it, because it sends a clear message to anyone who thinks religious freedom ends at the schoolhouse door. We've heard from policymakers in other states who are interested in passing their own version of Act 400. Maybe this good law will help start a nationwide trend of affirming religious rights at school.

### Stopping Bad Abortion Laws.

This year a few bills were filed to erode or erase Arkansas' pro-life laws. H.B. 1011 by Rep. Andrew Collins would have repealed Arkansas' laws against abortion, and it would have legalized abortion throughout the state. Fortunately, this bad bill never came up for a vote. H.B. 1880 by Rep. Ashley Hudson would have created broad health exceptions for abortion through all nine months of pregnancy, and it would have legalized abortion in cases of rape or incest or when a baby is at risk of certain fetal abnormalities. In other states, courts have used health exceptions like the ones in H.B. 1880 to effectively allow elective abortion through all

nine months of pregnancy. This bad bill came up for a vote toward the end of the session, but the House Public Health Committee defeated it. We were pleased to work with our friends in the Arkansas Legislature and at Arkansas Right to Life to stop these bad abortion bills.

### Opposing Internet Gambling.

There is evidence that Arkansas has a serious gambling problem. On average, people across the state wager more than \$1 million every day through sports betting alone. During March Madness a few weeks ago, that figure spiked to more than \$2 million a day. Part of the problem with sports betting is that people can gamble on it from anywhere in the state using their smart phones. All of that underscores just how bad internet gambling is. Last year Saracen Casino in Pine Bluff began pushing for Arkansas to expand internet gambling to let people bet on slots and table games via smart phone apps as well. We expected them to work with lawmakers to propose a bad internet gambling bill this year—which they did. H.B. 1861 by Rep. Matt Duffield and Sen. Jamie Scott would have let casinos in Arkansas conduct internet gambling. The bill was deceptively written and promoted as a way to crack down on illegal internet gambling apps and websites run by gamblers in other states or other countries. In reality, H.B. 1861 would have given Saracen, Oaklawn, and Southland casinos a legal monopoly over internet gambling in Arkansas. Once lawmakers understood how bad the bill was, it lost a lot of support at the legislature. We were able to spread the word about this bill to our friends around the state and encourage them to ask their legislators to oppose it. Ultimately, lawmakers referred the bill to interim study, which means the legislature may continue to discuss H.B. 1861 and internet gambling between now and the next regular legislative session, but the lawmakers will not vote on it. We appreciate the Arkansas Faith and Ethics Council and all of our other friends who worked together to oppose this bad bill.

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From Left: Family Council Staff Attorney Stephanie Nichols, Rep. Robin Lundstrum, and First Liberty Senior Counsel Stephanie Taub discuss H.B. 1615 with members of the House Judiciary Committee during a meeting on Tuesday, April 1, 2025.



Above: Family Council Staff Attorney Stephanie Nichols (left) and Rep. Alyssa Brown (right) present the Religious Rights at Public School Act to lawmakers on March 18.

## Here are Some of Family Council's Greatest Hits (continued)

### Protecting Physical Privacy and Safety in Arkansas.

In the final days of the session, we were able to work with our friends in the legislature and our supporters across Arkansas to secure passage of S.B. 486. This good law by Sen. Blake Johnson and Rep. Mary Bentley protects the physical privacy and safety of Arkansans in showers, locker rooms, changing rooms, restrooms, and sleeping quarters in government buildings and in state and local jails. The law also applies to changing rooms, restrooms, and sleeping quarters in shelters for victims of domestic violence. S.B. 486 received a lot of opposition from transgender activists who came to the capitol to testify against it. Fortunately, Arkansas' lawmakers stood strong and voted to pass this good law.

### Educating and Equipping Voters at the Capitol, Online, and Across Arkansas.

Family Council's network has grown tremendously over the past two years. During the legislative session, we commu-

nicated with an estimated 10,000–11,000 people a week, on average, through our website, our daily and weekly email alerts, and our videos and social media content. Letters like this one reached more than 7,000 families and churches every single month. All of that communication came together for one purpose: To educate Arkansans and equip them to make a difference in our state—and it worked. Much of the time, conservatives are a “silent majority” when it comes to social and moral issues at the capitol. Part of our job is to help that majority not be so silent. One senator told us, “When other groups ask people to contact me, I get messages on my answering machine at work or at home. When Family Council asks people to contact me, I get text messages on my cell phone. And that's OK. I like hearing from my constituents.” **Our team was glad to get to work so much to educate, equip, and mobilize Arkansans to make their voices heard during this legislative session.**



Assistant Director David Cox

## Policy Points: At the Eleventh Hours, Lawmakers Pass Fetal Education Legislation

By David Cox, Assistant Director

On the final day of the 2025 legislative session, the Arkansas Senate delivered S.B. 450 to Governor Sanders to be signed into law. This good measure by Sen. Breanne Davis and Rep. Kendra Moore makes it possible for public school students to see a recording of a high-definition ultrasound video and learn important facts about

how unborn children develop in the womb. Arkansas is the fifth state in the nation to pass a fetal education law like this one, but the road to the governor's desk was not simple.

On January 21, Rep. Mary Bentley and Sen. Clint Penzo filed H.B. 1180, also known as “The Baby Olivia Act.” This good bill would have required public schools to show students a high-definition ultrasound video of an unborn child and an animated video called “Meet Baby Olivia” produced by the pro-life group Live Action. The “Meet Baby Olivia” video is designed to show important stages of fetal development from conception until birth. After she filed H.B. 1180, Rep. Bentley asked Erin Hogan on our team if Family Council would be willing to support the bill. We told her we liked the idea, and we offered Rep. Bentley suggestions on minor amendments to the bill that would make sure it did not get complicated by Arkansas' sex education laws. After she adjusted it, we were happy to help support this good bill.

**The Baby Olivia Act sailed through the Arkansas House of Representatives with overwhelming support, but it**

**hit an unexpected roadblock in the Senate Education Committee.** The bill narrowly avoided a “Do Not Pass” motion in February—which would have effectively killed the bill in that committee. Rep. Bentley and Sen. Penzo amended the bill to try to address the committee's concerns, and they presented it again a short time later. Arkansas Surgeon General Dr. Kay Chandler testified in support of the bill, as did a number of other pro-life people. The only opponents to the Baby Olivia Act were liberal and pro-abortion groups. At the second hearing, the Senate Education Committee voted on the bill, but it failed to pass. In March, Sen. Penzo made a motion from the senate floor to extract H.B. 1180 from committee and let the senate vote on the measure. It is very rare for the senate to extract a bill from committee like that, and after a lot of discussion, the motion failed—which meant the Baby Olivia Act had effectively failed as well.

While much of this was going on, one of the Senate Education Committee members—Sen. Breanne Davis—filed fetal education bill S.B. 450 along with Committee Chair Sen. Jane English, Rep. Kendra Moore, and a few other lawmakers. S.B. 450 requires the Department of Education to develop curriculum standards for schools to show an ultrasound video and provide fetal development education to students. It easily passed in the Senate Education Committee and the Arkansas Senate.

Around that same time, Rep. Bentley and Sen. Penzo filed H.B. 1946—a bill that was similar to the Baby Olivia Act, but did not name Live Action or the “Meet Baby Olivia” video in

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## Policy Points: At the Eleventh Hours, Lawmakers Pass Fetal Education Legislation *(continued)*

the bill. H.B. 1946 again sailed through the House of Representatives, but it was defeated in the Senate Education Committee on April 9. Sen. Penzo made a motion to extract H.B. 1946 from committee so the Arkansas Senate could vote on it, but the motion failed—which meant H.B. 1946 had effectively failed as well.

On April 15, the Arkansas House of Representatives passed S.B. 450 by Sen. Davis. The following morning, the bill was delivered to the governor for her to sign into law—just hours before legislators finished the session. **To be clear,**

**S.B. 450 is a good law that Family Council fully supports, and Sen. Penzo and Rep. Bentley both voted for it along with most of their colleagues. Unfortunately, the political maneuvering around these measures and the way the Senate Education Committee rejected two good House bills in favor of a Senate bill frustrated a lot of folks at the end of the session.** But the Arkansas Legislature passed a good law that will help teach public school students that unborn children are living human beings. That is something voters can be proud of.



*Above: Rep. Bentley presents H.B. 1180, the Baby Olivia Act, in the House Public Health Committee on February 4.*



*Above: Family Council staff member Erin Hogan testifies in support of H.B. 1180, the Baby Olivia Act, by Rep. Bentley in the Senate Education Committee on February 10. The bill narrowly avoided a “Do Not Pass” during this meeting.*



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

### A Victory for Protecting the Innocence of Children and the Safety of Women and Girls

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

There has been a movement in recent years to call men who would rather be women “trans women.” If you don't refer to these men as women, you are regarded as “bigoted” and “transphobic.” The threat of being labeled has kept many people silent about what we all know is biological reality: Men cannot become women, and women cannot become men.

None of us can change our DNA. No surgery and no amount of prescription hormones will do it. You can fight against your biological reality, but it will be a lifelong fight with severe health consequences. While adults in our country are free to wage war against their biological sex, that decision should not come at the cost of the privacy and protection of women or young, innocent children.

The debate on this issue played out in the Capitol in recent weeks throughout consideration of S.B. 486. This bill required governmental entities to take reasonable steps to designate multi-occupancy restrooms, locker rooms, and sleeping quarters for use according to biological sex.

Men in dresses showed up in the Capitol and asserted their right to use the ladies' restroom. Some female lawmakers and other women working at the Capitol mentioned that they avoided entering the restrooms while these men were in them, thus pushing biological women out of their own private spaces.

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## A Victory for Protecting the Innocence of Children and the Safety of Women and Girls *(continued)*

After I testified for the bill, a man in a dress approached me in an intimidating manner while I was still at the legislative table. He called into question some of the information I testified about and asked me my name. The look in his eyes was brazen, and I could not believe that this man believed he had a right to be in private spaces for women and young girls, including those my daughters use.

There is a power differential between men and women, and that power differential means increased vulnerability for women and girls. Before the passage of S.B. 486, Arkansas law had a major loophole on this issue that needed to be closed: A biological male could enter a space for females, such as a swimming pool dressing area, and undress and expose himself to women or girls of any age. There was no legal remedy unless you could prove that the male changed, showered, and so on with criminal intent. That is a hard bar to get over, because it is easy enough to just claim a female gender identity. And once a young girl is violated by exposure of a man in her own private spaces, the damage is done.

I'm glad that the Arkansas Legislature took action to safeguard women and girls and show them they are worth protecting. I am grateful for brave legislators like the sponsors for S.B. 486, Rep. Mary Bentley and Sen. Blake Johnson, and Reps. Cindy Crawford and Karilyn Brown, who boldly spoke in favor of the bill. And I'm proud of our state as a whole, which is now a leader on this issue for the nation.

## Thank You For Helping Us Have a Successful Legislative Session. Please Help Us Make the Rest of 2025 Just as Successful.

**We just wrapped up one of the best legislative sessions in Family Council's history, and we couldn't have done it without you!** When I look back at the goals we set for this year and everything we accomplished between January 13 and April 16, I can honestly say that we were successful. Many years ago a Little Rock businessman described Family Council as a "high leverage" organization—meaning we could do a lot with relatively little. He appreciated that about us. Thanks to you and friends like you all over the state, we were able to multiply your support to get a lot done at the capitol. As I look ahead to the rest of the year, I can already see other goals and challenges on the horizon.

Later this summer we expect pro-life leaders to begin advising pro-life states like Arkansas on new ways we might stop abortion drugs from being shipped illegally into our communities. Pro-lifers are already thinking ahead about how to fight any possible abortion amendments in 2026. A few bills we worked on were referred to Interim Study—which means lawmakers will meet to discuss them between now and the next legislative session, but they won't vote on the bills. We plan to be part of those discussions. Our Church Ambassador Network made great progress during the session helping ministers build relationships with elected officials. We plan to continue that valuable work throughout the rest of the year.

I hope you will send a generous, tax-deductible donation today, if you are able, to help us make the rest of 2025 just as successful as the past few months have been. I promise we will do our best to stretch your gift as far as it will go.

Thank you for your friendship and support. Please let me know if there is anything my staff or I can do for you.

Sincerely,



Jerry Cox, President

Thank you!!

**P.S. Enclosed with this letter is a summary of the good bills we supported and the bad bills we opposed.** There really isn't room to tell you about everything we worked on this session, but I hope this will give you an idea of what your gifts helped us accomplish.