



# Arkansas CITIZEN

APRIL 2026

*The following is from Family Council's Assistant Director, David Cox:*

## **Dear Friends,**

Like a lot of families, my wife, children, and I enjoy watching sports on the weekends, and my kids have grown to be NFL fans over the years. Last fall, we mailed several trading cards and autograph requests to football players hoping they would sign the cards and send them back to us. Collecting autographs through the mail is an old hobby, but the return rate is pretty low. Some athletes charge a fee or will only send autographs to people who donate to their charitable foundations. Others are just too busy to respond to fanmail. We received a couple of autographs back, but so far that's been it.

One of my sons loves the Kansas City Chiefs, and back in February I decided on a whim to try to get an autograph from K.C. Wolf, the Chiefs' mascot. After a brief Google search, I was able to find an email address for Dan Meers. Dan spent three and a half decades portraying K.C. Wolf. Besides being a mascot, Dan is also a motivational speaker and a Christian. He recently retired, but I emailed him, and by that afternoon, Dan had put me in touch with a gentleman at the Chiefs' office who told me he would be glad to mail my son a card with K.C. Wolf's autograph. I decided not to tell my son about any of this.

A few days later, the rest of my family and I watched as my son excitedly ripped open the envelope that came in the mail for him. I had expected a simple trading card with a signature printed on it. Instead, he received a 5x7 photo with a personalized autograph. What a surprise! I snapped a quick picture of the autograph before my son framed it, and I texted the picture to a friend from church. My friend also collects trading cards, and he happens to be a Chiefs fan. I told him about my email conversation with Dan Meers. My friend texted back that he thought that was awesome, and then he added, "Dude loves Jesus too!"

**That's quite a reputation, when you think about it.** It's one thing for people to know who you are or what you do for a living. It's another thing for people to hear your name and immediately say, "Oh yeah! That person loves Jesus." Wouldn't it be great if that were the first thing people thought when they heard your name or mine? Dan Meers and the Chiefs' organization didn't stand to gain anything by helping my son get an autograph from the team mascot—although I did later order a copy of Dan's book, *Wolves Can't Fly*. According to his website, Dan doesn't profit from the book sales, but the proceeds help fund missions and ministries around the world. The fact that Dan Meers took the time to help a stranger who emailed him out of the blue says a lot.

**Family Council has a simple rule of thumb we follow for every phone call and email we receive: If people ask us for help, we do our best to help them or tell them who may be able to help them.** Over the years, we've received a few phone calls from people who assumed we were a counseling service. We don't provide counseling, but we have tried to suggest good, biblical counselors to those people, if possible. Sometimes people need help understanding a legislative issue. If it's one we have worked on, we tell them what we know. If it isn't, we try to point them to someone who can answer their questions. We want to help everyone who calls us. I hope you will keep reading this letter to learn more about how we have been working to help people in Arkansas, and how you can be part of that work, too.



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Executive Director Jerry Cox

## My Thoughts: NYT Editors Finally Admit America has a “Marijuana Problem”

By Jerry Cox, Executive Director

Back in February, the editorial board at *The New York Times* published a stunning admission titled, “It’s Time for America to Admit That It Has a Marijuana Problem.” The editors acknowledged that marijuana use has created serious public health and safety concerns across the country. Along the way,

oversight and regulation have failed in states that have legalized marijuana. The editors also acknowledged that they supported legalization in 2014, writing:

At the time, supporters of legalization predicted that it would bring few downsides. In our editorials, we described marijuana addiction and dependence as “relatively minor problems.” Many advocates went further and claimed that marijuana was a harmless drug that might even bring net health benefits. They also said that legalization might not lead to greater use.

It is now clear that many of these predictions were wrong.

**As the editors point out, the numbers tell a sobering story.** About 18 million Americans now use marijuana almost daily. That’s triple the number from just over a decade ago. If these frequent users formed their own state, it would be nearly six times the population of Arkansas.

## Family Council Joins Legal Brief Against Mail-Order Abortion Drugs

Federal rules allow abortion pills to be delivered by mail nationwide, and pro-abortion groups have turned mail-order abortion into a big business. But pro-life leaders are taking federal agencies to court to stop the flow of dangerous abortion drugs across state lines.

**On February 13, Family Council joined 43 other pro-life leaders in a legal brief challenging mail-order abortion drugs.** The case is *Louisiana v. FDA*, in which the State of Louisiana is challenging the U.S. Food and Drug Administration’s 2021 and 2023 rule changes that removed important restrictions on RU-486 and allowed abortion drugs to be delivered through the mail without an in-person visit with a doctor. Since then, abortionists in other states have marketed abortion drugs to women in Arkansas even though abortion is generally prohibited except to save the life of the mother and it is a crime to deliver abortion drugs by mail into the state.

**Advancing American Freedom, who led the amicus brief in Louisiana, issued a statement about the lawsuit, saying:**

Yale reports roughly 30% of current cannabis users now meet the criteria for addiction. Researchers writing in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* found nearly one in three “medical” marijuana users may suffer from cannabis use disorder. THC—the main psychoactive substance in marijuana—has been tied to everything from heart disease and cancer to stroke, mental illness, and birth defects. In fact, researchers now say marijuana use doubles a person’s risk of death from heart disease.

And contrary to popular belief, legalization in other states has actually emboldened drug cartels and increased the flow of illegal drugs across the country. In February, Arkansas State Police seized more than 600 pounds of illegal marijuana in a series of traffic stops across the state. Most of that marijuana came from states where it may have been grown legally.

**It’s good to see *The New York Times* finally acknowledge that America has a marijuana problem, but we need to do more.** Arkansans need to stand up against marijuana and its expansion in our state. We can’t let wealthy growers and sellers pressure our lawmakers or trick voters into legalizing marijuana. That’s why we are prepared to mobilize our grassroots network against any effort to expand marijuana in Arkansas. Just like we have said for years: Marijuana may be many things, but “harmless” simply is not one of them.

Rosalie Markezich, a Louisiana woman, did not want an abortion. Yet, since the FDA no longer requires women to meet with a medical professional to obtain a mifepristone prescription, her then-boyfriend was able to obtain chemical abortion drugs from a California abortionist through the mail. He then coerced Rosalie into taking the abortion pill which killed her baby and left her with lasting mental health challenges, physical pain, and heavy bleeding.

Abortionists should not be able to disregard the laws of pro-life states made possible by *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*.

**New evidence shows that abortion drugs are much more dangerous than the FDA realized when it first approved RU-486 more than 25 years ago.** A recent study by the experts at the Ethics and Public Policy Center found abortion drugs are at least 22 times more dangerous than the U.S. Food and Drug Administration labeling indicates.

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## Family Council Joins Legal Brief Against Mail-Order Abortion Drugs *(continued)*

Nearly 11% of women experience serious health complications from abortion pills—including life-threatening sepsis and hemorrhage. These drugs should not be available at all—much less through the mail.

**Last summer, Arkansas Attorney General Tim Griffin sent letters to the FDA and Congress urging them to reinstate safety restrictions on abortion drugs and let states enforce their pro-life laws that prohibit delivering abortion drugs by mail.** This year, Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton filed a lawsuit against a nurse practitioner in Delaware who, the A.G. says, “operates an extremist group known as Her Safe Harbor that ships abortion drugs into Texas.” North Dakota Attorney General Drew Wrigley recently issued a cease-and-desist order against an organization he says is promoting the illegal sale of abortion pills online, and authorities in South Dakota have called for investigations into abortion pill advertisements at gas stations.

**Family Council is pleased to join with so many other excellent groups who are willing to stand up for innocent human life.** Public opinion polling shows Arkansans

*Right: Attorney General Tim Griffin at a 2025 press conference about illegal abortion pills being delivered into Arkansas.*

oppose abortion, and there is statistical evidence that children are alive today because Arkansas has prohibited abortion. The state’s pro-life laws are saving lives, but it’s important to make sure abortion drugs aren’t illegally shipped into Arkansas—or any other state, for that matter. Abortion drugs are dangerous. They simply should not be for sale in America.



## U.S. Sen. Cotton Asks Justice Department to Investigate Chinese-Owned Surrogacy Centers

On February 26, U.S. Senator Tom Cotton (R-Arkansas) and U.S. Senator Rick Scott (R-Florida) sent a letter urging the Department of Justice to investigate surrogacy centers operated by foreign nationals. The senators expressed concern that Chinese nationals may be systematically exploiting America’s surrogacy and birthright citizenship laws. The letter said in part:

“Recent reports have uncovered more than 107 Chinese-owned surrogacy agencies operating in Southern California alone. These agencies cater almost exclusively to wealthy Chinese clients, and some are affiliated with Chinese state-owned entities. Chinese nationals pay women living in the United States more than \$50,000 to serve as surrogates. The children are born on United States soil and granted automatic citizenship. And in most cases, the infants are promptly flown to China and raised there under the direct influence of the Chinese Communist Party.”

Last year, *The Wall Street Journal* uncovered how Chinese billionaires are exploiting America’s surrogacy industry to create what some call “mega-families” with dozens or even hundreds of children. The newspaper named one wealthy Chinese executive who allegedly hired U.S. models as egg

donors to have girls he hoped would one day marry powerful men. The journal concluded, “A thriving mini-industry of American surrogacy agencies, law firms, clinics, delivery agencies and nanny services—even to pick up the newborns from hospitals—has risen to accommodate the demand, permitting parents to ship their genetic material abroad and get a baby delivered back, at a cost of up to \$200,000 per child.”<sup>1</sup>

**Stories like these are one of the reasons Florida lawmakers amended a foreign interference bill last month to prohibit commercial surrogacy contracts with people or entities from China, Russia, North Korea, and certain other countries.** The measure would effectively prevent a Russian or Chinese citizen from signing a commercial surrogacy contract with someone in Florida.

**U.S. Sens. Cotton and Scott are concerned about protecting our nation’s citizens from foreign influences, but it’s important to remember that commercial surrogacy also raises serious ethical concerns.** In commercial surrogacy arrangements, corporate agencies hire women to carry children for paying customers. Commercial surrogacy treats women like commodities. It turns pregnancy in-

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## U.S. Sen. Cotton Asks Justice Department to Investigate Chinese-Owned Surrogacy Centers *(continued)*

to a “service” that can be purchased. It also treats children like products that can be made to order and sold for prof-



it. It also deliberately deprives children of their biological mothers or fathers. None of that is right.

**Human beings are not products that can be manufactured, bought, and sold.** That’s why it’s essential for policymakers to enact real restrictions on commercial surrogacy contracts and agencies. We appreciate Sens. Cotton and Scott taking this issue so seriously at the federal level. We hope Arkansas’ lawmakers will take this issue seriously at the state level as well and enact good restrictions on commercial surrogacy agencies.

1 Long, Katherine, Ben Foldy and Lingling Wei. “The Chinese Billionaires Having Dozens of U.S.-Born Babies Via Surrogate.” *The Wall Street Journal*, Dec. 13, 2025.

*U.S. Sen. Tom Cotton recently published a letter expressing concerns about commercial surrogacy agencies owned or operated by foreign nationals and urging Attorney General Pam Bondi and the Justice Department to investigate.*

## Indiana School District Learns \$650K Lesson About Religious Freedom

An Indiana school district recently learned a \$650,000 lesson about respecting the free exercise of religion. John Kluge taught orchestra and music theory at Brownsburg High School until the school district demanded he use students’ “preferred pronouns” that contradict biology. Kluge is a Christian who believes God created people as male or female. He couldn’t in good conscience speak in a way that violated his faith. So he offered a reasonable compromise: he would refer to all students by their last names. The school agreed—until a handful of students and teachers complained and the district forced him to resign.

Our friends at Alliance Defending Freedom represented Kluge in a lawsuit against the school district. Last year, a federal appeals court ruled his case should go to a jury trial. Rather than face that jury, Brownsburg Community School Corporation agreed to settle the case for \$650,000. The district will also train its senior staff on how federal law protects employees from religious discrimination.

**This is a good outcome that should send a powerful message to every public school district in America.** ADF Senior Counsel David Cortman put it plainly: “Public schools cannot force teachers to violate their religious beliefs.” ADF

President Kristen Waggoner added, “One case at a time, we’re taking free speech back from the pronoun police.”

We have seen this same pattern play out again and again. Over the years, pro-LGBT activists have used public schools to promote transgender ideology to kids and faculty. When teachers and students push back, they often face punishment. That’s wrong—and now the courts are saying so.

**Arkansas has worked hard to make sure this kind of thing doesn’t happen here.** Arkansas’ students are already protected against compelled pronoun use by state law. And Arkansas has been a leader when it comes to passing laws that block radical pro-LGBT ideology in the classroom. Mr. Kluge’s case is a good reminder that these protections matter—and that when schools ignore them, there are real consequences.



*Right: John Kluge taught orchestra and music theory at an Indiana high school until he was fired for declining to use students’ “preferred pronouns.” That prompted a lawsuit from Mr. Kluge and our friends at Alliance Defending Freedom. The school district recently settled the case for \$650,000 and agreed to train its staff on how federal law protects religious liberty.*

## Good News: Supreme Court Sides with Parents Against California Public Schools' Gender Transition Policies

On March 2, the U.S. Supreme Court sided with a group of parents who challenged California's social gender transition policy for public schools. The policy requires teachers and administrators to hide children's gender dysphoria and social gender transition from parents. While the decision is not a final ruling, the justices indicated the parents are likely to win their case and restored a lower court injunction blocking the school policy while their parents' lawsuit proceeds.

**This is a good decision that protects children and upholds parental rights.** In January, Family Council joined 65 other organizations in a legal brief in this case. Last summer, Family Council and dozens of other pro-family organizations from across the country also filed an amicus brief regarding a New York school district that treated a middle-school girl as if she were a boy without her mother's

knowledge or consent. **Arkansas has been a leader when it comes to passing laws that block radical pro-LGBT ideology at school.** But federal court cases like the ones

**That's why this Supreme Court decision is so significant: It helps us stand up for students and parents not just in California, but all across the country.**

in California and New York can affect schools nationwide. That's why this Supreme Court decision is so significant: It helps us stand up for students and parents not just in California, but all across the country.

## Fortune 500 Flee the Pro-LGBT Equality Index

The tide continues to turn against corporate pro-LGBT activism. Most of the U.S.'s 500 largest companies no longer support the Human Rights Campaign's Corporate Equality Index. The organization's 2026 index lost a whopping 65% of its Fortune 500 participants, dropping from 377 companies in 2025 to just 131 this year.

**HRC's Corporate Equality Index puts some heavy requirements on businesses that participate.** To get a perfect score on the index, companies must agree to demands like covering the cost of gender-transition procedures for employees and their families, forcing workers to undergo ideological training, opening restrooms to both sexes, and so forth. Many companies established Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) policies to create an equal playing field for racial and ethnic minorities, but it did not take long for pro-LGBT groups like HRC to hijack those policies. We have written repeatedly about how DEI initiatives have been used to promote critical theory and other leftwing ideas.

**Corporate DEI and pro-LGBT initiatives are deeply out-of-step with everyday Americans.** These are flawed ideologies that do not ensure individuals are valued, heard, or included. Employees who hold biblical views of marriage or gender risk losing their jobs in workplaces that have adopted DEI policies. None of that is good for our economy or our country. Consumers have made it clear they are tired of pro-LGBT pandering. It's good to see Corporate America retreating from the kind of activism that groups like the Human Rights Campaign promote. We hope that will continue in Arkansas and nationwide in the coming months.

## One in Four Likely Voters Now Support Socialism

On March 5, pollsters at Rasmussen reported that support for capitalism has declined since 2023, and a growing share of likely voters now say socialism is better. On the whole, most Americans still support free markets—but that support has dwindled. Rasmussen writes:

The latest Rasmussen Reports national telephone and online survey finds that 25% of Likely U.S. Voters say socialism is a better system than capitalism. More than twice as many voters (51%) say capitalism is better. Fourteen percent (14%) are not sure. Support for capitalism has declined by 16 points since February 2023, when 67% of voters said capitalism was better than socialism.

**The latest Rasmussen Reports national telephone and online survey finds that 25% of Likely U.S. Voters say socialism is a better system than capitalism.**

**We've seen support for socialism play out in recent elections.** In November, Zohran Mamdani won New York City's mayoral election. Mamdani, 34, belongs to the socialist Working Families Party. In his victory speech, Mamdani promised New Yorkers would replace capitalism's rugged individualism with the "warmth of collectivism," saying,

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## One in Four Likely Voters Now Support Socialism (continued)

"We will prove that there is no problem too large for government to solve, and no concern too small for it to care about."

**As we have said before, there is nothing new about the socialism that Mamdani and others support. These are the very same failed ideas that harmed tens of millions of innocent people in the last century.** Unfortunately, many young adults are well educated about capitalism's shortcomings, but they are uninformed when it comes to socialism's oppression.

Socialism is oppressive, because it's built on the idea that individuals receive dignity from society. But in reality, individuals receive their dignity from their Creator whose image they bear. Socialism holds that our rights come from the government. But the truth is that our rights come from God, and we establish constitutions and governments to protect our God-given rights. **Americans—and especially Christians—need to understand socialism's basic problems and its track record. This is a fatally flawed belief system that has produced disastrous results every time.**

## Racing Commission Approves FanDuel, DraftKings to Partner with Arkansas Casinos

On February 26, the Arkansas Racing Commission approved sports betting license applications by FanDuel and DraftKings. DraftKings reportedly will partner with Southland Casino in West Memphis, and FanDuel will partner with Oaklawn Casino in Hot Springs. The decision likely means Arkansas will see more sports betting in the coming months.

Nationwide, sports betting is now legal in 39 states, and Arkansans wager an average of nearly \$1.8 million on it every day. But a growing body of evidence shows sports betting is harmful—and that Internet sports betting is especially destructive. Studies indicate people who gamble on sports may be twice as likely to suffer from gambling problems. When sports gambling happens online, the rate is even higher. A study by Northwestern University found that for every dollar spent on sports betting, household investment falls by an average of \$2. Researchers at UCLA estimate that online sportsbooks are linked to an increase of roughly 30,000 more bankruptcies per year nationwide.

**Some online sportsbooks have actually produced advertisements that seem to glamorize compulsive gambling and other problem-gambling behaviors.** In 2023, FanDuel released one commercial that showed people so focused on sports betting that they ignored everyone else around them. Another ad promoted taking advantage of every opportunity to gamble. In 2024, FanDuel

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el aired commercials encouraging people to gamble on "surprising" hunches—including powerful hunches that strike during live games. More recent commercials advertise "playoff mode" with promotional offers such as \$300 in "bonus bets." Gamblers who ignore loved ones, wager nonstop during games, or place bets "on a hunch" quite possibly suffer from gambling addiction, and high-end promotional offers may appeal to people who struggle with gambling problems.

**Sports betting is out of control.** It's corrupting sports, and it's ruining lives. Whatever tax revenue the State of Arkansas gets from sports betting does not compare to the toll gambling takes on everyday Arkansans. As powerful corporations try to make gambling part of everyday life, it's important for Arkansas to protect its citizens and families from predatory gambling. Otherwise gambling addiction will simply continue wrecking lives and hurting families in our state.



Erin Hogan, Family Council  
Government Affairs and Projects

## Building a Culture of Life One Resolution at a Time

By Erin Hogan, Family Council

In 2021, Arkansas passed a law affirming that municipalities may adopt resolutions declaring themselves to be pro-life. The legislature updated the law in 2023 not only to acknowledge that municipalities may pass a pro-life resolution, but also counties, school districts, political subdivisions, and any other publicly governed entity like a fire district. To date, twenty three

counties and fifteen municipalities have passed resolutions declaring themselves to be pro-life. This has been an excellent way to stand for life and affirm Arkansas' rank as the most pro-life state in the nation.

Some may inquire why these resolutions are necessary while others may ask what good they do. After all, a resolution is not legally binding, is not enforceable, and does not require anyone to do anything. But here are other questions to ask: Why shouldn't they be passed? Isn't messaging a huge part of changing the culture?

**If you have a passion for the cause of life and are looking for a way to spread awareness, please consider a pro-life resolution in your community.**

Passing pro-life resolutions puts a stake in the ground by issuing a bold statement in support of life from local governments that reflects the convictions of thousands of pro-life Arkansans. For decades, pro-lifers have worked to defend the sanctity of life through advocacy, public policy, personal outreach, and compassionate support for women facing crisis pregnancies. One of the biggest goals of the pro-life movement is to win hearts and minds for the truth that life is valuable and worth protecting. As communities across Arkansas declare their pro-life stance, our state will continue to lead our nation in reducing the demand for abortion and in respecting the disabled and the elderly. A resolution follows the excellent laws that the state legislature has passed in Arkansas, and it also gives legislators backup and support from their district.

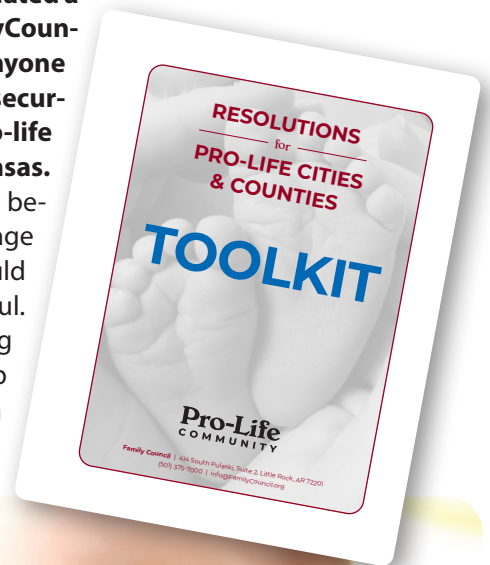
Though Arkansas is the most pro-life state in the nation, America still has many pro-abortion states. Passing pro-life resolutions in Arkansas may encourage other states to have their elected officials do the same.

If you have a passion for the cause of life and are looking for a way to spread awareness, please consider a pro-life resolution in your community. Contact your local government officials to begin the process. Help your local school district become the first to pass a pro-life resolution in the state! You can always reach out to our office and we would be happy to help provide guidance and connections in your pro-life efforts.

Even though abortion is no longer legal in Arkansas except to save the life of the mother, it does not mean we should halt all efforts to protect life. Passing a pro-life resolution is a practical and unique way to make the case for the sanctity of life.

**Family Council has created a free toolkit at [FamilyCouncil.org](http://FamilyCouncil.org) to assist anyone who is interested in securing passage of a pro-life resolution in Arkansas.**

Anyone who wants to begin efforts for the passage of a resolution should find this toolkit helpful. Be a part of this growing movement and help your community pass a pro-life resolution!



## We Need Your Help

**So far this year we have distributed thousands of copies of the Arkansas Voter's Guide.** Our guide shows people where the candidates stand on the issues that matter to them. Voters often struggle to know what their candidates actually believe. Family Council's Arkansas Voter's Guide helps solve that problem.

**We have unique opportunities ahead of us.** One is coming up in just a few days. When the Arkansas Legislature convenes on April 8, we will have an opportunity to lobby for millions of dollars in state grant money to pregnancy help organizations. This funding will support pro-life charities that provide real assistance to women with unplanned pregnancies. That's why when lawmakers convene in Little Rock, we plan to be there.

**Family Council is working to accomplish its goals for 2026.** Back in December we made a list of goals for the coming year, and we haven't forgotten them. We want to bring a godly influence into the public arena. We want to stand against any effort to legalize abortion or marijuana. We want to stop moneyed interests from destroying our constitution through the initiative process. We are ready to do this work thanks to good friends like you.

**I wish I could sit down face-to-face with everyone who supports us.** Without your friendship, your prayers, and your financial support, we would have failed a long time ago. Thanks to you, Family Council is working hard to make Arkansas a better place to live, work, and raise a family. That's why I hope you will give a generous, tax-deductible gift right now, if you are able. Your gift will help us continue to stand up for traditional family values this spring and summer. You can mail your gift back using the card and envelope enclosed with this letter. You can also give securely online at [FamilyCouncil.org/donate](http://FamilyCouncil.org/donate).

Thank you for standing with us! Please let me know if there is ever anything my staff or I can do for you.

Sincerely,



Thank you!!

Jerry Cox, President

P.S. I hope you will follow our work online at [FamilyCouncil.org](http://FamilyCouncil.org). We publish articles and videos every day. We also send regular email updates to thousands of friends across the state. You can sign up for those free emails when you visit our website. Thank you for your friendship and support!



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**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.

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