



Arkansas CITIZEN

JUNE/JULY 2026

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

Dear Friends,

Do you ever feel like you're living on borrowed time?

I sometimes think back to my final conversation with my great uncle at his home in Sevier County, in rural southwest Arkansas. He was well into his 90s, but his wits were still sharp. My dad and I sat in his living room as he talked about friends, family members, and neighbors who had come and gone over the decades. There were stories about fish caught on the banks of the Saline River, stories about barns and houses burned by fire, and stories about people who made and lost fortunes during the 1920s and 1930s.

As he spoke, he paused in thought for a moment before adding with a shrug, "When it's all said and done, we're just borrowing it anyway."

That one sentence contained a lifetime's worth of wisdom.

There are so many things we work for—our homes, our cars, our bank accounts, and the rest. They aren't bad things. In fact, some of them are very important, like providing for our families. But when it's all said and done, everything we act like we rightfully own is really just borrowed from the Lord. When we leave this earth, He will take it back or loan it to someone else.

King David understood this. After collecting offerings for the temple his son Solomon would build, he gave thanks to the Lord.

In 1 Chronicles 29:14, David says, "For all things come from You, And of Your own we have given You." In other words, David understood all things come from the Lord. He was just returning to God the things that were rightfully His in the first place. In Psalm 90:10–12, Moses asks the Lord to help us gain wisdom by teaching us to "number our days." When you understand that your time here is limited, it puts life in perspective. The same ideas come up in Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and other books of the Bible.

All of this speaks to the biblical idea of stewardship. Life is short. Our days on earth are numbered. Everything we have is God's, and when we stand before the Lord, He will ask us to give an account of how we used it. We're all living on borrowed time. To the unbeliever, that may sound discouraging, but to the Christian, it ought to be an uplifting reminder that there is more to life than this temporary world.

Stewardship is something we talk about a lot at Family Council. Every dollar we spend at our office started as a gift someone decided to give us. People trust us with their donations, and we want to honor that trust by doing as much good as possible with what we are given. That's at the heart of good stewardship: Making good use of the gifts and talents you've been handed. I hope you will keep reading this letter to learn more about how we have been working to be faithful stewards – and how you and your family can make a difference in Arkansas.

**Life is short.
Our days on earth
are numbered.
Everything we
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to Defend Traditional
Values from the Public
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Executive Director Jerry Cox

My Thoughts: Family Council Working to Defend Traditional Values from the Public Square to the Courthouse

By Jerry Cox, Executive Director

Arkansas is a deeply conservative state, and our lawmakers have enacted some of the best laws in the country. Arkansas is ranked the most pro-life state in America, because its laws defend innocent human life. The Arkansas Legislature was the first in the nation to pass a law protecting children from sex-change surgeries, puberty blockers, and cross-sex hormones. Arkansas has excellent protections for everything from the free exercise of religion to parental rights. Our laws could always be better in some areas, but they're still good laws.

But there's a problem: A federal judge in California or New York can issue a court ruling that affects how judges in Arkansas interpret those good laws. One bad court decision can have a chilling effect on laws in states like Arkansas. We're doing great work at the state level when it comes to public policy, but we need to make sure the justice system doesn't undermine that work.

That's why Family Council has started joining amicus briefs in federal lawsuits around the country. We've joined briefs in two lawsuits against government policies that let abortionists ship abortion drugs through the mail. We've also joined amicus briefs that defend state laws keeping men out of women's sports, protecting children from LGBT indoctrination at school, and preserving donor privacy at pregnancy resource centers. Some of these court cases have gone all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. We want to make sure the federal rulings in these cases don't hurt the good laws we've worked so hard to support in Arkansas. Your friendship and support is making it possible for us to do this. Thank you for standing with us as we all work to make Arkansas a better place to live, work, and raise a family.

Arkansas Legislature Approves \$3.5M in Grant Funding for Mothers with Unplanned Pregnancies

The Arkansas Legislature continues to put its money where its mouth is by approving millions of dollars in grant funding to support women with unplanned pregnancies. Since 2022, Arkansas law generally has prohibited abortion except to save the life of the mother, and abortion facilities in the state have closed down. But data shows that Arkansans may be traveling out of state for abortions. We also know that abortionists in other parts of the country are shipping abortion drugs into Arkansas illegally. That's why Family Council has encouraged Arkansas' lawmakers to provide grant funding for pregnancy help organizations across the state.

Pro-life charities give women real options besides abortion, and a growing number of states provide these organizations with public funding. This year, the Arkansas Legislature raised its Pregnancy Help Organization Grant fund from \$2 million to \$3.5 million. Lawmakers approved the funding as part of the Department of Finance and Administration's 2026-2027 budget for its Disbursing Officer, and Governor Sanders signed the budget proposal into law. The measure makes it clear that "pregnancy help organizations" include nonprofit organizations that promote infant and maternal wellness and reduce infant and maternal mortality by:

- 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; or
- Providing referrals for WIC and community-based nutritional services, including but not limited to food banks, food pantries, and food distribution centers.

Family Council is grateful to the General Assembly and Governor Sanders for approving this \$3.5 million in grant funding to provide alternatives to abortion. This is money well spent! We look forward to seeing the state award the funds to pregnancy help organizations in the coming months.



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Pro-Life Centers Win Unanimous Supreme Court Victory

In April, the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously agreed New Jersey pregnancy centers can defend themselves from government overreach. In 2023, the New Jersey Attorney General's Office subpoenaed a massive amount of information from First Choice Women's Resource Centers in New Jersey—including donor information that may be sensitive. In response, First Choice filed a federal lawsuit to protect its sensitive data from government overreach, and the attorney general sued to force First Choice to hand over the documents.

After two years in court, the U.S. Supreme Court finally ruled in favor of First Choice. In the ruling, Justice Neil Gorsuch pointed out that the New Jersey Attorney General's office targeted First Choice despite receiving no consumer complaints against the pro-life group, writing:

"The [New Jersey] Attorney General served a subpoena on First Choice, commanding the group to produce 28 categories of documents, including documents reflecting the names, phone numbers, addresses, and places of employment of all individuals who had made donations to First Choice by any means other than through one specific webpage. Effectively, that demand required First Choice to provide personal information about donors who gave

through two other websites, through the group's various social media pages, by mail, in person, or by any other means. The subpoena warned twice that failure to comply may render the group liable for contempt of court and other penalties...

"Since the 1950s, this Court has confronted one official demand after another like the Attorney General's. Over and over again, we have held those demands burden the exercise of First Amendment rights. Disputing none of these precedents but seeking ways around them, the Attorney General has offered a variety of arguments. Some are old, some are new, but none succeeds."

We are glad to see the Court rule in First Choice's favor. Pregnancy resource centers offer women real options besides abortion.

This is really good news. Last summer, Family Council joined a coalition of pro-life groups in an amicus brief supporting First Choice's lawsuit before the U.S. Supreme Court. We are glad to see the Court rule in First Choice's favor. Pregnancy resource centers offer women real options besides abortion. Many of these centers provide everything from ultrasounds and pregnancy tests to maternity clothes and adoption referrals—typically free of charge.

That's part of the reason Arkansas provides millions of dollars in publicly funded grants for these organizations. It's a way Arkansas can use public funds to support women and children without expanding government or creating new state programs. Family Council is pleased to stand up for pro-life pregnancy resource centers in Arkansas and around the country. We hope all of our state and federal officials will continue to do so as well.



Family Council Joins Brief Asking SCOTUS to Block Mail-Order Abortion Drugs

In May, Family Council joined 49 other pro-life organizations in a legal brief challenging mail-order abortion drugs before the U.S. Supreme Court. Arkansas law generally prohibits abortion except to save the life of the mother, and it is a crime for an abortionist to mail abortion drugs like RU-486 into the state. But under President Biden, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration loosened its safety protocols to allow mail-order abortion drugs. Pro-abortion states have also enacted “shield laws” for abortionists who mail abortion drugs into states like Arkansas. All of that has created a dangerous industry of abortion-by-mail in Arkansas and across the nation.

The State of Louisiana has filed a lawsuit challenging the U.S. Food and Drug Administration’s mail-order abortion rules, and on May 1 a three-judge panel from the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals blocked the FDA’s protocols. But almost immediately, two abortion drug manufacturers appealed that decision to the U.S. Supreme Court. Our friends at Advancing American Freedom worked very quickly to

draft and file an amicus brief against the drugs, and Family Council was able to join that brief at the U.S. Supreme Court. The amicus brief argues that states have the authority to restrict or prohibit abortion, and that the FDA is undermining pro-life laws in states like Arkansas.

New evidence shows that abortion drugs are much more dangerous than the FDA previously thought. 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 drugs’ labeling indicates. Nearly 11% of women experience serious health complications from abortion pills—including sepsis, infection, and life-threatening hemorrhage.

Abortion drugs hurt women and kill unborn children. These drugs should not be available at all—much less through the mail. We believe our federal courts ultimately will recognize that fact and make it possible for states like Arkansas to enforce their laws against mail-order abortion.

Good News: Judge Dismisses Lawsuit Against Arkansas’ Pro-Life Laws

A Pulaski County Circuit Judge has dismissed a lawsuit seeking to undo Arkansas’ pro-life laws. This is really good news. In 2022, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, making it possible for states to set their own abortion policies. Since then Arkansas law has prohibited abortion except to save the life of the mother. Last year the state legislature took excellent steps to strengthen and clarify Arkansas’ pro-life laws. But in January, attorneys with a pro-abortion group filed a lawsuit in Pulaski County to strike down Arkansas’ good, pro-life laws. Arkansas Attorney General Tim Griffin told media outlets at the time that the lawsuit on its face appeared to have little legal merit, and Family Council agreed with the attorney general.

On April 29, the judge presiding over the case dismissed the pro-abortion lawsuit and closed the case. That is a pro-life victory. Arkansas has been named the most pro-life state in America for the past six years, and lawmakers have enacted excellent legislation protecting women and unborn children from abortion and supporting women with unplanned pregnancies. This lawsuit would have undone all of that good work.

Public opinion polling has shown time and again that most Arkansans are pro-life and oppose abortion on demand. Arkansas’ pro-life laws reflect Arkansans’ pro-life views. These laws protect everyone’s right to life—including the unborn child’s. We appreciate Attorney General Tim Griffin’s office for working so hard to defend the sanctity of human life and defeat this pro-abortion lawsuit in Arkansas.



Arkansas Watches as Appeals Court Rules Ten Commandments Can Stay in Texas Classrooms

A federal appeals court ruled this spring that Texans can display the Ten Commandments in public school classrooms. The Ten Commandments are one of the earliest examples of the rule of law in human history, and federal courts have ruled that state and local governments can recognize their longstanding tradition and influence in American society. But groups like the ACLU have opposed public displays of the Ten Commandments nationwide.

The 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals said that Texas’ law placing the Ten Commandments in school classrooms does not violate the First Amendment’s Establishment Clause. The court noted that “no child is required to recite the Commandments, believe them, or affirm their divine origin.” This is not the first victory we have seen in the 5th Circuit this year. Louisiana has a similar Ten Commandments law, and the 5th Circuit lifted an injunction against it in February.

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Arkansas Watches as Appeals Court Rules Ten Commandments Can Stay in Texas Classrooms *(continued)*

Arkansans should pay close attention to these court cases in Texas and Louisiana. Last year, Arkansas enacted a law letting people donate posters of the Ten Commandments to be displayed in public school classrooms and public buildings. Unfortunately, a federal judge has ruled against the posters at schools in Arkansas. The 5th Circuit's decision sends a strong signal that laws like Arkansas' are on

solid constitutional ground. We believe our federal courts ultimately will uphold the law and let Arkansans display the Ten Commandments in public school classrooms. **If you have questions about obtaining Ten Commandments posters to place in the public buildings of your community, please call our office at (501) 375-7000.**

Arkansas Attorney General Asks 8th Circuit to Keep Ten Commandments Monument on Capitol Grounds

Arkansas Attorney General Tim Griffin's office has appealed to the 8th Circuit to keep a monument of the Ten Commandments on the State Capitol Building grounds. In 2015 the Arkansas General Assembly passed a law authorizing a privately funded monument of the Ten Commandments at the Capitol Building in Little Rock, and the monument was finally unveiled three years later. But almost immediately, atheist groups filed a lawsuit to remove the monument from the Capitol grounds. That lawsuit languished in federal court until March 31, when a judge ruled against the monument.

However, Attorney General Tim Griffin has appealed that bad decision to the judges at the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals. The appeals process so far has been scheduled to take the rest of the spring and a good portion of the

summer. The case may not be decided quickly, but it is finally moving forward.

Historians have long recognized the Ten Commandments as one of the earliest examples of the rule of law in human history, and they have helped shape philosophy and laws in countries around the world. That's why the Ten Commandments traditionally have appeared in artwork at courthouses and other public buildings. Arkansas' monument commemorates that same historical and cultural legacy. It's also identical to a monument the U.S. Supreme Court ruled constitutional at the Texas Capitol Building in 2005. With that in mind, we believe our federal courts ultimately will uphold Arkansas' Ten Commandments monument as constitutional.

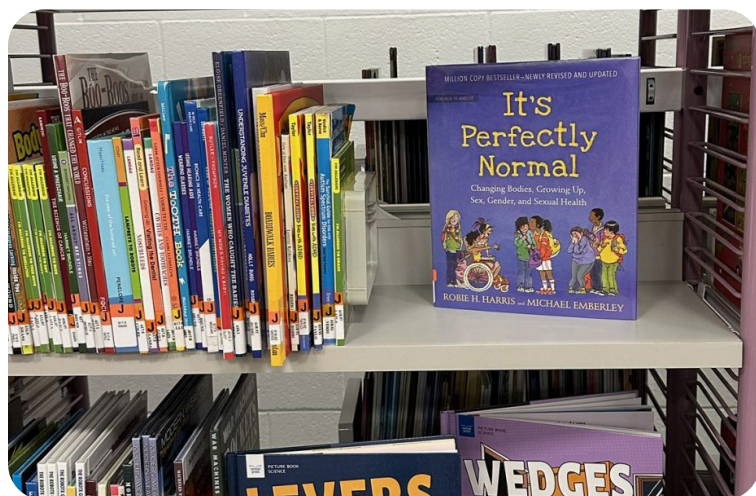
Arkansas State Library Board Advances Rules to Protect Children from Explicit Material

Last month, the Arkansas State Library Board advanced a proposal to help protect children from sexually explicit material in public libraries. Arkansas is home to many public libraries all across the state, and the library board helps oversee them. But in recent years, parents and policymakers

alike have expressed serious concerns about obscene and explicit children's books that some librarians have placed on the shelves of their local libraries.

At its May 8 meeting, the Arkansas Library Board unanimously approved a proposed set of rules requiring public libraries to ensure children under the age of 16 may not check out sexually explicit materials without parental consent. Under the rules, libraries would also keep explicit material separate from other areas of the library, and could not knowingly advertise explicit material. Libraries that fail to abide by the rules may not receive state funding.

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Left: The book It's Perfectly Normal sits on display in the children's section of the Craighead County Public Library in Jonesboro in this file photo from 2024. The book contains inappropriate illustrations depicting nudity and sexual activity. As of 2026, the book appears in the Craighead County Public Library's Parent/Teacher Collection as well as the juvenile sections of the North Little Rock Public Library System and Central Arkansas Library System.

Arkansas State Library Board Advances Rules to Protect Children from Explicit Material *(continued)*

These proposed library rules are a step in the right direction, because too many libraries in Arkansas have made headlines for promoting sexually explicit material to young children. For example, the Jonesboro public library has been at the center of multiple controversies over its decision to place books with sexually explicit images in its children's section and for failing to adopt a policy that separates sexual material from children's books. The library even went so far as to post on Facebook that it isn't the library's responsibility to protect kids from obscenity. The controversy in Jonesboro escalated to a point that voters finally decided to reduce the library's millage in 2022. Other public libraries in Arkansas have included explicit children's books in their

catalogs and failed to separate sexual material from children's material as well. Some of these books actually contain explicit images of minors engaged in sexual acts.

Families should not have to worry about what their children might see in the children's section of a library, and taxpayers should not be forced to subsidize library material that is explicit or obscene. That's why Family Council has supported laws protecting children from harmful content at their local libraries. Some of these laws have faced legal challenges from liberal organizations. These new rules from the State Library Board could help address these concerns as well.

Attorneys Say Online Sports Betting Is Bankrupting Families

Bankruptcy attorneys across the country say online sports betting is driving a surge in personal bankruptcies—especially among young men in their 20s and 30s. This is a very troubling trend.

As states have legalized sports betting, most men ages 18–49 now have an active sportsbook account online. Arkansans wagered a record \$86.5 million in March alone this year. But this type of gambling is taking a terrible toll on individuals and their families. Chad Van Horn, a bankruptcy attorney in Florida, recently told Business Insider that roughly 15% of his clients now carry gambling-related debt—and that it piles up faster than any other type of debt he sees. He described clients going from zero to

\$25,000 in credit card debt in a matter of months.

“The debt builds incredibly fast because people aren't gambling with cash; they're gambling with borrowed money,” Van Horn said.

Ed Boltz, a bankruptcy attorney in North Carolina, said the same thing, noting that, “It has been astonishing, the speed in which people can fall into this.”

We have written before about how research shows sports betting is linked to bankruptcies and financial devastation. A report from the Federal Reserve Bank of New York found that states with legal mobile sports betting have seen credit delinquency rates spike—especially among borrowers under 40. These financial problems affect families—and sometimes even whole communities.

Sports betting is out of control. It's corrupting sports, and it's ruining lives. Tax revenue from gambling has not improved Arkansas' roads or boosted the economy. As powerful corporations try to make gambling part of everyday life, it's important for Arkansas to protect its citizens. The Arkansas Racing Commission and Arkansas Legisla-

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ture need to take meaningful steps to restrict and prohibit predatory sports betting. Otherwise, gambling addiction will simply continue wrecking lives and hurting families across our state.



Federal Grand Jury Charges Southern Poverty Law Center with Fraud, Conspiracy to Commit Money Laundering

Back in April, a federal Grand Jury in Alabama charged the left-wing Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) with 11 counts of wire fraud, false statements to a federally insured bank, and conspiracy to commit “concealment money laundering.” The story is significant, because the SPLC has spent decades claiming to fight white supremacy. At the same time, the group has also branded Christian organizations like Family Research Council and Focus on the Family as “hate groups” on par with Neo-Nazis and the KKK, and the SPLC has urged financial institutions to close bank accounts belonging to conservative organizations. But now a federal Grand Jury says the SPLC has secretly funneled more than \$3 million to a covert network of informants affiliated with groups like the Ku Klux Klan, and that this money has actually funded white supremacists.

According to the indictment, the SPLC opened bank accounts under fictitious corporations so it could launder money to people in the very groups the SPLC claimed it was working to dismantle. The indictment says one SPLC contact from the National Alliance was paid more than \$1,000,000 between 2014 and 2023. According to the indictment, the informant helped fundraise for the National Alliance while also providing the SPLC with stolen documents. The SPLC paid another person \$270,000 while that person helped plan

and coordinate transportation to the 2017 “Unite the Right” event in Charlottesville, Virginia. **Some of the people that the SPLC paid were actually listed on the SPLC’s own “Extremist File” webpage at the same time.** The indictment also says the SPLC also used these informants to indirectly funnel money to other violent extremist group leaders.

According to federal prosecutors, what the SPLC did isn’t just hypocritical. It’s fraud. The indictment alleges the SPLC defrauded donors by raising money to fight racism, and then instead secretly used that money to fund racism. To hide what they were doing, the group allegedly violated federal banking laws by making false statements on its bank applications. Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche put it plainly: “The SPLC is manufacturing racism to justify its existence.”

Arkansas families and churches should pay attention. The SPLC has worked to pressure banks, employers, and government agencies to treat Christians and conservatives around the country like dangerous extremists. Government agencies have relied on material and resources from the SPLC over the years. This indictment should make it clear that the SPLC isn’t trustworthy. Family Council plans to continue monitoring this case as it moves forward.

Federal Government Moves to Reschedule Marijuana

The federal government is taking major steps toward loosening restrictions on marijuana. Across the U.S., many states have legalized marijuana either for “medical” or “recreational” use, and the Trump Administration has signaled that it wants to change U.S. policy on marijuana. But a growing body of evidence shows marijuana is actually much more dangerous than many people realize and needs to be restricted.

On April 23, the Justice Department and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) announced they are placing FDA-approved marijuana products as well as marijuana products legalized under state “medical” marijuana programs on Schedule III of the federal Controlled Substances Act. Schedule III drugs are considered to have accepted medical uses and a lower potential for abuse than Schedule I or II substances. The announcement also kicks off an expedited hearing process, beginning June 29, to consider moving all marijuana from Schedule I to Schedule III under federal law.

Rescheduling marijuana this way sends the wrong message. For years, marijuana advocates have used the push for “medical” marijuana as a stepping stone toward

full legalization. Making marijuana a Schedule III substance may not legalize marijuana outright, but it will create more confusion about marijuana’s legal status and make it much easier for people to grow, sell, and use marijuana.

THC—the main psychoactive substance in marijuana—has been tied again and again 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. Yale reports roughly 30% of current cannabis users now meet the criteria for addiction, and researchers writing in *JAMA* found nearly one in three “medical” marijuana users may suffer from cannabis use disorder. A major study by *The Lancet* recently found marijuana fails to effectively treat anxiety, depression, or PTSD. The findings raise serious concerns, because PTSD is the most common qualifying condition listed among “medical” marijuana users in Arkansas.

States like California and Colorado legalized marijuana with promises of regulation, oversight, and tax revenue. Instead, legalization has emboldened drug cartels and spread il-

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Federal Government Moves to Reschedule Marijuana (continued)

legal marijuana on the black market. California alone has seized more than \$1.2 billion in illegal cannabis since 2022. And law enforcement has alleged that 40% of America's illicit marijuana has come from legal grow sites in Oklahoma.

All of this matters for Arkansas. Major drug trafficking corridors pass through our state. Arkansas State Police routinely intercept marijuana from other states that appears

to be intended for the black market. As Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders said recently, "Arkansas sits at the heart of major drug-trafficking corridors." That's a serious problem, and softening our federal policies on marijuana will only make that problem worse.

As we have said time and again: Marijuana may be many things, but "harmless" simply is not one of them.

We're Inviting All Our Friends to Become Regular Financial Supporters of Family Council

A couple of years ago, Family Council launched what we call our \$9 Network. It's a group of friends who give \$9 to Family Council every month. That may not sound like much money. You can hardly buy lunch at McDonald's for \$9 any more. But over the course of a year, those \$9 gifts add up to \$108.

We're supported almost entirely by families and churches across Arkansas who care deeply about our work. All of those friends give as they are able. Some give \$9 every month. Others may give \$99. Some may give \$25 once a year. Others may give \$2,500 once a year. But everyone gives as they feel led and as they are able, and I deeply appreciate that. It's humbling when I think about how our friends trust us enough to support our work financially.

If you are not already a monthly supporter of Family Council, I hope you will consider becoming one today, if you are able. There's no obligation. You can scan the QR code on this page or go to FamilyCouncil.org to set up a recurring donation from your credit card or bank account today. You can also fill out the enclosed response card and mail it back to our office with your first month's donation. We understand how finances ebb and flow, so if you need to stop giving for any reason, that's not a problem.

If you would rather give a one-time gift, we would appreciate your support. You can give securely online, over the phone at (501) 375-7000, or through the mail. If you have any questions, feel free to contact our office.

Thank you for your friendship and support! We could not do this without friends like you. Please let us know if there is ever anything my staff or I can do for you.

Sincerely,



Jerry Cox, President

Thank you!!

*Scan here
TO GIVE A TAX-DEDUCTIBLE
GIFT TO FAMILY COUNCIL*



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.

