



ILLINOIS Family Institute

Boldly Bringing a Biblical Perspective to Public Policy in the Land of Lincoln.

Newsletter | Spring 2020

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a **LIVING HOPE** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead...

1 Peter 1:3

illinoisfamily.org



from the **Executive Director — David E. Smith**



In the midst of the ever-developing news regarding the COVID-19 crisis — a crisis that has blindsided our state and nation — President Donald J. Trump did the right thing by calling for a National Day of Prayer on Sunday, March 15th. While there are always serious issues to pray about, the level of anxiety, and even fear, among citizens is at a level many of us have never experienced before. **The need for Christians to participate in national corporate prayer is indisputable.** Yet, unsurprisingly, many in the establishment media “overlooked” the President’s call to seek God’s intervention.

“In our times of greatest need, Americans have always turned to prayer to help guide us through trials and periods of uncertainty,” the Presidential Proclamation states. “As we continue to face the unique challenges posed by the coronavirus pandemic, millions of Americans are unable to gather in their churches, temples, synagogues, mosques, and other houses of worship. But in this time we must not cease asking God for added wisdom, comfort, and strength, and we must especially pray for those who have suffered harm or who have lost loved ones. I ask you to join me in a day of prayer for all people who have been affected by the coronavirus pandemic and to pray for God’s healing hand to be placed on the people of our Nation.”

While some politicians and media pundits are working overtime to convince us that the federal or state government can save us, we know that **God is sovereign** (Psalm 103:19) over the affairs of all creation. **It is to Him we must turn when we encounter various trials.** Yes, we should heed the recommendations of scientists regarding hand-washing, social-distancing, and stocking our pantries with necessities, but we shouldn’t panic or worry. (Mat. 6:34)

The Apostle Paul tells us:

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all

comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. — Phil. 4:6-7

Workplaces, schools, churches, sports stadiums, casinos, and even the state legislature are closed due to the coronavirus. This is a serious pathogen that can be dangerous, even deadly, for many of our vulnerable family members, neighbors, and friends. It is wise to take precautions to prevent its spread. But it is infinitely more important to bow our heads and bend our knees before Almighty God to **make our appeals known to Him.** Again, the Apostle Paul exhorts us to rejoice in hope, persevere in tribulation, and **be constant in prayer.** (Rom. 12:12)

Christians must diligently and fervently pray for our nation and world in the midst of this pandemic. Many of our neighbors will be tempted to give in to fear and uncertainty, but it is important that we remember, as President Trump rightly said, “there is no burden too heavy for God to lift or for this country to bear with His help.” Moreover, this is an opportunity for Christians to shine the Light of Jesus to those who are without hope. May we cast all our anxieties on Him, and let Him sustain us, as the peace of Christ reigns in our hearts. (1 John 4:18; 1 Peter 5:7)

So, we pray for healing for those infected with coronavirus, especially those for whom it can be most dangerous: the elderly and those with underlying medical issues. We pray for protection and strength

BE CONSTANT
in prayer

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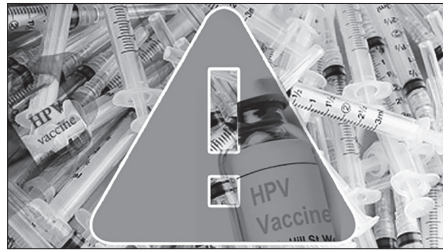


State Lawmakers Think They Know Better Than Parents *by Kathy Valente*

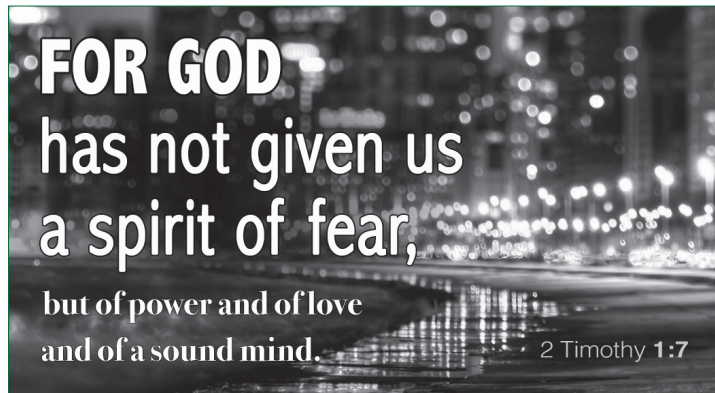
The latest government attempt to usurp parental rights is HB 4870, sponsored by State Representatives **Robin Gabel** (D-Evanston) and **Kelly Cassidy** (D-Chicago). This proposal mandates that *all children* receive the HPV vaccine, Gardasil 9, before entering middle school.

HPV is a sexually transmitted virus that may cause cancer. Reps Gabel and Cassidy assume your child is or will become sexually active at age 10 or 11 or soon thereafter.

The Gardasil 9 web site claims that it will only “help protect against” the human papillomavirus (HPV). And elsewhere, “Gardasil 9 may not fully protect everyone, nor will it protect against diseases caused by other HPV types or against diseases not caused by HPV.”



There are over 200 types of the human papillomavirus (HPV), the majority of which are not harmful, according to the National Vaccine Information Center. Nine of these are associated with genital cancers. The vaccination only “helps to protect” against these nine. And remember HPV is only contracted through sexual activity.



While the Gardasil 9 web site claims the vaccine is safe, many parents reviewing research with titles like these are less certain.

Discrepancies in the evaluation of the safety of the human papillomavirus vaccine

Hypothesis: Human papillomavirus cavination syndrome — small fiber neuropathy and dysautonomia could be its underlying path

Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia With Chronic Fatigue After HPV Vaccination as Part of the “Autoimmune/ Auto-inflammatory Syndrome Induced by Adjuvants”

Chronic epipharyngitis: A missing trigger in chronic fatigue syndrome

Multiple Evanescent White Dot Syndrome after Human Papillomavirus Vaccination

Severe somatoform and dysautonomic syndromes after HPV vaccination: case series and review of literature

The epidemiological profile of ASIA syndrome after HPV vaccination: an evaluation based on the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting Systems

The National Vaccine Information center contains data on HPV and the Gardasil 9 vaccine. It links to the federal Vaccine Adverse Events reporting System (VAERS) which contains more than 62,390 reports of adverse HPV vaccine reactions, 503 related deaths, 6,286 hospitalizations and 3,018 disabling conditions. “Nearly 47 percent of the reported serious adverse events occurred in children and teens 12-17 years of age.”

We are alarmed to learn that Rep. Gabel has taken tens of thousands of dollars in campaign contributions from pharmaceutical companies, the largest amount from Merck, the maker of Gardasil 9. It makes us wonder if she really has the children’s best interest at heart, or those who will profit greatly if HB 4870 becomes law.

Ultimately, medical treatments should be left up to parents and their doctors, not politicians. Please contact your state representative to urge them to oppose HB 4870. ▲

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Lawmakers Push to Expand Sex Ed to Kindergartners by Kathy Valente

Illinois state lawmakers don't think children are learning enough about sex. Apparently the 2013 comprehensive sex ed law, that instructs children in manners that would make most parents blush, wasn't enough. Nor was the law taking effect this July 1st that mandates children graduating 8th grade *must* show a proficiency in LGBT roles and accomplishments. Once again, they are working with Planned Parenthood lobbyists to indoctrinate impressionable children who attend government schools.

There are two bills that should be of great concern to Illinois' parents with children in public school.

SB 2762

- **SB 2762** expands not only sex ed, but also promotes transgenderism and homosexuality to children as early as **kindergarten**. "It is the intent of the General Assembly that comprehensive sex ed shall [*must*]... promote awareness and healthy attitudes about gender identity, gender expression" and "sexual orientation ... and *must* be available to students in **kindergarten through 12th grade.**"

- **SB 2762** requires instruction for **kindergarten through second grade** on "human anatomy...gender roles...[and] varying family structures." Discussing human anatomy in co-ed classrooms with children that young will remove modesty just as it starts to develop. The bill sponsors apparently see this as a good thing. And you can guess what "gender roles" and "varying family structures" will look like.

- **SB 2762** introduces to **third through fifth grade** "diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions. ... and an examination of the harm caused by gender-role stereotypes." All major religions believe God made 2 genders: male and female. Anything else is a lie and an affront to all major religions.

- **SB 2762** mandates a "discussion about ... sexting" to **eight to ten-year-olds**, most of which have never heard of sexting or porn, or even have cell phones. If this bill passes, the government will be stealing the innocence that parents have been working hard to preserve in their children by introducing young children to deviant behavior.

- **SB 2762** forbids the use of "stigmatizing or [using] shame-based instructional tools or stigmatiz[ing] parenting..." and "may not employ gender stereotypes." For example, saying that only girls menstruate or boys have penises would be forbidden.

- **SB 2762** instructs taxpayer funded schools to express only one judgment on homosexuality, cross-sex identification, and same-sex parenting — APPROVAL.

- The bill is endorsed by Planned Parenthood and Equality Illinois. No surprise.



In case SB 2762 isn't enough, they have also proposed SB 3788.

SB 3788

- **SB 3788** adds to "course material and instruction" on "how to give [and] receive...consent" for sexual activity. This will, without a doubt, increase sexual activity for young children.

- **SB 3788** deletes "teach[ing] honor and respect for monogamous heterosexual marriage."

- **SB 3788** deletes "evidence-based" curricula, changing it to "evidence-informed," which is much more useful to those who promote "trans" ideology because there is no hard science *YET* proving that social, chemical, and surgical interventions for gender dysphoric children are harmful.

- **SB 3788** mandates all "material and instruction" be "affirming" of "individuals, families, and communities" in an "inclusive, respectful, and effective" manner based on their "**religion.**" This is impossible when all the major religions have beliefs that are in stark contrast to sexual activity outside of marriage and LBGTQ sexual activity.

Please make it a point to talk to your state senators about these 2 bills. You can find their contact information by going to illinoisfamily.org and clicking on **Officials Finder** in the orange rectangle. Please also share this information with your church leaders and like-minded friends and family. ▴



» » » Don't forget to urge your state lawmakers to <<<<
OPPOSE THE REPEAL OR REWRITING OF ILLINOIS' PARENTAL NOTIFICATION OF ABORTION LAW

Abortion rights activist and president of Personal PAC, **Terry Cosgrove**, says that the repeal is "*the most important bill coming up.*"



Why We Must Win the Next Generation by Jonathan Lewis



The Christian church is only ever one generation away from suffering a major setback. That's why it's vital for us to work diligently to pass our faith and convictions on to our children and grandchildren.

Psalm 78 lays out both the blueprint and the motivation for raising up a generation that follows God; it gives us the *how*, the *who*, the *where* and the *why*. It also gives us an illustration of the consequences if we fail.

The how, who, and where:

I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old, which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, telling to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done. For He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children; that the generation to come might know them, the children who would be born, that they may arise and declare *them* to their children, . . . (Psalm 78:2-6)

"And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up." (Deuteronomy 6:6-7)

We see a few important truths in these verses.

First, we see that the primary mechanism for passing the truth of God on to the next generation is for parents to tell their children. It's parents who are given the indisputable top spot in the training and teaching of their children. Grandparents are also given a role, but you'll search long and hard for any explicit

instructions to anyone else to train the next generation. That doesn't mean no one else can be involved, but it does serve to highlight the absolutely central role and responsibility that parents have.

Second, we can see that the truth that's to be passed on involves both God's law (His commands and instructions), and also God's works (what He has done). This powerful combination comes together to give children both a sense of their responsibility toward God (following His law), and also God's character and faithfulness to His people (what He's capable of doing and how He has taken care of His children in the past).

Third, we see that this isn't a single-generation practice, but an ongoing, multigenerational habit of fathers passing the truth of God on to the next generation, who will do the same with the next one, and so forth, down through many generations.

Fourth, we see the *where* — when you sit, walk, lie down, and rise up. In other words, everywhere!

Moving further in Psalm 78, we see the *why* behind our work:

That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments: And may not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that did not set its heart aright, and whose spirit was not faithful to God. (Psalm 78:7-8).

This is the motivation: we want our children to walk in right relationship with God, putting their hope in Him and walking in His commandments rather than falling into stubbornness and rebellion. We want their hearts to be right with God and their spirits faithful to Him.

This ought to be the desire of every Christian parent and grandparent: to see our children/grandchildren walking in right relationship with God day by day. My wife and I are still early in our parenting journey so we don't have any great successes to speak of, but our greatest desire is to see each of our children come to Christ and live a life of faithful service to God.

In the midst of raising children, it can be easy to lose sight of the *why* behind our work. There are squabbles to settle, diapers to change, a messy house to clean up (and make sure the kids are doing their part), and so much more. It's easy to forget that this is holy work. Vital work. Work with eternal consequences.

And that brings us to the last point I'd like to draw our attention to, found in verses 9-11. It's as if we're being given an example of what can happen when we fail to pass God's truth on to the next generation:

The children of Ephraim, being armed and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle. They kept not the covenant of God; they refused to walk in His law, and forgot His works and His wonders that He had shown them. (Psalm 78:9-11)

This is a sad testimony. The children of Ephraim had the physical weapons they needed in order to do battle, but they apparently lacked the spiritual fortitude. They turned back. Not only that, they didn't follow God—they refused to walk in His law and they forgot His works. Undoubtedly this is what preceded their failure in the day of battle.

This is what's at stake in our quest to pass our faith on to our children: not only their personal walk with God (which is important enough on its own), but also their bold presence on the field of battle, fighting for what's good and right.

I don't want my kids to grow up to become like the children of Ephraim who had the means to do battle but lacked the will. I don't want them to turn their back on God and consequently turn away from standing strong for what's right and true.

The church is always in need of a new generation of faithful followers of Christ, and today is no different. It ought to be our mission to raise up that generation in our own time. The stakes are high. The calling is great. With God's help, let's do our part.

And be encouraged that our God "is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think..." (Ephesians 3:20) Amen! ▀



Marijuana and the Coronavirus by David G. Evans, Esq.

The Centers for Disease Control states that the people at higher risk of getting very sick or dying from this illness include:¹

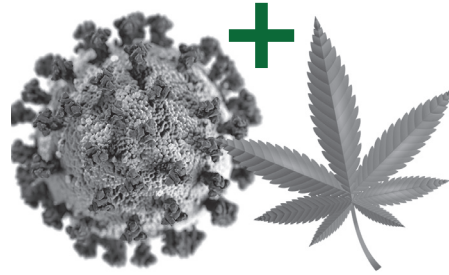
Older adults and people who have serious chronic medical conditions like:

1. **Heart disease**
2. **Diabetes**
3. **Lung disease**

This means that if your immune system is impaired or you have a lung problem you are very vulnerable. What does the science say about marijuana use and impaired immune function or lung disease?

A comprehensive study of the dangers of marijuana smoke by the Hazard Assessment Branch of the California Environmental Protection Agency concluded in part that:

"There is evidence that marijuana smoke is genotoxic, **immunosuppressive**, and can alter endocrine function. Studies of 9-THC and other cannabinoids provide evidence for alterations of multiple cell signaling pathways, in endocrine function, and suppression of the innate and adaptive immune response. Prolonged exposures to marijuana smoke in animals and humans cause **proliferative and inflammatory lesions in the lung.**"²



One of the earliest findings in marijuana research was the effect on various immune functions. Cellular immunity is impaired, pulmonary immunity is impaired, and impaired ability to fight infection is now documented in humans. This impairment leaves the patient unable to fight certain infections and fatal diseases. The potential for these complications exists in all forms of administration of marijuana.³

Contaminants of marijuana smoke are known to include bacteria and fungi. Those at particular risk for the development of infection when these substances are inhaled are people with impaired immunity.⁴

A study done at the University of California, Davis discovered that medical marijuana from 20 dispensaries contained multiple fungal and bacterial contaminants that were highly toxic and can cause

serious and sometimes fatal infections among marijuana users. Smoking, vaping or inhaling aerosolized marijuana is a serious health risk, especially for people with chronic conditions or other conditions requiring immunosuppressing therapies. The study revealed a multitude of toxic microorganisms, many of which are known causes of serious lung infections, including *Cryptococcus*, *Mucor*, and *Aspergillus* fungi and *Escherichia coli*, *Klebsiella pneumoniae* and *Acinetobacter baumannii* bacteria.⁵

Can marijuana use open your body up to a virus?

A study from Harvard Medical School showed that marijuana use opens the door for the virus that causes Kaposi's Sarcoma. This is a serious life-threatening problem for people with HIV infection.⁶ ▀

Reprinted with permission by David G. Evans, Esq., who is Senior Counsel for the Cannabis Industry Victims Educating Litigators (CIVEL). CIVEL educates lawyers on how to make the marijuana industry accountable to their many victims. Mr. Evans was a plaintiff's litigator in personal injury and employment law cases. He is the author of Employee Medical Leave, Benefits and Disabilities Law §§ 1:1 et seq. (2019 ed.), and Drug Testing Law, Technology and Practice §§ 1:1 et seq. published by Thomson Reuters. seniorcounsel@civel.org or www.civel.org

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/high-risk-complications.html>

² Evidence on the Carcinogenicity of Marijuana Smoke, August 2009, Reproductive and Cancer Hazard Assessment Branch Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, California <https://oehha.ca.gov/media/downloads/proposition-65/chemicals/finalmjsmokebid.pdf>

³ Cabral & Vasquez, Delta-9-Tetrahydrocannabinol suppresses macrophage extrinsic anti-herpes virus activity, *Cannabis: Physiopathology, Epidemiology, Detection* pp. 137-153 (CRC Press 1993); "Immunological Changes Associated with Prolonged Marijuana Smoking" -American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology, 17 November 2004; "Respiratory and Immunologic Consequences of Marijuana Smoking" - *Journal of Clinical Pharmacology*, 2002; 42:71S-81S; Wu et al., Pulmonary hazards of smoking marijuana as compared with tobacco, *NEJM*, 1988;318:347-351.

⁴ Fleisher, Winawer & Zauber, Aspergillosis and marijuana, *Annals of Internal Medicine* 1991;115:578-579; Ramirez, Acute pulmonary histoplasmosis: newly recognized hazard of marijuana plant hunters, *American Journal of Medicine* 1990;88:5-60N-5-62N; Taylor et al., Salmonellosis associated with marijuana: a multi state outbreak traced by plasmid fingerprinting, *NEJM* 1982;306:1249-1254.

⁵ UC Davis. Clinical Microbiology and Infection, titled, "A microbiome assessment of medical marijuana." In press. <http://www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/publish/news/newsroom/11791>. March 13, 2018

⁶ "Marijuana Component Opens The Door For Virus That Causes Kaposi's Sarcoma" -Science Daily, 2 August 2007

from the **Executive Director — David E. Smith**

(continued from page 1)

for their families. We pray for health care providers and first responders who

are caring for and aiding those who are infected, that God would grant them protection and great endurance in this crisis.

We pray for wisdom for our leaders and for those researching a cure. We pray for those who are facing economic distress due to the loss of a job or reduced work hours. We pray that our rebellious, agnostic, and/or unbelieving neighbors will wrestle with the reality of their own mortality and diligently seek God. (Deut. 4:29; Prov. 8:17; Jer. 29:13; Mat 7:7; Luke 11:9; Ps. 105:4)

Finally, we ask God for discernment for all of us, that we would not give in to fear or misinformation, but rather that we would place our hope, our wellbeing, and our lives in His hands as we seek to bless and serve others. ▀

BE CONSTANT
in prayer



SPRINGFIELD | UPDATE 2020

For additional information, please call the IFI office 708-781-9328.



SUPPORT

HB 3515, sponsored by **Tom Morrison** (R-Palatine), Youth Health Protection Act prohibits a medical doctor from prescribing or delivering puberty-suppressing drugs or cross-sex hormones and prohibits sexreassignment surgery on anatomically normal persons under the age of 18.

HB 4060, sponsored by **Margo McDermed** (R-New Lenox), purges voter files of deceased voters.

HB 4134, sponsored by **Daniel Didech** (D-Buffalo Grove), creates a registry by which an individual struggling with addiction can willingly add his/her name to be prohibited from entering or purchasing at a marijuana dispensary.

HB 4141, sponsored by **Deanne Mazzochi** (R-Westmont), increases penalties for human trafficking.

HB 4143, sponsored by **Deanne Mazzochi** (R-Westmont), allows for a school district to opt out of unfunded mandates.

HB 4146, sponsored by **Deanne Mazzochi** (R-Westmont), creates the Rights of Conscience Act.

HB 4304, sponsored by **Allen Skillicorn** (R-Crystal Lake), creates the Infant Born Alive Protection Act.

HB 4394, sponsored by **Patrick Windhorst** (R-Harrisburg), repeals tax-funded abortions.

HB 4416, sponsored by **Anthony DeLuca** (D-Chicago Heights), prohibits unincorporated areas within a county from selling cannabis within a 1.5 mile radius of any municipality that has opted out of retail sales.

HB 4763, sponsored by **Martin Moylan** (D-Des Plaines), prohibits General Assembly members/families or state employees from involvement with a cannabis business.

HB 5377, sponsored by **Tom Morrison** (R-Palatine), requires voter ID to vote.

HB 5559, sponsored by **Allen Skillicorn** (R-Crystal Lake), allows for a family member to bring a civil suit against a sanctuary city from which, due to a sanctuary policy, the family member was a victim of murder, rape or any felony by an illegal alien.

OPPOSE

HB 2467 and **SB 1594**, sponsored by **Emmanuel Chris Welch** (D-Westchester) and **Elgie Sims** (D-Chicago), respectively, repeals the Parental Notice of Abortion Act.

HB 3624, chief sponsor is **Ann Williams** (D-Chicago), creates several new Acts to reduce carbon emissions like the Green New Deal.

HB 3972, sponsored by **Rita Mayfield** (D-Waukegan), allows for early parole, even for a prisoner serving a life sentence for a heinous crime.

HB 4339, sponsored by **David Welter** (R-Morris), allows electronic advertising and marketing of cannabis.

HB 4870, sponsored by **Robin Gabel** (D-Evanston), mandates the Gardasil 9 Vaccine for 11 to 12-yr olds to “help” prevent the sexually transmitted disease Human Papillomavirus (HPV).

HB 5012 and **SB 3788**, sponsored by **Camille Lilly** (D-Oak Park) and **Celina Villanueva** (D-Summit) respectively, amends sex education law to include affirmation of homosexuals and cross-dressers; includes instruction on how to give/receive consent for sexual activity for 6th graders; deletes teaching “honor and respect for monogamous heterosexual marriage”; and replaces “evidence-based” curricula with the far less rigorous requirement of “evidence-informed.”

HB 5472, sponsored by **Sonya Harper** (D-Chicago), allows licenses to sell marijuana at temporary events.

HB 5474, sponsored by **Theresa Mah** (D-Chicago), allows non-citizens to vote in municipal and school board elections.

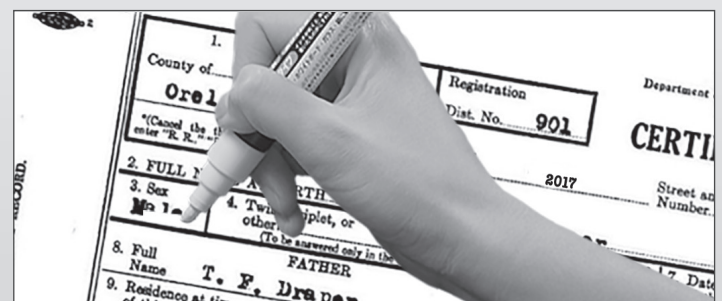
HB 5506, sponsored by **Barbara Hernandez** (D-Aurora), forces pregnancy care centers to display a notice about obtaining an abortion.

HB 5578, sponsored by **Michelle Mussman** (D-Schaumburg), allows sexual misconduct in schools if the employee is no more than 3 years older than the student or the student and employee were in a “romantic relationship that began before the employee was with the school.”

HB 5637, sponsored by **Ann Williams** (D-Chicago), allows for a married couple to change their “gender identifiers” on their marriage certificate.

HB 5654, sponsored by **Jennifer Gong-Gershowitz** (D-Glenview), a new birth certificate for someone that has undergone gender transition.

continued... >>





Did YOU KNOW?

When Illinois' first state Constitution was adopted in 1818 (in Kaskaskia), Article VIII section 3 declared:

That all men have a natural and infeasible right to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of their own consciences; that no man can of right be compelled to attend, erect, or support any place of worship, or to maintain any ministry against his consent; that no human authority can, in any case whatever, control or interfere with the rights of conscience; and that no preference shall ever be given by law to any religious establishments or modes of worship. ▀

OPPOSE *continued...*

HB 5656, sponsored by **Jonathan Pizer** (D-Chicago), mandates abortion insurance coverage.

SB 2762, sponsored by **Ram Villivalam** (D-Chicago), expands sex ed to kindergartners that will include instruction on “human anatomy...gender roles... [and] varying family structures;” ... “gender identity, gender expression” and “sexual orientation;” instruction “may not use stigmatizing or shame-based instructional tools or stigmatize parenting or sexually active youth;” and “may not employ gender stereotypes.” Eight to ten-year-old students will be introduced to “sexting.”

SB 3576, sponsored by **Melinda Bush** (D-Grayslake), allows for a pharmacist to dispense birth control without a doctor's prescription.

SB 3668, sponsored by **Heather Steans** (D-Chicago), repeals religious exemptions for immunizations. ▀

Social Media Platforms *by David E. Smith*

Due to Americans being told to employ social-distancing measures or to self-quarantine, we want to make sure you and your family are aware of IFI's social media platforms, especially the great content we have on the IFI YouTube channel.

As you know, Illinois Family Institute works hard to disseminate Judeo-Christian truths in the public square via all possible communication mediums. Social media is a large part of the public square and we must not leave it devoid of our voice.

You can connect with IFI, read and share articles, then plan to attend future IFI events, and get involved in being salt and light.

If you're reading this, you probably already know about the Illinois Family Institute website. But there's more — much more!

Follow and tweet with IFI on **Twitter**, watch and share our videos on **YouTube**, interact via the Illinois Family App for Android or iPhone, listen to the weekly Illinois Family Action **podcasts**, and sign up for **Text Alerts**, which serve as an SOS for time-sensitive information and alerts.

Wise King Solomon wrote in Proverbs 29,

“Where there is no vision, the people perish.”

The Apostle Peter wrote 2,000 years ago,

But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15).

Options for staying social ... amidst COVID-19



Those inspired words are as true today as they were all those millennia ago. Illinois Family Institute is using multiple platforms in order to shine the light and dispense the salt, to share God's vision, and to help you be equipped with the answers for the hope that is in you.

Please join us in this great venture, using the latest iteration of the Gutenberg press — digital and social media — as we attempt to teach the world to observe all that God commands.

We hope and pray that all culture warriors and concerned citizens will take advantage of these tools to help oppose the latest rot being promoted in the culture and to support policies that contribute to the public good and human flourishing. ▀

SCOTUS Abortion Case

The U.S. Supreme Court recently heard arguments in a pivotal abortion case in 2020 which originated in Louisiana. IFI has filed an amicus brief on behalf of Illinois families, which ensures that your views on *genuine* women's healthcare and on the issue of life will be properly represented as the Justices consider their decision. Please remember to pray for members of the Court and their staff. ▀





Baby Owen Smith

by David E. Smith

Late in the afternoon on January 29, my wife and I welcomed our newborn son to the Smith Family. Weighing in at 7lbs 2oz and measuring 19 inches long, Owen is the youngest of eight children. We were surprised to learn that he has Down Syndrome, among other significant medical challenges.

On the second night after his arrival, we became concerned about Owen's erratic



breathing. We called our family physician and reported our concerns. We were told to go to Hope Children's Hospital ER in Oak Lawn. Shortly after arriving at the hospital, we learned that Owen, like many other Down babies, had an imperforate anus and an AV canal defect (his heart).

On his third day of life, Owen had colostomy surgery so that he could pass his stools. He will have a colostomy bag and a nasogastric tube (feeding tube) for the short term. Owen spent 9 days in the hospital, seven in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU). We are eternally grateful for the amazing medical teams that worked to stabilize him and for those who cared for him.

The morning after Owen's surgery, my wife and I let them know how much we appreciated their work, saying "God equipped you with special skills and knowledge to help the least of these, and we thank you for using those gifts to save our little Owen and all the kids on this floor."

Babies born with these medical conditions 70 years ago wouldn't have had a chance. The technology and science just wasn't there. Owen would have died.

This entire experience had a profound impact on us. From Owen's hospital room, I sent the following message to the IFI staff:

"I honestly didn't think I could be more pro-life than I've been over the last 25+ years... but this experience has given me a different perspective which has only served to reinforce what it means to be pro-life and care for 'the least of these.'"

Being on the PICU floor with other parents and young patients opened our eyes to the fact that many of our neighbors are going through medical challenges. Working with various medical specialists opened our eyes to the fact that there are many more Down Syndrome children in our culture than we would have guessed. I have no doubt that these special people are included when Jesus used the phrase "the least of these" in Matthew 25:40-45.

The world is cruel to "the least of these." As for Down Syndrome, we were already aware that Iceland was well on its way to eliminating these children through abortion. I remember a 2012 article that ran in *Christianity Today* titled: "Children with Down Syndrome: Will Culture Make Them Disappear?"

The author of that article, Kelly Rosati, stated that even though there have been "huge advances in improving quality of life—life expectancy has doubled from 25 to 55 years in the last 30 years due to medication, therapies, and specialized surgery—the population of those with Down Syndrome is barreling toward extinction."

That was also the message behind a 2011 article in the *New York Post* titled "The End of Down's Syndrome." The article estimated that 92 percent of women who are told their child will have down syndrome choose abortion.

May God forgive us!

I read about another couple from Oregon who received a \$2.9 million settlement because their doctor failed to diagnose Down Syndrome during pregnancy. The parents, through their lawyer, told the media that while they loved their little girl, they would have terminated the pregnancy had they known her diagnosis.

Can we get anymore selfish and self-

absorbed?

In 2017, Patricia Heaton, actress and honorary chair of Feminists for Life, wrote an article in *American Magazine* saying:



"As Christians, we must always engage in this battle by being a voice for the voiceless and taking seriously Christ's command to care for the least among us. In a world where we are daily conditioned to expect an environment that caters to our every need and desire, we must remind ourselves that the value of our lives and the lives of others is based not on material wealth or accomplishments but on the intrinsic worth we all possess as human beings created by God and in His image."

Heaton goes on to quote John Paul II:

"A society will be judged on the basis of how it treats its weakest members, and among the most vulnerable are surely the unborn and the dying."

Yes, being the father of Owen has made me ever so much more pro-life. I am proud to work at a bold pro-life organization that will not shrink back from telling the truth about the wickedness of abortion.

I realize how much more work we have in front of us, if we hope to educate friends and neighbors and realize that day when our country will gain the courage and conviction to stand up on behalf of the pre-born and the least among us.

To me it couldn't be clearer. We must speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves. Proverbs 31:8-9 challenges us to advocate for those who have no voice:

"Speak for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy."

We're called to reach out with care to our neighbors in need. And we called to speak out with courage and compassion for the least among us.

continued... >>



Near Extinction: Blue Dog Democrats *by David E. Smith*

While Vote-By-Mail is becoming more popular among voters, the overall turnout for the March 17th Primary Election was lower than normal. For example, the turnout for the Illinois Primary dropped more than 20 percent from 2016. One could only guess that the COVID-19 crisis kept many people from going to the polls.

But that didn't stop left-wing abortion fanatics from working diligently for their candidates of "choice." With each election cycle, these activists seem to make steady progress of purifying the Democratic Party during the primary election or adding to their caucus of abortion cheerleaders in the general election.

For example, the southwest side of Chicago and its suburbs used to have pro-life Irish Catholic Democrats representing House Districts 35 and 36 and Senate District 18. Today, those seats have incumbents that are unapologetically pro-abortion, though they still identify as Irish Catholic Democrats.

That trend has now extended to the entire 3rd Congressional District as pro-life U.S. Representative **Dan Lipinski** lost his primary race to pro-abortion **Marie Newman**. While Lipinski was good on the life issue, we could not call him pro-family, as most of his votes fell in line with Speaker Nancy Pelosi's caucus.



It is important to note that pro-abortion purists within the Democratic Party are absolutely intolerant of anything less than

full compliance with their radical agenda to make money by killing pre-born babies.

Why not? After all, it is "legal." On that point, Dr. **Albert Mohler** opined:

The thing we need to note now is that the only word the Democratic party will agree with, even if it were in conversation with its own candidate in 1992, is "legal." "Safe" and "rare" have disappeared. Rare, of course, implies that it should be rare.

And what about "safe" abortions? Dr. Mohler continues:

The greatest evidence [that safety is no longer an issue] is that the Democrats will go to war with any state restriction that is actually enacted in order to protect a woman's health in the context of an abortion.

Denyse Wang Stoneback (Skokie) soundly defeated progressive **Mark Kalish** in the 16th district three-way primary. Kalish's only crime? He voted "present" on the Reproductive Health Act (SB 25) which radically expanded abortion in our state.

By our count, only three pro-life Democrats remain when it comes to state and federal legislators. State Representatives **Nathan Reitz** of Red Bud, **Monica Bristow** of Alton and **Sue Scherer** of Decatur (though she voted for the ERA.)

Pro-abortion forces are already fundraising, planning and messaging for the November general election. Pro-life candidates will need our prayers, our time and our donations if we hope to see them win these seats. We can ill afford to sit on the sidelines while the enemies of pre-born babies are busily working toward their goals. ▲

Baby Owen already has a strong support structure around him. Seven older siblings and two parents that love him enormously and care for his physical, emotional and spiritual needs. We will do everything we can to help him flourish and reach his full potential. Honestly, we can only imagine how God is going to use him in our family and for His glory. May his precious life silence the ignorance of foolish men. (1 Peter 2:15)

Smith Family Prayer Request

In addition to the medical conditions listed above, baby Owen has been diagnosed with transient abnormal myelopoiesis (TAM). Twenty percent of Downs kids develop leukemia, but 80 percent outgrow it. Further blood tests should tell us more. In the meantime, we can pray that Owen is part of the 80 percent who outgrow it.

Baby Owen still faces at least 3 or more surgeries in the coming months. We would appreciate if you would lift him up in prayers over the next several months. ▲

Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot Lobbies for a Casino

Before the COVID-19 became an all-consuming crisis, Chicago Mayor **Lightfoot** was busy working with Springfield lawmakers in order to make a Chicago casino a reality. It is hard to believe, but the mayor is actually lobbying to cut the tax rate for a Chicago casino at the very same time she is lobbying for a greater percentage of the filthy lucre for the City. According to Crain's Chicago Business, "a casino operator would pay an effective tax rate of 72 percent to operate a Chicago casino." So it is really no surprise that there isn't a rush of bidders. The Mayor claims that the city's cut of gambling revenue would be dedicated to underfunded police and fire pension funds.

Wouldn't it be nice if the Mayor was visiting state lawmakers urging them to cut the tax rate for Chicago small businesses and working families? Unfortunately, that doesn't seem to be on the agenda.



The Good News: "For seven years in a row, the gambling industry in Illinois has seen a decline in the amount of revenues earned. The year 2019 was not a good one, as the state Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability reported a 1.5% decline from 2018." (US Gambling News) ▲





Please Don't Forget IFI

The fact that Illinois state lawmakers have not been in session since the first week of March is indeed a silver lining behind the COVID-19 crisis cloud. As you can see from our Springfield Update on page 6, there are many anti-family proposals that may not be debated and called for a vote. For this, we are truly thankful.

To be honest with you, the board of directors and I are concerned about the drop off in donations to IFI that we've seen since the coronavirus situation has been a 24/7 "breaking news" story.

As Executive Director, I cannot help but wonder how depleted our resources will be when this issue finally subsides.

We know that left-wing lobbyists funded by Planned Parenthood, the ACLU and Equality Illinois are continuing their work to gain support for radical policies that reflect their libertine worldview.

We know that religious freedom will come under further attack from those who demand conformity to the fundamentalist



doctrines of the "brave new world."

We know that the serial slaughter of preborn children by the abortion industry continues unabated in Illinois. In fact, business is so good, they've opened three new mills to accommodate the bloodshed, while other states have closed them down.

We know that our local public libraries have been providing platforms for drag queens in order to inculcate preschoolers.

We know that government schools are teaching students that they are the masters of their own existence, and they can choose their own gender. I guess truth is defined by intersectionality rank.

To continue to be your bold voice of truth in the public square here in this

state, Illinois Family Institute needs your continued prayerful and financial support. For every dollar raised by IFI for pro-family work, our opponents raise thousands.

We rely on donations from people like you who will make a sacrifice to see that our Christian values are represented in the deliberations of the state legislature and in the public square.

If you support our efforts to stand up to the latest attacks on Judeo-Christian values, please do not forget about us during this time of national emergency. If you are able, and only if you are able, please prayerfully consider making a donation to support the work of IFI. Your support will help us fulfill our mission to "boldly bring a biblical perspective to public policy."

I am ever grateful for your generosity and thank you in advance. ▲

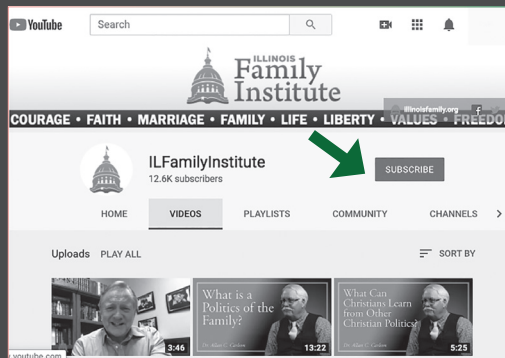
David E. Smith

Check 'Em Out!

We are very excited by the fact that we now have over 12.5K subscribers on the IFI YouTube channel (ILFamilyInstitute). We'd like to believe that the excellent content and the variety of subjects are among the chief reasons why we've seen steady growth over the last several years. Please, come on over and scroll through our content and see what you've been missing. If you like it, please click the "subscribe" button to be notified when we post new content.

We have short videos as well as longer videos that feature local and national Christian leaders. For example, we have videos that feature:

- Professor Anthony Esolen
- Brigitte Gabriel
- Franklin Graham
- Pastor Doug Wilson
- Dr. Alan Carlson
- Mary Louise Hengesbaugh
- Anita Bedell
- Peter Breen
- Michael Medved
- Rod Dreher
- Dr. Erwin Lutzer
- Dr. Michael L. Brown



We have previous banquet speakers and Worldview sessions, as well as great interviews with pro-life/pro-family activists and experts. Please take advantage of these educational videos for yourself and your extended family and friends at church! ▲

The Lord is my light and my

SALVATION

-whom shall I fear?

The Lord is the stronghold

OF MY LIFE

-of whom shall I be afraid?

Psalm • Twenty-seven • One

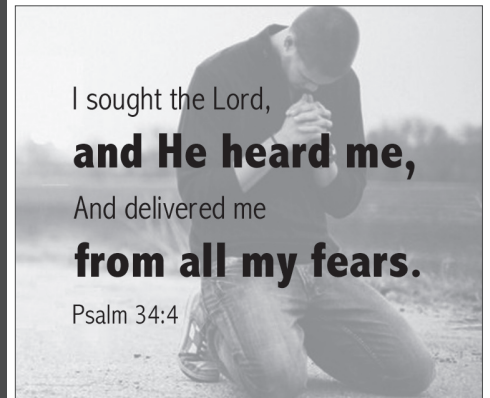
I sought the Lord,

and He heard me,

And delivered me

from all my fears.

Psalm 34:4





Public Schools Failing Illinois Children Academically

by Alex Newman

As if the sexualization and radical politics were not enough cause for alarm, the latest data shows public schools are failing Illinois children academically, too — and big time! Indeed, the vast majority of high-school graduates are unprepared for basic college work.

According to a recent report by Chicago Public Media, almost two thirds of the new students enrolled in Chicago-area community colleges placed below college level on their placement exams. That means they must complete remedial education to proceed, even under the watered-down “college” standards that exist today.

Furthermore, even though the colleges only offer two-year degrees, just one in ten of those students in remedial classes — euphemistically dubbed “developmental education” — end up graduating within *three* years. By contrast, the figure is about one third among students not in remedial education.

One developmental English professor at a community college in Chicago, **Tara Whitehair**, was quoted revealing that many students lack even a “basic foundation” in “literacy.” Comparing that to the “foundation for a house,” Whitehair said it “takes time” to bring students up to that level.

In previous generations, graduating from 2nd or 3rd grade without strong literacy skills would have been unthinkable. Today, however, according to the government’s own literacy data, many high-school graduates would struggle to read their own diploma.

Other professors interviewed for the story confirmed the extent of the disaster. “When I ask them to go to a [reading] and say, ‘What is this text saying? Put this into your own words’ ... they can’t,” Wright College English Professor **Carrie Mocarski** said. “They can’t comprehend the writing. ... Generally we’re not talking about academic journals, we’re talking about newspaper articles.”

The reporter confirmed the dismal situation. “Students also haven’t learned

to write academic essays,” reported **Kate MgGee** in an in-depth piece about “Starting College Behind.” “Many don’t know how to craft a thesis statement or cite research. They struggle with sentence structure, topic sentences, vocabulary and grammar.”

If these were 3rd graders, or even perhaps 5th graders, it might be understandable that they struggle with sentence structure, grammar, or vocabulary. Yet it completely boggles the mind to contemplate how anybody could graduate from junior high — much less high school — without being able to write a thesis statement or cite research.

The problems begin early, though. According to 2019 results from the U.S. Department of Education’s National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), known as “America’s Report Card,” less than one third of American 8th-grade students are proficient in *any* core subject. That includes math and English. In 4th grade, NAEP data show well over a third of children are “below basic,” which means they cannot read at all.

Despite spending an astonishing \$17,000 per pupil annually, the 12th highest in the nation, Illinois is slightly *worse* off than the atrocious national average when it comes to NAEP scores. But it is not the money that is the issue — some of the highest spending districts, such as Baltimore and Detroit, have among the lowest scores in the nation.

Other data confirms the fact that American children are getting dumber and dumber with each passing generation. The SAT, for instance, must be regularly re-centered to conceal the ongoing plunge in scores and educational levels.

According to recent ACT’s data, which also relies on standardized testing, just two out of five high-school graduates were ready for college work, with the numbers continuing to drop. Only about one in four graduating students had the “foundational work readiness skills needed for more than nine out of 10 jobs recently profiled in



ACT’s JobPro database,” ACT researchers found.

Incredibly, instead of addressing the real problem — a fraudulent K-12 “education” that leaves students unprepared for anything except collecting welfare and contemplating “gender identity” — lobbyists are working to scale back or even eliminate remedial education completely. More tax-funded “financial aid” to the students, even when the overwhelmingly majority will never graduate, is also being advocated, along with more hand-holding by ever more “advisors.”

Others wring their hands and blame “poverty,” “systemic racism,” “oppression,” and all sorts of other real and imagined problems. And yet, Americans today are dumber than ever before, despite the nation and its people being richer and less racist than ever before. Data from the 1800s, for instance, reveals that Americans were far more literate than compared with today.

With government schools pumping out illiterate and innumerate graduates by the millions after bilking taxpayers for more than \$200,000 per child over the span of 12 years, the question must be asked, “What are the schools actually doing?” The answer is simple: indoctrinating, sexualizing, and confusing the children on an unprecedented scale.

In any other industry, these sort of abysmal numbers would be prosecuted as fraud and extortion. But when it comes to government schools, the education establishment simply demands more money and more victims. This is absolutely outrageous. It should not be tolerated for another instant. ▀

Prayer Requests . . .

Many of us were taken by surprise as we walked into our usually well-stocked local grocery store only to find long lines and various shelves absolutely empty. For many of us, having church via livestream was more than a little different. We receive constant news updates — not just from media outlets but from banks, stores and more — as schools are closed, events are cancelled or postponed, and places of business curtail hours and minimize the number of people allowed.

Thankfully, we have a president who is not only working hard to protect the American people, but rightfully called for a National Day of Prayer on March 15th in response to this international crisis. Prayer is our only real option here. Christians should be praying fervently every day, multiple times a day, to appeal to the One who could heal our land and stop this disease from spreading.

I call on You, my God, for You will answer me; turn Your ear to me and hear my prayer. Psalm 17:6

*Now to Him
who is able to do
immeasurably
more than
all we ask or
imagine,
according to His
power that is at work within us, to Him be glory
in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations,
for ever and ever!* Ephesians 3:20

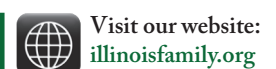
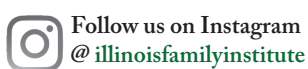
What a beautiful picture of our Heavenly Father, whose mere word was capable of creating the universe and everything in it. And this incredibly powerful sovereign God wants to comfort you with His assurance that we haven't seen anything yet, but what's more — there's nothing He can't do! (Matthew 19:26)



Please Pray...

- that God would use this crisis, this wake-up call, to draw people to Himself. Pray for the spread of the Gospel. In this time of great anxiety, pray that God's people would be ready to meet the world with the comfort and hope that only the good news of Jesus Christ can offer. (John 14:27)
- that through this we would better understand what it means to "walk by faith and not by sight" (2 Cor 5:7). Scripture teaches us that God has not given us a spirit of fear but of power and love and self-control (2 Tim 1:7). Pray for enduring faith during this season of heightened fear, anxiety, and confusion. Appropriate precautions should be taken, but Christians must continue to rely on God and trust His purposes and plans (Rom. 8:28).
- for honest reporting. Christians should pray for those in the news media. Pray that reporters and journalists would accurately report updates about the status of the virus, and not seek to peddle conspiracies, politicize the threat or stoke fear where it is unwarranted.
- for healthcare workers who are on the front lines. Pray for protection of their health and protection of the health of their families.
- for your pastors and the leaders of your church.
- that God will sustain His children, their families and small businesses who are being hit very hard during the "stay in place" order.
- for God's mercy, comfort and healing for those who have tested positive for the coronavirus.
- that the "stay in place" order will quickly diminish new outbreaks and life can get back to normal.
- that since the Capital is closed, the bills that IFI opposes will not be able to move. Pray that the session would end quickly and without these anti-family proposals moving forward.
- that IFI's Freedom & Justice Law Center will be under way and operational soon.
- that God would continue to provide all of IFI's financial needs. ▀

Stay up-to-speed on news impacting the family



Illinois Family Institute is a non-partisan, non-profit 501c3 organization. Gifts to IFI are tax-deductible. IFI has a working relationship with the American Family Association, Alliance Defending Freedom, Family Research Council, Mauck & Baker, Liberty Counsel, and the Thomas More Society.

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