



Biblical Citizenship Briefing

August 2019

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In California

State Legislative Session Ends September 13 – California lawmakers have returned from their summer recess and have until mid-September to complete the year’s session. All bills must complete their trip through both the State Assembly and Senate by September 13 to move to the governor’s desk. Bills that fail to pass both houses may have an opportunity to re-enter the process in January. Several bills we have discussed over the past months are poised for votes on the floor of their second house and could be on Gov. Newsom’s desk in the next weeks. These include:

LGBTQ Teacher Training – [AB 493](#) (Todd Gloria, D-San Diego) requires all California public schools, including charter schools, to provide specific LGBTQ training to all 7th-12th grade certificated staff and track the staff’s attendance. Some teachers with traditional biblical values have reported feeling uncomfortable and even maligned at trainings *already* taking place in the state for teachers at all grade levels, causing some question as to whether the bill is even necessary.

Student ID Cards – [AB 624](#) (Jesse Gabriel, D-L.A.) requires that all public and charter school identification cards for students in grades 7-12, and at public colleges, include “a sexual or reproductive health hotline” number in addition to the National Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Hotlines. Currently ID cards are only required by law to carry the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline telephone number. The bill does not specify a particular hotline, but it is likely that a number for Planned Parenthood or a similar organization would be used on many, if not most, cards. Alliance Defending Freedom believes AB 624 makes students “billboards” for services they disagree with and states in its legal memorandum, “Such compelled speech, especially on controversial issues like abortion and sexuality, violate the First Amendment rights of students and educational institutions alike.”

Therapy for LGBTQ Persons – [ACR 99](#) (Evan Low, D-San Francisco) does not have the force of law, but may lead to a bill next year. It makes broad statements about “conversion therapy” for counseling persons with unwanted same-sex attraction or gender dysphoria being “ineffective, unethical and harmful,” referring to practices often associated with the term which have not been utilized by any professionals for decades. The Coalition for Counseling Choice, which includes representatives of ministries who have benefited from restorative therapy, offer [this official letter](#) in opposition.

If any of these measures concern you, please contact your state senator with your views. Find your state senator [here](#). You may also share your concerns with Gov. Newsom [here](#), should the bills reach his desk next month.

Medication Abortions at Campus Clinics – [SB 24](#) (Connie Leyva, D-Chino) requires health centers on Cal State and UC campuses to dispense RU-486, the abortion pill. Not to be confused with the “morning after” pill, these chemical abortions include a two-pill combination that can be used up to ten weeks’ gestation. The first kills the unborn child and the second induces a miscarriage. Gov. Brown vetoed a similar bill last year as unnecessary, since abortion facilities are already located in close proximity of these campuses. Opponents are elated when the California Dept. of Finance recently issued its [report](#) indicating that implementation at UC campuses alone could cost taxpayers up to \$7.8 million with millions more in ongoing costs annually. The bill is currently in the Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file awaiting a hearing.

Transgender Rights in Prison – [SB 132](#) (Anthony Wiener, D-San Francisco) allows prisoners to declare a gender identity different from their biological sex “with or without a diagnosis of gender dysphoria or any other physical or mental health diagnosis, and regardless of anatomy.” Based solely on the inmate’s statement, the Department of Corrections would be required to provide re-assignment to the desired male or female facility to be housed in the general population or in protective custody, and in a single or double cell, or dorm, as requested by the prisoner.

If either of these bills concern you, please contact your assembly member with your views. Find your assembly member [here](#). You may also share your concerns with Gov. Newsom [here](#), should the bills reach his desk next month.

In the Courts

Employees' Religious Rights Score Win – Last month, American Medical Response of Tennessee (AMR) [settled](#) a religious discrimination lawsuit filed in federal court by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) on behalf of a former employee who had asked for Sundays off to attend worship. Her requests were initially accommodated (under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 employers must provide “reasonable accommodation” for an employee’s sincerely-held religious beliefs), but she was subsequently fired. While there are exceptions for employers faced with “undue hardship,” that was not the case here. The employee was provided \$40,000 in monetary relief and AMR must implement a religious accommodation policy and train its staff accordingly. This is a win for her and for all religious employees. Read more [here](#).

In the News

Feds Propose Protections for Religious Organizations – In another win for religious freedom, the federal Department of Labor (DOL) is proposing a new rule to offer the “broadest protection permitted by law” to faith-based organizations doing business with the federal government. A DOL [news release](#) indicates that the rule draws from the Civil Rights Act of 1964, various executive orders, and Supreme Court cases in order to clarify that faith-based organizations “may make employment decisions consistent with their sincerely held religious tenets and beliefs without fear of sanction by the federal government. The proposal also reaffirms employers’ obligations not to discriminate on the basis of race, sex, or other protected bases and does not exempt or excuse a contractor from complying with any other requirements.” Acting Labor Secretary Patrick Pizella said, “[The] proposed rule helps to ensure the civil rights of religious employers are protected. As people of faith with deeply held religious beliefs are making decisions on whether to participate in federal contracting, they deserve clear understanding of their obligations and protections under the law.” Read more [here](#). The public comment period on the rule ends September 16. Read the proposal and submit comments [here](#).

Planned Parenthood to Lose \$60 Million in Federal Funding – In [last month’s briefing](#), we discussed the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) “Protect Life Rule” which prohibits federal Title X funds from being granted to family planning programs that promote abortion. It also requires physical separation between facilities that provide abortion and those that offer family planning not related to abortion. In view of this, on August 19, Planned Parenthood decided to no longer accept Title X federal grants for family planning. This means, the abortion giant could stand to lose some \$60 million in taxpayer funding which will instead go to local community clinics and other facilities. HHS spokeswoman Mia Heck stated, “To the extent that Planned Parenthood claims that it must make burdensome changes to comply with the Final Rule, it is actually choosing to place a higher priority on the ability to refer for abortion instead of continuing to receive federal funds to provide a broad range of acceptable and effective family planning methods and services to clients in need of these services.” Planned Parenthood will still receive funds from state Medicaid programs (as much as \$500 million annually) and some of the states who have sued the Trump Administration over the rule may offer funding assistance. Read more [here](#).

Is Polyamory Next? – Following the *Obergefell* decision in 2015, Princeton Professor Robert George [postulated](#), “If gender doesn’t matter for marriage, they ask, why should number matter?” It seems the American Psychological Association’s (APA) new task force on “consensual non-monogamy” will explore that question. The APA website for that division states, “Finding love and/or sexual intimacy is a central part of most people’s life experience. However, the ability to engage in desired intimacy without social and medical stigmatization is not a liberty for all. This task force seeks to address the needs of people who practice consensual non-monogamy, including their intersecting marginalized identities.” Dr. Andre Van Mol, co-chair of the committee on adolescent sexuality for the American College of Pediatricians warned, “This is the entirely expected and predicted consequence of what happens when ideology replaces science. The APA is yet again showing us that they are a professional guild and not a scientific organization.” Read more [here](#).

This briefing was prepared by the EFCC Biblical Citizenship Committee. To subscribe or unsubscribe, please e-mail johnwaring42@outlook.com. If you have any questions regarding content, please contact Penny Harrington (penny.harrington@cox.net ; 760.224.4744) or John Waring (johnwaring42@outlook.com ; 760.480.9454)

EFCC Biblical Citizenship Committee
efcc.org/biblical-citizenship