



Biblical Citizenship Briefing

July 2019

*This briefing is strictly for your information. It is a summary of some current public policy issues, including pending legislation, that involve moral and biblical principles. While suggested action may be included from time to time, no specific position by EFCC is implied. If you do not wish to receive further briefings of this nature, please unsubscribe as shown at the bottom of this document. **Note:** If you are reading a printed version of this Briefing, please view the document online to link to the articles mentioned (efcc.org/biblical-citizenship).*

In California

State Resolution Denying Effectiveness of Restorative Therapy Advances – Last year, Assemblyman Even Low (D-San Francisco) took his bill, [AB 2943](#), to prohibit “sexual orientation change efforts” for adults all the way to the floor of its second house (such therapy for minors was banned in 2012 by [SB 1172](#)). Low then pulled AB 2943 from consideration before the vote by the full Senate in hopes of finding “common ground” with the many pastors and counselors who objected to its premise that current practices and protocols in such therapy are deceptive and even harmful. He promised to bring some form of bill or resolution on this issue back this year. And he has.

Assembly Concurrent Resolution 99 does not have the force of law, but resolutions are often stepping stones to new bills. [ACR 99](#) makes broad statements about “conversion therapy” being “ineffective, unethical and harmful” referring to practices often associated with the term which have not been utilized by any professionals for decades. Sexual orientation change efforts today generally involve talk therapy and the Coalition for Counseling Choice (CCC), comprised of many professional counselors, faith-based organizations and former LGBT individuals believe that it is, in fact, effective based on the lives that have been changed as a result of its use and the work of the Holy Spirit in those who desire to change.

In addition to the assumptions made in ACR 99, the text calls on “religious leaders” to counsel from a place of love, compassion, and knowledge of the psychological and other harms of conversion therapy.” As first glance this sounds reasonable. Of course, everyone should counsel with compassion, but coupling that goal with an acknowledgement of the “harms” of a term that is not even defined in the text is cause for great concern to opponents. Pastor Ken Williams, a former homosexual, states, “ACR-99 elevates government ideology above an individual’s right to religious freedom. With this resolution, individuals, leaders, and even therapists and religious institutions are commanded to embrace homosexuality as something to be applauded, giving no thought to potential ramifications to a person’s spouse, children, or to a person whose own religious or personal convictions do not align with that ideology.” Read more from Williams [here](#) and read CCC’s official letter [here](#).

ACR 99 has already passed the Assembly and will be heard by the Senate Judiciary Committee after the California Legislature returns from its summer recess on August 12. ***If this resolution concerns you, please contact your state senator with your views.*** Find your state senator [here](#). Please note that the summer recess (July 12 to August 12) is a good time to visit your California representatives in their district offices or at local events.

In the Courts

Ninth Circuit Upholds Trump Administration’s Protect Life Rule – A new Department of Health and Human Services [rule](#) went into effect in February. Immediately, 20 states and Planned Parenthood sued, requesting an injunction to keep the rule from taking effect. The “Protect Life Rule” ensures that no Title X funds were granted to programs “in any way promoting or encouraging abortion as a method of family planning.” It requires “clear financial and physical separation between Title X funded projects and programs or facilities where abortion is a method of family planning” and prohibits “referral for abortion as a method of family planning.” According to The Catholic News Agency, “The Protect Life Rule will strip about \$60 million in federal funding from Planned Parenthood, whose clinics both refer for abortion services and are often co-located within abortion facilities. Planned Parenthood presently receives about one-fifth of the total amount of Title X funds distributed and serves about 40 percent of all clients who benefit from Title X.” Read more [here](#).

And the injunction? While the lawsuits will proceed through the courts, on June 20 the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals [denied](#) the request to halt the rule during that time and it has gone into effect. Soon after that decision, Planned Parenthood’s CEO, Leana Wen was [fired](#) after just eight months at the organization’s helm. Wen tweeted that her ouster had occurred after a “secret meeting” and said in a statement, “I am leaving because the new Board Chairs and I have philosophical differences over the direction and future of Planned Parenthood.” She noted that she believes abortion care to be a health care issue, not a political one.

In the News

HHS Moves to Redefine Sex as Sex – During the last year of the Obama Administration, HHS [redefined](#) “sex” as used in its nondiscrimination policies for health programs and services to include “gender identity.” The implications of the change were sweeping. The current administration plans to reverse that change and bring the agency’s policies more in line with federal law. The [new rule](#) states, “[T]he Department proposes to make substantial revisions to the Section 1557 Regulation and to eliminate provisions that are inconsistent or redundant with pre-existing civil rights statutes and regulations prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, and disability.” Read more [here](#) and [here](#). The public comment period for the new rule ends August 13.

Abortion Laws Take Divergent Paths, Likely to Meet in Court – Illinois recently [joined](#) several other states in loosening abortion laws to the point of what some consider infanticide. The new law provides for legal abortion up to the moment of birth and removes any protections for medical professionals who may object to participating in abortions, among other provisions. Read more [here](#).

At the same time, more conservative states are passing “heartbeat” legislation to limit abortion to the period before a fetal heartbeat can be detected. Some of these bills are being challenged legally, which may ultimately bring the issue of abortion back before the U.S. Supreme Court. For a summary of the “heartbeat” laws, go [here](#).

As far as California is concerned, the Guttmacher Institute, an abortion advocacy and research organization, considers our state policies “[very supportive](#)” of abortion. They note correctly that “California does not have any of the major types of abortion restrictions—such as waiting periods, mandated parental involvement or limitations on publicly funded abortions—often found in other states.” See a table of abortion laws state-by-state [here](#).

Amazon Bans Books – The giant retailer Amazon recently removed books written by Dr. Joseph Nicolosi and intended to help those with unwanted same-sex attraction from its online marketplace. Why? Apparently due to the pressure by *one* persistent activist. Now more books, this time by *former* gays and lesbians, have been banned. Among them are works – largely personal testimonies – by Anne Paulk of Restored Hope Network and Elizabeth Woning of Equipped to Love. Also included are some books by Joe Dallas, who told *The Christian Post*, “First, the LGBTQ movement will convince the culture that telling homosexuals they can change is dangerous. Then they’ll convince the culture that calling homosexuality a sin is dangerous. Then the government will tell the pastors of America what they can or cannot say on this subject, and the culture will approve.” But, he added, “None of us will stop communicating the grace of God evidenced in our lives, and in the lives of those we serve.” Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

Pray that the voices of those who have experienced the transformational power of God in their lives will not be silenced in the marketplace of ideas. Give them courage to stand strong in the face of opposition and protect them from temptation. (Deuteronomy 31:6)

AMA Says “No” to Assisted Suicide – Last month, the American Medical Association (AMA) voted 65 percent to 35 percent to continue its opposition to physician-assisted suicide. The AMA policy [states](#), “It is understandable, though tragic, that some patients in extreme duress—such as those suffering from a terminal, painful, debilitating illness—may come to decide that death is preferable to life. However, permitting physicians to engage in assisted suicide would ultimately cause more harm than good. Physician-assisted suicide is fundamentally incompatible with the physician’s role as healer, would be difficult or impossible to control, and would pose serious societal risks.” Read more [here](#).

Of course, California is one of eight states along with the District of Columbia where physician-assisted suicide is already legal, and where the California Medical Society has taken a neutral position on the issue. Efforts to challenge the law here have not been successful. In [2017](#), 577 prescriptions for life-ending medication were written by California physicians and 374 of those patients ended their lives.

Pray for legislators in states are currently considering legalization. They will be making truly life-and-death decisions. May they value and protect life at its beginning and its end, knowing that it is the Lord who numbers our days. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

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