



Biblical Citizenship Briefing

September 2019

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In California

All Eyes Turn to Gov. Newsom – The 2019 California legislative session ended on September 13. All bills that passed both houses are now in the hands of Gov. Gavin Newsom to sign or veto by October 13. If he takes no action, bills will automatically become law without his signature. If either of the two bills below concern you, you may wish to contact him and request a veto. Call his office at 916-445-2841 or use the online contact form [here](#).

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 those at public colleges, include a phone number for “sexual and reproductive health care information” that is “comprehensive and medically accurate” and consistent with requirements of the [CA Healthy Youth Act](#). Most schools will likely use hotlines for Planned Parenthood or similar organizations.

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. Gov. Brown vetoed a similar bill last year as unnecessary, since abortion facilities are already located in close proximity to these campuses. The costs of implementing SB 24 are considerable, as a recent California Dept. of Finance [report](#) indicates. At UC campuses alone, taxpayers would have to fund up to \$7.8 million in start-up expenses with millions more in ongoing costs. Gov. Newsom promised to sign SB 24 before the report was issued.

LGBTQ Teacher Training Bill Amended – [AB 493](#) (Todd Gloria, D-San Diego) initially required 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. On Sept. 6, this bill was amended to remove the mandates and, instead, *encourage* schools to offer training every two years using resources that are being developed by the State Dept. of Education to support LGBTQ students. Opponents of the original language welcomed the amendments.

Transgender Rights in Prison Placed on Hold – [SB 132](#) (Anthony Wiener, D-San Francisco) would have allowed 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. The bill was moved to the inactive file before its final vote and is now dead for this year. It is, however, considered a “two-year bill” and, after some planned amendments, will have another chance at passage in January.

Resolution Targeting Pastors and Churches Passes Both Houses – It does not have the force of law, but opponents of [ACR 99](#) (Evan Low, D-San Francisco), which was passed by both state houses, say it could have a chilling effect on pastors and churches. First, the resolution defines “conversion therapy” not as the horrific practices once used in attempts to force changes in behavior that every reasonable person would consider wrong (such as shock therapy and other modalities not used in decades), but rather simply as “practices or therapies that attempt to create a change in a person’s sexual orientation or gender identity.” This definition is what many counselors, Christian and otherwise, regularly practice through talk therapy with individuals who desire to affect all manner of change in their lives. Further, ACR 99 refers to “conversion therapy” as “ineffective, unethical, and harmful” when thousands of persons testify to being changed by talk therapy through the transformative power of the gospel.

ACR 99 calls for “religious leaders to counsel on LGBTQ matters from a place of love, compassion,” which is what pastors and counselors already do, but adds that they should do so with the “knowledge of the psychological and other harms of conversion therapy.” Sen. Brian Jones (R-Escondido), himself a former pastor, questioned this very point during the [Sen. Judiciary hearing on August 27](#). He believed that this statement in particular went “too far” and subsequently voted against the resolution both in committee and on the Senate floor.

During Senate floor debate, Sen. Andreas Borgeas (R-Fresno) stated in opposition, “We are treading into freedom of speech territory that should concern us all.” Sen. John Moorlach (R-Costa Mesa) asked, “How can we foreclose on

spiritual counseling when someone is on a journey and is honestly inquiring about wanting to change and wants professional assistance?”

To reiterate, ACR 99 is merely a resolution and is not binding, but it does imply that the state of California has the expectation that its principles should be followed. It is also a possible precursor to legislation on this issue next year. Read more and view the floor debate [here](#).

In the Courts

Court Rules in Favor of CSUSM Students for Life – In 2017, Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) filed a lawsuit against California State University–San Marcos (CSUSM) alleging viewpoint discrimination in the disbursement of student activity fees to campus groups. The suit was filed on behalf of the campus Students for Life organization (SFL) and its then-president Nathan Apodaca. A request by SFL for \$500 to bring a pro-life speaker to campus had been denied, while the Gender Equity Center and LGBTQTA Pride Centers (Centers) had received a combined total of more than \$296,000 in student fees for pro-abortion and highly sexualized events.

Last month, U.S. District Court Judge James Lorenz [ruled](#) in favor of SFL and Apodaca. He found that student fees had not been disbursed using a “viewpoint neutral” method and that “unpopular viewpoints” had been treated in an unconstitutional manner. The judge cited in his ruling that he was unable to verify reasons that certain requests had been denied due to the use of closed-door meetings where the decisions had been made. In granting the challenge to the funding process, he declared, “These ‘back room deliberations’ are exactly type of considerations the First Amendment is designed to prevent.” Judge Lorenz further declared that no funds could be disbursed to the Centers “until narrowly drawn, reasonable, and definite standards are adopted.”

Kristan Hawkins, president of Student for Life of America said in a press release, “Public universities have no right to use their power, including mandatory student fees, to restrict speech they don’t agree with or particularly like.” Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

Former Planned Parenthood Director Wins Whistleblower Case – Mayra Rodriguez knew there were problems at the Arizona Planned Parenthood Clinic where she served as director and had been employed for 17 years. The patients of one particular abortionist suffered numerous complications (including incomplete abortions), the medication room was left unlocked, and a supervisor failed to report an abortion on a minor impregnated by an adult, among other deficiencies. When Rodriguez reported the problems, she was fired and she sued for wrongful termination.

Last month, a jury awarded Rodriguez \$3 million in damages and cleared her of any wrongdoing. She stated, “I hope my case is a lesson to other workers that shows them that the truth will prevail. I also hope my case is a lesson to employers who abuse their power: sometimes the underdog wins and justice will be done.” Read more [here](#).

Court Sides with Conservative College Professor – Moreno Valley College fired Professor Eric Thompson in 2017 after 12 years of teaching, during which he had received the faculty of the year award twice. In his sociology class, Thompson asked students to consider various positions on gender roles, marriage and sexual orientation. He wanted to expose his students to multiple viewpoints, including traditional ones. In 2014, some students and colleagues complained and Thompson was investigated. Ultimately, he was fired for “dangerous” and “immoral” discussions. Following arbitration and a trial, a Riverside judge found that the termination was not warranted and cited the arbitrator’s statement: “Reaching a determination as to what is acceptable academic speech can well be subtle and ‘difficult’ . . . [and] . . . should not be prohibit[ed] . . . simply because society finds it offensive or disagreeable.” Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

In the News

Bring Your Bible to School on October 3 – Pretty much anything that involves faith seems to be embroiled in controversy in our current culture. New Orleans Saints quarterback Drew Brees found out the hard way that simply filming a promotional advertisement for “Bring Your Bible to School Day” could ignite a firestorm of negative comments. The annual event, sponsored by Focus on the Family, began in 2014. Its purpose is for students to “celebrate religious freedom and share God’s love with their friends.” Students, parents, pastors and teachers can find out more at bringyourbible.org. Is it legal? Yes. Read the Alliance Defending Freedom memorandum [here](#).

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