



Biblical Citizenship Briefing

September 2023

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. Find contact and subscription information at the end of this document.

In California

California Bills Move to Gov. Newsom's Desk – September 14 was the final day for California legislators to vote on this year's bills. All measures that passed both houses are now moving to Gov. Newsom, who has until October 14 to sign or veto them. If he takes no action on a bill, it will become law without his signature on that date.

To share your views and ask Gov. Newsom to sign or veto bills, visit his website (gov.ca.gov/contact) or call his office at (916) 445-2841. If you comment through the website, choose "An active bill" and scroll to the bill number to choose pro or con and make a brief comment.

Some bills Gov. Newsom is considering:

AB 665 (Wendy Carrillo, D-Los Angeles) removes the requirement that before children ages 12 and over, can be placed in group homes without parental permission, there must be risk of self harm or a situation of abuse or incest. These stipulations have ensured that young children remain at home unless there are safety concerns. Under AB 665, a "professional person" (including social work interns and psychological trainees) must simply consider a child "mature enough" to access a residential shelter to leave their home without parental involvement. Advocates for trafficking victims see this as a dangerous situation, as these environments can make young people easy prey for traffickers.

AB 957 (Lori Wilson, D-Suisun City) requires a judge considering the custody or visitation of a child to strongly consider that a parent "affirming" the minor's chosen gender identity or gender expression is in the best interest of the child's health, safety and welfare. Greg Burt, Capitol Director for the California Family Council, said, "If Governor Gavin Newsom signs this bill, parents have every right to sue. Every parent has a God-given responsibility and a constitutionally protected right to direct the upbringing, education, and care of their own children. No one should lose custody of their children because their opinions or religious beliefs are unpopular with state politicians." AB 957's passage even prompted a response from Tesla founder Elon Musk, who [wrote on X](#) (formerly Twitter), "This bill is a wolf in sheep's clothing. What it actually means is that if you disagree with the other parent about sterilizing your child, you lose custody. Utter madness!" See how your representatives voted [here](#). Read more [here](#).

SB 14 (Shannon Grove, R-Bakersfield), which passed unanimously in both houses, increases penalties for trafficking a minor by designating the crime a "serious felony." This makes the crime of selling a minor for sex equal to other serious felonies, such as kidnapping and murder, and eligible for enhanced penalties under the Three Strikes Law. Read more [here](#).

SB 541 (Caroline Menjivar, D-Van Nuys) requires all public high schools, including charter schools, to provide condoms free of charge in at least two unsupervised locations on campus and post notices about the availability. The bill also requires schools to allow the distribution of condoms to students in grades 7-12 at sex education classes, school health fairs, pupil peer clubs or groups and at the student health center. SB 541 also prohibits retail stores from refusing to sell contraceptives to anyone, regardless of age.

You will find the current status of many bills relating to life, faith and family issues at judeochristiancaucus.com/bills-and-resolutions. (Referral for informational purposes only, does not imply an endorsement by EFCC of the opinions, positions, or contents of the site.) You may also look up any California legislation or search by keyword at leginfo.legislature.ca.gov.

In the Courts

Case Update: Escondido Teachers Granted Preliminary Injunction – Earlier this year, The Thomas More Society filed a request for Preliminary Injunction on behalf of two teachers from Rincon Middle School. The complaint asked the Escondido Union School District to halt its policy excluding parents from information about their student's gender identity on campus and forcing teachers to lie to parents, violating the teachers' constitutional rights. On September 14, Judge Roger Benitez of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District granted the injunction against the district's "Parental Exclusion Policy." Benitez wrote, "Parental involvement is essential to the healthy maturation of schoolchildren ... The school's policy is a trifecta of harm: it harms the child who needs parental guidance and possibly mental health intervention to determine if the incongruence is organic or whether it is the result of bullying, peer pressure, or a fleeting impulse. It harms the parents by depriving them of the long recognized Fourteenth Amendment right to care, guide, and make health care decisions for their children. And finally, it harms plaintiffs who are compelled to violate the parent's rights by forcing plaintiffs to conceal information they feel is critical for the welfare of their students –violating plaintiffs' religious beliefs." Read more [here](#).

Salinas Mom Wins Settlement in Transgender Case – In June 2022, the [Center for American Liberty](#) filed a [complaint](#) on behalf of Jessica Konen against the Spreckels Union School District. Konen asserts Buena Vista Middle School in Salinas socially transitioned her 11-year-old daughter Alicia to a boy without notifying her and obtaining her consent. Alicia had been acting distressed at school and two teachers named in the complaint told her the reason was she didn't know who she "truly was inside." That's when the school allowed Alicia to use the boys' restroom and male pronouns. When Konen discovered the school's actions, she filed the complaint. Eventually her daughter returned to identifying as a girl. Without admitting fault, the school district has settled with Konen for \$100,000. She told Fox News, "I think it took a lot of guts for both of us to be able to open up publicly and explain what is happening. Parents, be vigilant, you know, pay attention. Those gut feelings you have, they're real. I feel like this just opened doors." Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

Abigail Shrier reports on the California Teachers Association "2021 LGBTQ+ Issues Conference, Beyond the Binary: Identity & Imagining Possibilities" and how some teachers, including the two named in this case, are recruiting children [here](#).

Parental Notification Policy Heads to Court – Last month, we reported on the [parental rights policy](#) Chino Valley Unified School District (CVUSD) adopted ensuring that parents will be advised if their students present as another gender at school. Now, five more districts have followed suit, [Rocklin Unified](#) (near Sacramento) and [Orange Unified](#) being the most recent. Others are planning to present the policy, or a similar one, to their boards as well.

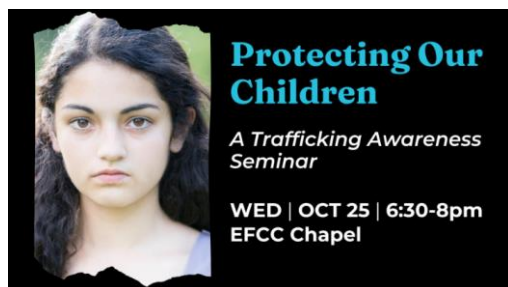
Enter California Attorney General Rob Bonta, who immediately launched an investigation into the CVUSD policy and, on August 29, filed a [temporary restraining order](#) to keep the policy from going into effect. On September 6, San Bernardino Superior Court Judge Thomas Garza [issued](#) the order, pressing pause on portions of the policy that relate to gender and sex "out of an abundance of caution." California Policy Center (CPC) [reports](#) that the judge admitted in court that he "did not have time to fully read the school district's response since Bonta filed his motion last week." Lance Christensen, CPC's Vice president of Education Policy and Government Affairs declared, "The attorney general's lawsuit is a political gimmick to intimidate school boards, nothing more."

On September 11, CVUSD voted to retain Liberty Justice Center to represent the district against the state. The firm's Senior Counsel Emily Rae stated, "Parents have a constitutionally protected right to direct the upbringing of their children ... the Chino Valley policy was enacted to just ensure that there are no secrets kept between the school district and the parents when it comes to critical information about their children's physical, emotional, and mental well-being." The next hearing is scheduled on October 13. Read more [here](#) and [here](#). To learn more about the growing effort to enact parent-friendly policies and find resources, visit [caparentalrights.com](#).

In the News

Supervisor Desmond Announces Trafficking Town Hall – San Diego County is one of the 13 hotspots for human trafficking in the nation with an estimated \$810 million generated in an underground economy that results in 8,000 victims per year at an average age of 16. Further, a study by local universities revealed that, among the area high schools researched, 90 percent reported cases of sex trafficking. To create awareness and understand the signs of this terrible crime, Supervisor Jim Desmond is hosting a Human Trafficking Zoom Town Hall with District Attorney Summer Stephan on Monday, September 25 at 6:00 pm. Register for this important online event [here](#).

On August 29, the County Board of Supervisors approved a proposal by Supervisors Jim Desmond and Nora Vargas to increase the amount of trafficking prevention education beyond the current curriculum that is limited to grades 7 and 8. The new policy will reach students from kindergarten through high school with age-appropriate information to help create awareness that will protect them, while also making materials available to parents, staff, and teachers. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).



EFCC to Host Trafficking Awareness Seminar – Please join us for "Protecting Our Children" on October 25 from 6:30-8:00 pm in the EFCC Chapel. Sex trafficking happens in every neighborhood. Learn how to protect your kids, spot victims of sex trafficking, and what you can do to make a difference. Our primary speakers will be Flavio Nominati, Deputy District Attorney – Sex Crimes and Human Trafficking Division, and Susan Johnson, Co-founder and Director of Alabaster Jar Project. Register [here](#).

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