



Biblical Citizenship Briefing

November/December 2023 - UPDATED

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

State Attack on Prolife Medical Clinics Goes Local – The state of California is an abortion sanctuary state with no real limits on the taking of preborn children, yet lawmakers in Sacramento continue their attempts to impose burdensome regulations on pregnancy care clinics with the goal of shutting them down. For example, [AB 602](#) (Pilar Schiavo, D-Santa Clarita), which is still pending and will be carried over into 2024, provides for civil penalties if a pregnancy center uses what a “reasonable person” would consider false advertising of services they do not provide (in other words – abortions). Penalties would include up to \$10,000 in fines, restitution, and attorneys’ fees. The same author attempted to “expose fake crisis pregnancy centers by launching a public awareness campaign” against them at taxpayer expense in [AB 710](#). That measure died in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

Now the attack on pregnancy care centers, the vast majority of which are licensed medical clinics, has moved to San Diego County. On November 7, Supervisor Terra Lawson-Remer (District 3 – see map [here](#)) introduced a plan to “shut down fake and fraudulent pregnancy centers.” Ironically, the meeting began with Lawson-Remer conducting a special recognition of November as National Adoption Month, followed by her resolution declaring November 7 as Planned Parenthood Day in San Diego. It is pregnancy care centers and clinics that support the adoption decision and process. Planned Parenthood does not offer adoption services, as confirmed with a call to Planned Parenthood Southwest.

Lawson-Remer’s [proposal](#) makes specious claims about the 16 centers in San Diego, 13 of which are fully licensed medical clinics. She claims they are “notorious for their unethical practices.” Lawson-Remer wants the County to initiate litigation with the goal of shutting down the centers, create a public education campaign to include billboards and social media, and look for other funding opportunities to increase awareness about reproductive health. Her proposal is estimated to cost San Diego County taxpayers \$500,000.

The November 7 Board meeting was packed with supporters of the local pro-life clinics. All speakers on this agenda item (more than 60) opposed Lawson-Remer’s plan, as did those calling in with their comments. Additionally, more than 1,000 e-comments were received with just 60 in favor and 975 opposed. After discussion, the Board voted 2-2 (Vargas joined Lawson-Remer in support, with Anderson and Desmond opposed), leaving the item on continuance for a decision at a future meeting. Read more [here](#) (includes video of the meeting with this item beginning at 1:07:00).

GOOD NEWS UPDATE! This item was expected to be brought up once again at the December 5 Board meeting. **But, on December 1, Sup. Lawson-Remer pulled the item from the [agenda](#) right at the deadline!** It will not be heard on December 5. Lawson-Remer’s office indicates that it this action was due to constituent calls and comments. God intervened and answered prayers, and we can praise Him for whatever prompted her to change her mind because, with the District 4 vacancy now filled Monica Montgomery-Steppe, who was endorsed by Planned Parenthood, the item was likely to pass on its second hearing.

Please consider thanking Sup. Lawson-Remer – Take a moment to call the supervisor’s office and thank her for pulling item 25 from the agenda Tuesday. Her number is 619-531-5533. Please be cordial and thank her for listening to constituents. No further action is needed. For now, our wonderful pro-life clinics are safe from this attack.

Classical Academy Adopts More Parent-Friendly Policy – In September, a federal judge [ruled](#) in favor of two Escondido Union School District teachers and enjoined the district’s “Parental Exclusion Policy” that, like the many of California’s public schools, forced teachers to lie to parents about student’s perceived gender identity at school. Spurred on by this victory and a rising tide of concerned parents, school districts around the state are considering the adoption of parent-friendly policies. Dean Broyles of the National Center for Law & Policy provided a model policy for the Board of Trustees for the Classical Academies charter schools to consider. On October 30, the Board met and voted to replace their existing procedures that called for hiding gender identity issues from parents with a [more parent-friendly one](#). Broyles noted, “While Classical Academy is headed in the right direction, they have not yet arrived at a policy which actually honors the constitutional rights of parents and teachers.” Broyles is urging the Board to continue working on a policy that is less vague and better protects parents and teachers. Watch the KPBS story and read the article [here](#). Find more [here](#).

Districts’ Reactions to Dueling Rulings Vary – As we [reported](#) in September, a federal judge ruled in favor of parents and teachers in the Escondido Union (Elementary) School District, enjoining its gender policy and issuing a strong First Amendment and parental rights [ruling](#). This was followed by a San Bernardino Superior Court judge issuing a temporary restraining order against Chino Valley Unified School District’s new parental notification policy. Chino is fighting the legal action brought by Attorney General Rob Bonta, but it will take time to appeal, and the Escondido Union case is still pending a summary judgment or appeal. While the opposing rulings are causing some districts to hesitate, other school boards around the state continue to consider more parent-friendly policies, many working with the [Coalition for Parental Rights](#).

For example, on November 8, Lakeside Union School Board member Andrew Hayes held a press conference announcing that he and several other San Diego County school district board members are promoting a local Parental Bill of Rights project so that “local school districts can ensure parents have input and control over their children’s education.” The current districts include Ramona Unified, Grossmont Union, Rancho Santa Fe and Cajon Valley Schools. The proposed policies include transparency in curriculum and materials, age-appropriate library policies, opt-out ability for what parents deem inappropriate topics, and parental notification for gender transitioning. Read more [here](#). To view the Parental Bill of Rights petition, click [here](#). Hayes is in the process of building a coalition, so you may sign to show support in your local district.

On November 14, Escondido Union High School District trustees discussed parental notification procedures, but did not consider a specific policy. Trustees heard from attendees with 12 comments in support of adopting a parental notification procedure regarding gender identity and 11 opposed. The Board appeared to be split in its desire to pursue any change in existing procedures which withhold information from parents in favor of student “privacy rights.”

In the News

They’re Reading What? – A nationwide project by [Take Back the Classroom](#) to help parents remove vulgar and sexually explicit books from their children’s school libraries is gaining momentum. Several states are involved so far, including California. The concerns about the books are due to the obscene and explicit nature of the text and, in some cases, the graphic sexual images. Schools may be aware – or they may not. Books can be donated by outside interest groups and placed on the library shelves without a thorough review of content, so their presence may be an oversight. This is not “banning” books (they are still available elsewhere). It is curating what materials are appropriate for availability in a school library readily accessible to students on a daily basis and provided by taxpayers.

Take Back the Classroom has researched the content of many titles in school libraries, and its [website](#) has a current list of 24 California districts where these materials have been found, including Escondido Union High School District. More districts will be added as the project grows. A downloadable toolkit for parents and community members is provided with a step-by-step process to encourage removal of the books. (*Warning:* the website includes PDFs that include some of the actual content.)

The process begins with volunteers who search for specific books in their local elementary, middle, and high school libraries. If books with the obscene content are found, the goal is to present a [model policy](#) to the local district governing board establishing a procedure for removal of the materials pending review. In some cases, parents and others requesting the removal of the books have read from the text at school board meetings to prove its graphic nature. Many have then been asked by board members to stop reading – that’s how inappropriate the material is. Learn more and download the toolkit at [TakeBacktheClassroom.com](#). If you are interested in assisting with the project, there are free training sessions available.

The Kids Aren’t Alright Online - [S. 1409](#), the Kids Online Safety Act (KOSA), is a bipartisan federal measure sponsored by Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) to help limit the dangers of social media for children. According to the National Center on Sexual Exploitation (NCOSE), “a whistleblower testified before the Senate this month that Facebook and Instagram leaders KNOW kids receive constant unwanted sexual advances online but take no action to prevent this harassment.” In a short [video](#) of the hearing with a former Meta engineer, Sen. Josh Hawley (R-MO) said, “One in four teenagers – minor children – will experience sexual solicitation on Meta’s platform.” He stated Meta is deliberately misleading parents about the safety of their platforms [Instagram and Facebook] and that Meta has admitted “we make body image issues worse for one in three teenage girls.”

KOSA will require covered platforms to use safeguards, including settings that restrict access to minors’ personal data and provide the ability to restrict purchases and other financial activities by minors. They must allow parents to supervise minors’ use and include a mechanism for parents, guardians, minors, and schools to report harm. The Federal Trade Commission and state attorneys general will be tasked with enforcement.

There are 46 co-sponsors, but neither California senator has committed to support S. 1409. NCOSE has an [advocacy form](#) to send an immediate email to your Senator here. Or you may contact them directly: Sen. Alex Padilla (D); Phone (202) 224-3553 or e-mail through the “contact” link on his website: [padilla.senate.gov](#). Sen. Laphonza Butler (D); Phone (202) 224-3841 or e-mail through her website: [butler.senate.gov](#). You may also call Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer asking him to bring S. 1409 to a vote. Phone (202) 224-6542 or e-mail through his website: [schumer.senate.gov](#)

In Prayer

Each day there seems to be more and more trouble and darkness in our nation and around the world. We can certainly feel depressed, angry or frightened – but none of this surprises God. As we find ourselves once again in the Christmas season, let’s remember that Jesus, the Light of the world, came to abide with us and now sits on the throne. *Father, as we celebrate the birth of Your Son, help us to remember that He is the Prince of Peace over all. May that peace dwell in our hearts and be a light to others this season. In Jesus’ name, Amen.*

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