



# Biblical Citizenship Briefing

## February 2024

*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

**2024 Bills Move to Committee** – As the deadline for 2024 bills to be introduced passed on February 16, the focus in Sacramento moved to committee hearings. Hearings give you an opportunity to take part in the process by sharing your views with committee members before they vote on the bills before them. When you know a bill is coming up for a hearing, consider sending a letter of support or opposition through the Legislature Advocates Portal [here](#). Once you register with an email address and password, you may return to the portal at any time to upload a PDF for any bills and send to the appropriate committee. Find a tutorial [here](#). You do not need to be part of an organization, but letters must have a signature and should include your address. If your letter is received at least one week before the hearing, it will be included in the committee analysis of the bill either on the list of organizations or in the total count of letters received from individuals for or against a bill. You may also call the members of the committee with your views, this is particularly important if the member is your own state senator or assembly member.

You may locate bills by number, keyword, or author at [leginfo.legislature.ca.gov](http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov). Many bills relating to life, faith, education, and family are tracked at [judeochristiancaucus.com/bills-and-resolutions](http://judeochristiancaucus.com/bills-and-resolutions). California Family Council also has a watch list [here](#). These lists include committee and hearing date information. (*Referrals are for informational purposes only, does not imply an endorsement by EFCC of the opinions, positions, or contents of the site.*)

**What's in Store for 2024?** – Below are just a few of the 2,124 new bills this year moving toward committee hearings:

**Birthing confusion** – [AB 2319](#) (Akilah Weber, D-San Diego) establishes the California Dignity in Pregnancy and Childbirth Act. All healthcare providers and staff who come in contact with prenatal or perinatal patients will be required to undergo implicit bias training in order to recognize all “birthing people” to include “intersecting identities, ... nonbinary persons and persons of transgender experience.” Proof of compliance is required and penalties for noncompliance are \$10,000 to \$25,000.

**Free condoms at school** – [SB 954](#) (Catherine Menjivar, D-Van Nuys) requires all public high schools, including charters to provide condoms free of charge in an unsupervised area and post a “conspicuous” notice about the availability, among other requirements. Public schools with grades 7-12 may not prohibit the distribution of condoms by school health center staff, at pupil health fairs, or by organizations that provide sex education at the school. The bill also requires retail stores to sell contraceptives to youth regardless of age.

**Parental access to sex ed content** – [SB 996](#) (Scott Wilk, R-Victorville) requires school districts to adopt a policy allowing parents to view all curriculum and materials in the sex education programs at their child’s school. Materials must be available at all school sites and posted on the district website or parent portal.

**Combatting AI dangers** – Artificial intelligence may provide amazing benefits in science and other fields, but its dangers are real when it comes to AI-generated imagery of child sexual abuse and pornography. Several bills target this trend by criminalizing the creation and distribution of these images: [AB 1831](#) (Marc Berman, D-Palo Alto), [AB 1873](#) (Kate Sanchez, R-Murrieta), and [SB 933](#) (Rosilicie Ochoa Bogh, R-Redlands and Aisha Wahab, D-Sacramento). Read more about this threat [here](#).

**Protecting seniors against scams** – [AB 3207](#) (Joe Patterson, R-Rocklin) creates the Secure Seniors Online Protection Act. It calls for the Dept. of Social Services to train staff and establish a 24/7 toll-free hotline to assist seniors 60+ in dealing with online scams. Find videos from our scam prevention seminar last August on our website [here](#) and download resources [here](#).

**Creating awareness about prolife pregnancy centers** – [SB 1368](#) (Rosilicie Ochoa Bogh, R-Redlands) requires that information about pregnancy centers must be included among local resources referenced in the Healthy Youth Act (sex ed) curriculum.

### In the Courts

**Escondido Teachers Sue Governor and Attorney General** – As we have reported previously, two teachers at the Escondido Union School District held that their First Amendment rights were violated by the District’s policy requiring them to essentially lie to parents by withholding information about a child’s gender identity used at school and filed a federal lawsuit against the district, [Mirabelli, et al. v. Olson, et al.](#) Last September, Judge Roger Benitez of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District granted a [preliminary injunction](#) against the “Parental Exclusion Policy,” calling it a “trifecta of harm.” Reportedly at Judge Benitez’s suggestion, teachers Elizabeth Mirabelli and Lori Ann West have now amended their original lawsuit to add Gov. Gavin Newsom and Attorney General Rob Bonta as defendants based on the fact that these state leaders are responsible for the mandated policy and supervision of all the other defendants.

When Mirabelli and West had still not been reinstated in December, their attorneys at the Thomas More Society filed for [civil contempt](#). The district relented and allowed the teachers to return to the classroom. West returned to teaching in January.

With the preliminary injunction in place, the teachers' federal case has now entered the discovery phase. It is anticipated that Judge Benitez will issue a summary judgment later this year, after which it is likely the defendants will appeal to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals and, perhaps, ultimately the U.S. Supreme Court. Even now, while this is being adjudicated, teachers have the legal right to receive reasonable religious accommodation from gender policies, including pronoun usage, names, and informing parents. Questions: Please contact [nclplaw.org](http://nclplaw.org)

In the meantime, another legal battle is underway. Shortly after that federal ruling, Bonta pushed back, sending a directive to schools throughout the state supporting the secrecy policy. In apparent conflict with the federal ruling, Bonta was able to secure a [temporary restraining order](#) in the San Bernardino Superior Court stopping the enactment of a new policy in the Chino Valley Unified School District to notify parents within three days if a student wishes to change their gender at school. Chino is appealing the action against their district by the state. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

**State Settles with Christian Preschool, Reinstates Funding** – Dayspring Christian Learning Center (Dayspring) in El Cajon is a subsidiary of the Church of Compassion and offers its daycare and preschool children a Christian education and much-needed meals as part of its program. The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) cut off the school's funding in December 2022 when Dayspring and the Church refused the CDSS mandate that it adopt an anti-discrimination policy regarding sexual orientation and gender identity in employment. Last March, National Center for Law & Policy (NCLP) and Advocates for Faith and Freedom filed a joint federal civil rights [lawsuit](#) challenging the CDSS action as violating the First Amendment.

The state soon realized its actions were unconstitutional and moved to settle. While the state executed a [settlement](#) last October, it took until January to complete the terms and the case was finally dismissed. Ultimately, the food program at Dayspring was reinstated, suspended funds were reimbursed, and CDSS agreed to pay \$160,000 in legal fees. The CDSS must also provide clear guidance regarding religious providers and their ability to participate in programs without compromising their tenets. Dean Broyles, Esq., chief counsel of NCLP stated, "It is profoundly unethical and immoral that California officials so flagrantly ignored their oath to uphold the U.S. Constitution and deliberately decided to hold hungry children hostage to their draconian desire to coercively control the religious beliefs, observances and practices of a Christian church and its religious preschool." Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

## In the News

**Links to Protect Kids Online Posted** – During the Protecting Our Children [seminar](#) at Emmanuel Faith last October, San Diego Deputy District Attorney Flavio Nominati recommended a number of phone apps and software programs available to help parents protect their children from those seeking to exploit them. We have created a document listing these tools for you to use and share. Find it [here](#).

**Pastor's Prayer Raises Ire of Some** – Pastor Jack Hibbs of Calvary Chapel Chino Hills was invited by House Speaker Mike Johnson to deliver the invocation at the beginning of the January 30 House session. (Watch [here](#); read [here](#)) Hibbs immediately drew criticism from a self-identified atheist, Rep. Jared Huffman (D-CA) and 25 others who wrote a letter of protest calling him an "ill-qualified hate preacher who shares the Speaker's Christian nationalist agenda." However, Pastor Hibbs indicates that he received immediate thanks from many congressmembers and the chaplain after he prayed. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

**CIF Fails to Protect Girls' Sports** – Injuries have been mounting and the number of lost medals and scholarships have been growing as more transgender "girls" and "women" move into female sports. Further, locker rooms are no longer safe private spaces for girls and women when they must change in front of fully intact males. Now more focus is being put on the governing bodies that oversee high school and college sports to step in.

At a recent CIF meeting, many former athletes called on the leadership to protect girls' sports. One of these women, Sophia Lorey, stated, "CIF is putting the feelings of boys over the safety of girls." She said the CIF disregarded the testimony of the women who spoke at the meeting and refused to extend the 30-minute comment period to accommodate many who had traveled a great distance to share their concerns and ask for protection.

In a letter, [the Independent Council on Women's Sports](#) (ICONS) called on the California Scholarship Federation (CIF) "to protect and support your female athletes and their right to fair competition in high school sports." They added, "Throughout its Constitution and Bylaws, the CIF takes great care to outline its commitment to providing equal programs, facilities and awards for boys and girls, yet its Gender Identity Participation Policy allows males to identify onto female teams. The contradiction could not be more clear. The CIF cannot provide opportunities to girls in sport while at the same time, enabling boys to compete against and displace girls." Read more [here](#). View the "CIF Gender Diverse Youth Sport Inclusivity Toolkit" [here](#).

## In Prayer

As the March 5 election nears, please pray for those in the Church to carefully study their choices and participate in the process. Father, we ask You to give us wisdom as we approach the important privilege and duty to vote. Please place those who will honor You and Your precepts in leadership, then give them courage to follow them. In Jesus' name, Amen. *When the righteous increase, the people rejoice, but when the wicked rule, the people groan.* ~ Proverbs 29:2

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