



Biblical Citizenship Briefing

July 2026

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In California

Now is the Time! – The California Legislature, currently on its July recess, will reconvene on August 3 for the final weeks of the session. All bills that survive both houses will go to Gov. Newsom's desk on September 1. This is a perfect time to contact your state senator and assembly member asking them to support or oppose bills important to you.

Remember, bills are in their second state house now. An assembly bill (AB) is now in the Senate, so you would contact your state senator; contact your assembly member for Senate bills (SB). California Family Council has a bill watch list [here](#) to use in contacting your legislators directly, and they make it easy to share your views on many bills using the CFC [Action Center](#). Find your California state legislators at findyourrep.legislature.ca.gov.

Budgeting for Abortion – The state budget for 2026-27, Gov. Newsom's last, has been finalized and includes \$351 billion in spending. Adjusted for inflation, this is a 40 percent increase since the governor took office in 2019. The nonpartisan Legislative Analyst's Office [report](#) warns, "The state's current fiscal situation is genuinely unprecedented. Despite booming revenues, the budget position is overextended, reflecting: a structurally higher spending base, diminished reserves, an already accumulated wall of debt, and an operating deficit. Meanwhile, a revenue shock could be coming, as the state's revenue outlook rests disproportionately on AI-driven equity valuations that are trading at highs last seen at the peak of the dot-com bubble."

For what purposes will your tax dollars be used? Buried in the [spending plan](#) is \$5,000,000 for UCLA's Center for Reproductive Health, Law, and Policy, \$1,000,000 to the City of Fresno for Planned Parenthood Mar Monte health center renovations, and [\\$40 million for reproductive healthcare](#). An additional \$26 million is allocated to "gender-affirming" care.

According to the Legislative Counsel, another budget-related bill ([SB 164](#)) renames the California Reproductive Health Equity Program as the California Reproductive and TGI Health Equity Program, expanding its purposes to "ensure affordability and access to gender-affirming care." The program will "use the money in the Abortion Access Fund to provide grant funding to safety net providers for abortion services" and "expand the purposes of the California Reproductive Health Equity Fund to include grant funding for gender-affirming care services ... The bill would make contracts, grants, and related program information confidential and exempt from disclosure to the public."

Nearing Their Final Votes – When lawmakers return August 3, the bills we have been covering will be on or near the floor of their second house for final votes. Consider letting your legislators know your views before they vote. These include:

- Mandating insurance coverage for sex-rejecting procedures, forcing insurance companies to cover gender transition procedures (puberty blockers, hormones, and surgeries) with no religious exemption ([AB 1876](#))
- Expanding abortion providers to allow nurse practitioners, nurse-midwives and physician assistants to perform dilation and evacuation abortions with no gestational limits ([AB 1973](#))
- Making condoms "available and easily accessible" at school in grades 7-12 ([SB 608](#))
- Silencing counselors by creating retroactive civil liability for therapy related to sexual attraction and gender dysphoria up to 22 years after a minor becomes 18 ([SB 934](#))

New Law Removes Authority from the State Education Leader – The State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) is a non-partisan elected statewide office. The SPI currently manages the Department of Education (DOE), collects and analyzes data regarding student performance and district spending, implements policy set by the State Board of Education (Board) and acts as the primary voice for public schools, among other duties.

[AB 181](#), which has already passed the Legislature and been signed by Gov. Newsom is part of his budget proposal and intended to "strengthen governance of California's education system to provide coherence and meaningful accountability..." but it drastically changes the role of the SPI in the middle of an election year. In January 2027, all executive and administrative functions of the DOE will be vested in an unelected Education Commissioner appointed by the Governor and serving at his pleasure. The bill also places the SPI on the Board and adds two members – one appointed by the Assembly Speaker and the other by the President pro Tempore of the Senate. The SPI's function, still an elected position (and on the ballot this November), will be reduced essentially to the role of "the independently elected nonpartisan voice for the public interest in the governance of the state's educational system." AB 181 passed the Senate by just one vote. See how your legislators voted [here](#).

Critics say the change is an assault on the will of the voters. The Sacramento Bee reported that current SPI Tony Thurmond knew few details before the bill was passed and "that he would have preferred the change to be made by voters" and "that while he thought it would be a good idea to overhaul the office, he preferred voters approve it, instead of Newsom doing an 'end run on the Constitution.'" Richard Barrera, a Democrat, and Sonja Shaw, a Republican, are the top two candidates on the November ballot to succeed Thurmond. Both are critical of the AB 181 plan. (Read more [here](#).)

Schools Must Now Comply with All-Gender Restroom and Cell Phone Laws – Effective July 1 and pursuant to the 2023 bill [SB 760](#), all public schools with students in grades 1 through 12, including charter schools, that have at least one all-female and one all-male restroom must “provide and maintain at least one all-gender restroom for pupil use.” The restroom must have signage indicating that it is open to all genders, and it must be unlocked and easily accessible to any student. While a single-user restroom does not pose a problem, there are obvious concerns around both sexes having access to a multi-stall facility. Consider checking with your child’s school to see how they are complying with this new requirement and how privacy will be maintained. If schools fail to comply, they will be denied modernization funds. Read more [here](#).

[Another bill](#) goes into effect as students return to school next month. Public schools, including charters, must adopt “a policy to limit or prohibit the use by its pupils of smartphones while the pupils are at a schoolsite ... The goal of the policy shall be to promote evidence-based use of smartphone practices to support pupil learning and well-being.” There are some exceptions with emergencies and health reasons among them.

Get Ready to Opt Out – School starts next month. Have you researched what is being taught in your child’s school? Would you like to ensure that the curriculum doesn’t expose your child to content in opposition to your faith? The *Mahmoud v. Taylor* decision held that parents have the right to opt their children out of instruction that conflicts with their deeply held religious beliefs. To find out how you can opt your child out of objectionable content, visit California Family Council’s [Parent Rights Resources](#) page that includes valuable information from various legal and parental rights organizations (including resources for teachers), including a simple form to complete at [OptOutCA.org](#).

In the Courts

Ninth Circuit Enjoins California Secrecy Bill – Last month, a three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit [blocked](#) enforcement of [AB 1955](#), a 2024 bill that prohibited disclosure regarding students’ sexual orientation or gender identity to parents unless the child consented. The case is [City of Huntington Beach v. Newsom](#) in which Michael Gates, then-City Attorney of Huntington Beach, filed a [complaint](#) stating the purpose in part, “To protect parents and children in Huntington Beach, as well as the City’s economy, the City passed an ordinance that prohibits educators within the city limits from keeping parents in the dark regarding gender issues. That ordinance is in direct conflict with AB 1955.”

In the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision *Mirabelli v. Bonta* the high court held that California’s secret transition regime likely violates parents’ rights under both the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment and the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. In the Huntington Beach case the Ninth Circuit concluded, “In light of *Mirabelli*, AB 1955 thus forbids the mandatory policies that the Constitution requires.” Dean Broyles, President of National Center for Law & Policy and an integral member of the Coalition for Parental Rights stated, “AB 1955 is unconstitutional precisely because it directly interferes with and undermines parents’ constitutional right to raise their children according to their faith and have relevant mental health information about their children.” Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

High Court Scores Victory for Girls’ and Women’s Sports – On the last day of June, the U.S. Supreme Court handed down a ruling in [State of West Virginia v. B.P.J.](#) and [Little v. Hecox](#). Alliance Defending Freedom summarized the ruling stating, “The court ruled 9-0 that Title IX—a federal law that ensures equal opportunities for women in education—and 6-3 that the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment allow states to protect female athletes through sex-specific sports.” This is a tremendous victory for the girls and women who have lost titles and awards to biological males. Justice Clarence Thomas noted in his concurring opinion, “A man does not have a right to compete against women just because he believes he is a woman ... Legislatures have many obvious rational bases to keep men who believe that they are women out of teams and private spaces reserved for women.”

Of course, the ruling does not *require* states to protect female sports; it *allows* them to do so—and currently 27 states have. This means that unless California law changes to prohibit biological males from participating in female sports California will continue to allow transgender athletes to compete. Read more [here](#).

Irvine Penalizes Rabbi for Hosting Prayer Gatherings – In August 2025, the City of Irvine began fining Rabbi Rafi Dadon for hosting small religious gatherings in his home claiming that he was engaging in “church activities” that required a conditional use permit. Rabbi Dadon hosts prayer meetings, Torah study, and holiday meals by invitation. First Liberty Institute and Sullivan and Cromwell LLP sent a [demand letter](#) asking the City to cease penalizing the rabbi. Ryan Gardner, Senior Counsel for First Liberty Institute declared, “It is chilling that City of Irvine officials have resorted to serving fines to a small group of Jewish residents who meet together for worship, prayer, and religious observances. Rabbi Dadon has a constitutional right to engage in religious exercise at his home with family or friends, free from government burden and interference.”

Alliance Defending Freedom is representing an Ohio rabbi in a similar situation in [Grand v. City of University Heights](#). On June 30, the U.S. Supreme Court agreed to hear this important case. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

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