



Biblical Citizenship Briefing

July 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

Governor Signs Bill to Keep Secrets from Parents – Governor Newsom signed [Assembly Bill 1955](#) on July 15. The new law, which will take effect in January, prohibits public schools (including charters) from adopting policies to notify parents of name and pronoun changes, use of opposite sex facilities and other social transitioning of their children. It's the first such law in the nation and, as anticipated, has already been challenged.

Liberty Justice Center filed [Chino Valley Unified School District v. Newsom](#) in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California on July 16 naming the governor, California Attorney General Rob Bonta and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond as defendants. Plaintiffs are Chino Valley Unified School District (CVUSD) and several parents. The suit seeks an order for temporary (and permanent) injunctions barring enforcement, and for a judgment that AB 1955 violates the First and Fourteenth Amendments and the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). It also seeks a judgment declaring that CVUSD's policy regarding parental notification of any record changes does not violate AB 1955.

The complaint states in part, "Parents have a constitutional right 'to make decisions concerning the care, custody, and control of their children.' *Troxel v. Granville*, 530 U.S. 57 (2000)." It further declares, "[A] school-facilitated transition without parental knowledge and buy-in interferes with the parents' ability to pursue a careful, investigative assessment before undergoing a gender identity transition ... [and] ... interferes with parents' ability to pursue a treatment approach that does not involve an immediate transition—such as an exploratory process to understand the cause of the feelings or self-perceptions of gender incongruence." (Read more [here](#) and [here](#).)

On July 16, Governor Newsom's action prompted billionaire Elon Musk to declare on X (formerly Twitter), "This is the final straw." He posted, "I did make it clear to Governor Newsom about a year ago that laws of this nature would force families and companies to leave California to protect their children." Musk then stated he would be moving X and SpaceX from California to Texas, having already moved Tesla to Texas in 2021. On July 18, Musk tweeted, "The goal of this diabolical law is to break the parent-child relationship and put the state in charge of your children." (Read more [here](#).)

End of Session Nears – The 2024 legislative session resumes for its final month on August 5, and bills will begin arriving on the floor of their second house. It's a key time for you to contact your state senator and assembly member with your views. You may find a list of many bills relating to life, faith, education, and family at judeochristiancaucus.com/california (click on "Current Bills") or at California Family Council's watch list [here](#). To let your legislators know your views, simply call their offices (district or state). The staff is required to take down your name, ZIP code and position on the bill. Find your state senator and assembly member at findyourrep.legislature.ca.gov. Remember, you may check the status of any bill that interests you at leginfo.legislature.ca.gov. Click on "Bill Information" and search by bill number, topic, or author. (*Referrals are for informational purposes only, does not imply an endorsement by EFCC of the opinions, positions, or contents of the site.*)

Latino Pastor Coalition Opposes Bill to Streamline Abortion Clinic Approvals – Currently local cities and other agencies have latitude in the types of projects that they approve within their boundaries based on zoning, construction standards and, to an extent, the types of businesses they desire in their communities. Abortion proponents, citing several instances where cities have used various means to essentially block abortion clinics applications, want to ensure that applications for community clinics that provide "reproductive services" cannot be denied. [Assembly Bill 2085](#), sponsored by Planned Parenthood and Reproductive Freedom for All, will do just that. It will mandate how cities permit these facilities, undermining local control.

Last month, the Senate Environmental Quality Committee heard AB 2085. The opposition testimony was led by Cecilia Iglesias, the director of [Coalición de Pastores Latinos](#), an organization of 120 bipartisan Latino pastors and leaders. California Family Council reported that the pastors were "deeply troubled by the implications of AB 2085. This bill, they argued, not only undermines local autonomy but also misleads women, especially Latinas, into thinking that Planned Parenthood, with its focus on abortion, is the best option for their health care." Iglesias testified, "This bill mandates that cities must permit community clinics, specifically abortion facilities, and allows lawsuits against municipalities that do not comply. Cities should have the autonomy to regulate businesses based on their community's values and needs, just as they do with casinos, tobacco, and liquor stores." She continued, "One in four women receives inadequate prenatal care, 46 maternity wards have closed since 2012, and maternal mortality rates have doubled. It is inconceivable to prioritize expanding abortion facilities while neglecting essential maternity and prenatal care services." AB 2085 passed the committee and is currently scheduled for a hearing in the Senate Appropriations Comm. on August 5. **You may wish to share your concerns about AB 2085** with your state senator, as well as your assembly member, since the bill may return to the Assembly for a concurrence vote on amendments. Read more and view the hearing [here](#).

In the Courts

Christians Are Winning COVID-19 Lawsuits – Many Christian employees who had moral and religious objections to taking the COVID-19 vaccine and boosters were fired from employers who mandated the shots without providing a religious accommodation. One such employee is Marcia Stahovich, a nurse with San Diego’s Sharp HealthCare. She had been with Sharp for more than 30 years, but in 2022 refused to take COVID-19 boosters. As a result, she was placed on unpaid administrative leave and eventually terminated. Attorney Dean Broyles of the National Center for Law & Policy (NCLP) says hundreds of Sharp employees were treated similarly. While accommodations were made for employees with medical exemptions, Broyles states, “Sharp has an affirmative legal duty to treat its religious employees equally, if not actually better, compared to those who submitted secular medical accommodation requests. Sharp failed. Sharp discriminated.” NCLP filed a workplace civil rights lawsuit and Sharp will now pay Stahovich \$175,000 to resolve the dispute. Read more [here](#).

In another [case](#), a federal jury awarded a woman \$684,240 in back pay and damages after she was fired from BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee in 2022 for refusing to take the COVID-19 vaccine due to her sincerely-held religious beliefs.

In the News

Teachers Not Required to Join a Union – Most children and their teachers will return to school next month. As the new academic year begins, it’s a reminder that the 2018 [Janus v. AFSCME](#) decision held that no teachers or other government workers can be required to pay money to a union as a condition of employment. Many Christian teachers are concerned about the California Teachers Association’s support for legislation and policies that conflict with their beliefs, such as AB 1955. California Teachers Empowerment Network (CTEN) provides tools for teachers who choose to opt out of union membership at [ctenhome.org](#). There they remind employees that even nonunion teachers are still part of the monopoly bargaining unit. The site also links to information about membership options available to replace the liability insurance and legal representation that are part of union membership. You can also find out more about exiting a union at [forkidsandcountry.org](#) and [teacherfreedom.org](#).

Gateways Helps Teachers Go from Fear to Freedom – Many teachers are unaware of what they can and cannot teach about the Bible and Christianity in the public school classroom. It’s more than you think! Gateways to Better Education has done the research on state and federal guidelines. The organization provides many resources, including lesson plans, for teachers. Go to [gogateways.org/teachers](#) to learn more. Gateways also provides resources for parents and students at [gogateways.org](#).

As Cannabis Proliferates, So Do Its Dangers – Drive just through Vista and you will see some 16 marijuana dispensaries. There are many more in other areas of the county. Cities enjoy the taxes they receive from “legal” cannabis shops, but what is the cost to children and the community? Some points to consider: 1) The level of THC, the intoxicating substance in cannabis, has risen sharply over the years (from 2-3% in the 1960’s-1990’s to more than 20% now). 2) The advent of edibles resembling candy has more than doubled [emergency room visits](#) for children under 11 who gain access to these drugs in their homes. And edibles and cannabis drinks in general carry a [higher risk of poisoning](#) due to a delay in the psychoactive effects. 3) There is an increased [risk](#) of heart attack and stroke with using marijuana just once a month. 4) The high levels of THC have contributed to increased [cannabis-induced psychosis](#) and other psychiatric disorders. Find a comprehensive booklet about the risks of marijuana use at Americans Against Legalizing Marijuana [here](#). **Pray** for our leaders to be wise in setting policy regarding drug use and for our children and communities to be safe.

Are Sports Organizations Swimming in Confusion? – Recently the Court of Arbitration for Sport [ruled against](#) transgender swimmer Lia Thomas’ demand that [World Aquatics](#) change its policy preventing males who have gone through puberty from competing in women’s sports. The organization welcomed the decision, stating “we believe [it] is a major step forward in our efforts to protect women’s sport.” (Read more [here](#) and [here](#).)

Then there’s the International Olympic Committee (IOC). In 2015, as gender identity grew as an issue in athletics, the IOC adopted a testosterone testing [policy](#), softening its prior surgical and hormone therapy requirements. In 2021, it adopted a new [Framework](#) to “foster gender equality and inclusion” which states, “no athlete should be precluded from competing or excluded from competition on the exclusive ground of an unverified, alleged or perceived unfair competitive advantage due to their sex variations, physical appearance and/or transgender status.” Most recently, the IOC has reported that it will allow each sport’s oversight body “to determine how an athlete may be at a disproportionate advantage against their peers, taking into consideration the nature of the sport.” Read more [here](#).

For several years now, female athletes have been experiencing wins and losses both in their sports and in the courts as they attempt to remain safe and compete fairly against other women. Will the 2024 Summer Olympics treat them fairly by restricting each sports’ competitors to females? Or will some of the coveted medals go to men?

Pray for young women who have spent years in grueling training developing their skills as top athletes. Ask the Lord to keep the competition safe and fair. Ask that they would also be safe in their private spaces – locker rooms and lodging.

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