



Biblical Citizenship Briefing

August 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

August Marks Final Weeks of Sacramento Session – The 2023-24 legislative session ends August 31. Then Governor Newsom has until the end of September to veto bills presented to him or they will become law with or without his signature. On August 15, the powerful Appropriations Committees in both houses announced the fate of more than 800 bills, sending about 500 to the floor of the Assembly and Senate and killing the rest.

If you support or oppose any bills that remain active, this is the time to call your state senator and assembly member, as each house will be having floor sessions through the end of the month. 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 sites.*)

Author of Child Solicitation Bill Asks Full Assembly to Restore Intent – The crime of soliciting or engaging in commercial sex with a minor in California is currently just a disorderly conduct misdemeanor, punishable by as little as two days in county jail. Since the Senate Public Safety Committee hijacked and diluted [SB 1414](#) in April, Senator Shannon Grove (R-Bakersfield) has sought to have her bill restored to its original intent to make soliciting or engaging in sex with a minor of any age a felony, punishable by a term in state prison while ensuring that 16- and 17-year-olds are equally protected. The hostile amendments now make this crime a wobbler – chargeable as either a misdemeanor or felony and with incarceration in county jail, not prison. Only a second or subsequent conviction is a straight felony. The full Senate and Assembly Public Safety Committee failed to restore the original intent. While the Assembly Appropriations Committee passed the bill with its current language, in the hearing the California Department of Finance (CDF) opposed even the current watered-down version due to increased prison costs. As a leading advocate told an anti-trafficking coalition, “They are more concerned with shutting down prisons and doing everything they can to keep people out of prison than they are concerned with protecting kids from those who commercially exploit kids.” In [this video](#), the CDF representative refers to the goal of “continuing to right-size the prison population.” Sen. Grove responded stating, “The bottom line is we’re talking about those who are buying children for sex. And if we can’t lock those people up in prison, then we seriously have a problem ... It’s less expensive to make sure that these children are not impacted versus caring for them after they’re impacted.” Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

SB 1414 awaits a vote on the Assembly floor any day. Sen. Grove remains resolute in asking that her bill be restored. She asks that Californians take the following action: Contact [your assembly member and state senator](#), asking them to “Support SB 1414 in Sen. Grove’s original language.” In addition, call the following state leaders with the same message: Gov. Newsom - 916-445-2841; Senate Pro Tempore Mike McGuire - 916-651-4002; Speaker Robert Rivas - 916-319-2029

Committee Kills Bill to Protect Kids from Porn – The bill enjoyed bipartisan support with no opposing votes throughout its legislative path this year, but [AB 3080](#) (Juan Alanis, R-Modesto) died when it was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee on August 15. This bill would have helped protect minors from accessing pornography online by expanding the Parent’s Accountability and Child Protection Act and requiring “adult” websites to make reasonable attempts to ensure minors could not gain access to their online material. Assemblyman Alanis reacted, “Once again, Sacramento lobbyists convinced a select powerful few to side with those who prioritize greed over the safety of our children. They should have made the courageous choice to stand with the overwhelming majority of my colleagues in the legislature who would have voted to protect our kids. Even though I am deeply disappointed by today’s outcome, my resolve to protect our most vulnerable population remains unwavering. I will continue fighting to protect the innocent and provide a voice for both children and parents across California.” AB 3080 was opposed by the ACLU, large media lobbying groups, sexual minority organizations and various “adult” industries. The author plans to continue his fight to protect the innocent. Read more [here](#).

In the Courts

UPDATE: Judge Allows Additional Plaintiffs in Escondido Case – In June, attorneys for the Escondido Union School District teachers Elizabeth Mirabelli and Lori Ann West, who were required to lie to parents about the gender identity of their students, asked the federal court that enjoined such policies in EUSD ([Mirabelli v. Olson](#)) to accept additional plaintiffs in a proposed class-action lawsuit. On August 8, U.S. District Court Judge Roger T. Benitez permitted the addition of parents and additional teachers as plaintiffs, as well as California Attorney General Rob Bonta as an additional defendant. The [federal court order](#) also permitted the addition of California Attorney General Rob Bonta as a defendant in the proposed class action lawsuit challenging

“Parental Exclusion Policies,” but denied the addition of Lakeside Union School District. Attorneys at the Thomas More Society handling that case stated, “We look forward to prosecuting this case against California Attorney General Rob Bonta, whose addition to the suit has now been permitted with this order. Despite the clarity in the law brought by the federal preliminary injunction we won before Judge Benitez in *Mirabelli v. Olson*, in September 2023, Attorney General Bonta has ignored it, and state officials have pursued legal action in open defiance of the court’s order. In doing so, Attorney General Bonta is at the tip of the spear of the institutional push to unconstitutionally violate the rights of parents and teachers. Our clients hope to put this issue to rest once and for all—by obtaining class-wide relief on behalf of all teachers and parents.” Read more [here](#).

Supremes Uphold Title IX Rewrite Challenges – We [reported in May](#) that Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona of the Biden-Harris Administration amended Title IX to broaden the scope to include “gender identity.” Title IX was originally enacted by Congress in 1972 to prohibit sex discrimination in any federally-funded educational program or activity. These rule changes, now in place as of August 1, affect K-12 schools, as well as post-secondary institutions. When the changes were announced, 26 states responded by challenging the redefinition of sex regarding discrimination under Title IX and seeking injunctions to keep them from going into effect in their states (see the states listed [here](#)). First federal district courts enjoined the Title IX changes and then the Fifth and Sixth Circuit Courts of Appeal upheld those injunctions on the basis that the new rule “exceeded the bounds of the statutory text enacted by Congress.” The Administration then sought partial stays, attempting to separate the rules into three provisions but, on August 16, the U.S. Supreme Court, [denied](#) the requests pending oral arguments in the appellate court in October.

While blocked in 26 states, the remaining 24 states (California among them) must now operate under the new Title IX rules. Alliance Defending Freedom, which represents a West Virginia high-school female athlete, Christian Educators Association International and a Louisiana school board in the cases states, “The Department of Education’s fundamental and radical rewriting of federal law would force schools across the country to embrace a controversial gender ideology that harms children—including the very children it claims to help. Schools will be required to allow males who identify as female to enter girls’ private spaces like restrooms, locker rooms, and showers; to participate in girls’ physical education classes; and—despite logically inconsistent disclaimers saying otherwise—to play on girls’ sports teams.” Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

Parents are encouraged to contact their teachers and school administrators to understand how their students will be affected.

In Congress

Senate Votes to Protect Children Online – The Kids Online Safety Act or KOSA ([S. 1409](#)) passed the U.S. Senate 91-3 last month. The National Center on Sexual Exploitation (NCOSE) says, “KOSA provides the most comprehensive solution of any child protection bill pending before Congress. The bill holds tech companies legally accountable to designing their products in a way that keeps children safe.” It does this by requiring that platforms likely to be accessed by children have the highest safety settings ON by default for minor-aged accounts and provide safeguards for children and tools for parents or guardians to protect their kids from online dangers. In addition, KOSA establishes a legally actionable “duty of care” for platforms that are likely to be accessed by minors, and requires disclosure of policies and practices that companies use for personal data and minors’ safety.”

The House version of KOSA, [H.R. 7891](#), is currently being considered by two committees. If you would like to share your views on this bill, contact your member of Congress (find him or her [here](#)) and consider asking him or her to become a co-sponsor of H.R. 7891. You may also find a “take action” page on the NCOSE website [here](#). Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

In the News

ADF Offers Back to School Resource – As students and teachers return to class many may be asking what their rights are on campus. While faculty and students have different protections, Alliance Defending Freedom states, “The Constitution protects the right of educators and students to participate in the public school system without being compelled to violate their values and beliefs ... Every American is entitled to the freedoms enumerated in the Constitution, which do not vanish when one steps on public school property. When government officials infringe on the First Amendment rights of teachers, counselors, administrators, and students, they are violating the Constitution, and they must be held accountable.” Download the “Parents’ and K-12 Educators Guide” [here](#).

In Prayer

As you read these *Briefings* and tune into various media you may find yourself frustrated and even anxious about current events. It’s important to be informed about cultural, legal and policy issues because it gives us opportunities to pray, think biblically, and be salt and light in the world around us. But if you find yourself tied up in worry, remember to replace your worry with prayer and refocus your thinking on good. *Phil. 4:6-9* (See [Pastor Ryan Paulson’s message on August 18](#))

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