



## Biblical Citizenship Briefing November/December 2024

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### In California

**Governor Calls Extraordinary Session following Trump Victory** – When the 2025-26 legislative session convenes on December 2, a *special* session will convene concurrently. Governor Gavin Newsom issued a [proclamation](#) to that effect on November 7, calling for expedited action to “protect California values.” He is directing the Legislature to “consider and act upon legislation necessary” to provide funding for litigation challenging actions by the incoming Trump Administration and “mitigate the impacts of actions” by the new administration. According to the governor’s office, the focus will be on protecting reproductive freedom, environmental policies, LGBTQ+ rights, and immigration. We will report in January on key bills of interest from both the regular and special sessions. Read more [here](#).

**Pray** for the upcoming legislative session. Father, we ask You to reign over our State Capitol as our state senators and assembly members begin a new two-year session. Soften the hearts of those who do not know You and draw them. Embolden those who are Yours to speak truth and work to see Your principles undergird the laws of our state. Give them wisdom and favor with their colleagues. We pray for the work of organizations like [Capitol Ministries](#) as they seek to reach members of our Legislature for Christ. We ask all this for our local and federal leaders as well. In Jesus’ name, amen.

**California Votes to Make Marriage a “Fundamental Right”** – The November ballot included ten statewide propositions. Causing the greatest concern among faith-based organizations and churches was Proposition 3, which passed with 62.6 percent of the vote. This state constitutional amendment will now remove the traditional definition of marriage from the California Constitution and replace it with a declaration that “marriage is a fundamental right” with no stated restrictions. Pro-family groups are concerned about the potential repercussions, and closely watching for any new legislation amending the definition of marriage in state law, as well as lawsuits that may arise seeking to expand who can marry. Jonathan Keller, president of California Family Council warned, “Marriage is vital for the well-being of children and society, which is why Proposition 3’s failure to offer any clear definition is so dangerous. By abolishing the historic definition of marriage in California’s Constitution, Prop 3 paves the way for the legal recognition of polygamy, child marriage, and incestuous relationships. This is a grave threat to families across California.” Read more [here](#).

For more election results, find statewide totals [here](#). For San Diego County results, go to [sdvote.com](#).

### In the Courts

**High Court to Hear Important Transgender Treatment Case** – The state of Tennessee is among 26 states that have passed legislation protecting minors from harmful “treatments” for gender dysphoria, including puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones and surgeries. After its 2023 law was enacted, three families with gender-confused children and a medical doctor sued the state in *L.W. v. Skrmetti* (Jonathan Skrmetti is the Tennessee attorney general). The district court issued a preliminary injunction halting the law and Tennessee appealed.

The 6th Circuit Court of Appeals, after consolidating the case with another from Kentucky, [upheld](#) the state laws protecting minors from such medical interventions. The Biden-Harris Administration then appealed the 6<sup>th</sup> Circuit ruling, and the U.S. Supreme Court will hear oral arguments in *United States of America v. Skrmetti* on December 4.

[Alliance Defending Freedom](#) (ADF) filed a [friend-of-the-court \(or amicus\) brief](#) in the case. ADF Senior Counsel and Vice President of Appellate Advocacy John Bursch stated, “Tennessee is right to regulate medicine consistent with biological reality and protect children from harmful, experimental, and often irreversible medical procedures. Relying on bad science, activists and the Biden-Harris administration have pushed these harmful medical procedures across the country and even taken steps to prevent state legislatures from regulating these procedures. These procedures have devastated countless lives, which is why countries that were previously leaders in so-called ‘gender affirming’ care are reversing course and curtailing these experimental efforts to permanently alter children’s bodies. We urge the Supreme Court to affirm the lower court’s ruling that Tennessee is free to implement laws that follow the best science available in protecting vulnerable children from high-risk medical procedures.”

The [National Center for Law & Policy](#) (NCLP) also filed an [amicus brief](#) on behalf of 31 scholars. Dean Broyles of NCLP stated, “The importance of the *Skrmetti* case cannot be understated. Because the Biden administration is inviting the high court to recognize gender dysphoria transitioning as something that is somehow constitutionally protected for children by the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment’s Equal Protection or Due Process clauses, some court watchers have called this case the potential ‘*Roe v. Wade*’ of transgenderism.” Read more [here](#).

The high court’s decision, which will be handed down next year, could affirm states’ ability to ban so-called “gender-affirming care” for minors. Alternatively, it could potentially create a protected “trans” class which could place every parent at risk of losing a gender-confused child under laws that have created transgender sanctuary states. Read more [here](#).

*Pray* that the Lord would give the attorney arguing the case for the states great wisdom in presenting the case well. May the justices hear and understand the dangers of irreversible sterility, mutilating surgeries, life-long drug and hormone requirements so that they will understand the importance of the states' role in protecting minors from harm, while focusing on mental health treatments for gender dysphoria.

**Colorado Pays \$1.5M to Settle Free Speech Case** – In a years-long battle, graphic artist Lorie Smith fought to hold to her Christian convictions in how she handled her business, 303 Creative. She desired to design and publish websites for clients, but not do so in situations that violated her Christian beliefs. She clearly stated her convictions on her business site to explain her policies. The state of Colorado's antidiscrimination laws, however, required her to violate her religious beliefs and create even objectionable sites. In 2016, ADF assisted Smith in suing for her First Amendment rights. Ultimately, in June 2023, the U.S. Supreme Court handed down a landmark [ruling](#) in *303 Creative v. Elenis* that the government could not force Smith – or any American – to say things they don't believe. In March, the [final judgment](#) required the state of Colorado to amend its laws in compliance with the ruling and, on November 19, the state agreed to pay more than \$1.5M in attorney's fees for violating Smith's First Amendment rights. Read more [here](#).

**Supremes to Hear Counselor's Free Speech Case** – Colorado counselor Kayley Chile is taking her case to the U.S. Supreme Court. ADF is representing Chile, who has been fighting Colorado's Minor Therapy Conversion Law, similar to California's [SB 1172](#) (2012), on the basis that prohibiting her from counseling minors with unwanted same-sex attraction and gender identity issues violates her First Amendment freedoms of speech and religion.

“The government has no business censoring private conversations between clients and counselors, nor should a counselor be used as a tool to impose the government's biased views on her clients,” said ADF Legal Counsel Cody Barnett. “As Justice Clarence Thomas [wrote](#) in a similar case, even though these types of laws are ‘viewpoint-based ... discrimination in its purest form,’ the federal appeals courts are currently divided 2–2 over whether they are valid. We are urging the Supreme Court to hear Kaley's case, resolve the split, and stop Colorado officials from banning someone's speech simply because they disagree with her beliefs. All Americans should be allowed to speak freely and seek the best possible help they desire.”

In 2012, California passed [SB 1172](#) pronouncing mental health providers guilty of unprofessional conduct for assisting minors in changing their sexual orientation and making them subject to discipline by their licensing entity. Then in 2018, California legislators passed [AB 2943](#), which banned reparative therapy or efforts to help an individual, regardless of age, change his or her sexual orientation. The bill declared such counseling an unlawful practice under California's Consumer Legal Remedies Act. Should the high court rule in Chile's favor, California's mental health providers could potentially be freed from current legal restraints in helping their patients. Read more [here](#).

## In the News

**Canadian Healthcare Workers Struggle with Euthanasia Rules** – Since 2016, approximately 3,000 patients have ended their lives under California's End of Life Option Act. In Canada, that number was 13,241 in 2022 alone, making assisted suicide tied for the fifth most common cause of death in that country. To be eligible, the Canadian law states that a patient must have a serious illness or disability (but not a fatal one) and be in a state of decline. But a recent [Associated Press report](#) indicates that medical professionals are testing the limits of what qualifies, even as requests for euthanasia are made by the homeless, poor and grieving. Unlike California, patients in Canada are not required to self-administer life-ending drugs, but can be injected by doctors and nurse practitioners. Additionally, the official Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) [website](#) notes that the eligibility for those suffering *only* from mental illness has been delayed—but just until 2027. (Read more [here](#). Read also how faith-based health facilities are struggling with pressure to comply [here](#).)

California's End of Life Option Act (physician-assisted suicide) passed in 2015 and has been amended by subsequent legislation to reduce the waiting period, as Kaiser Permanente notes on their [website](#) that explains the process in which they participate. Generally, the law requires that an individual be at least 18 and suffering from a terminal disease that is estimated to take their life within six months. An [attempt to amend the law](#) to read a “grievous and irremediable medical condition” (including dementia) failed to reach its first hearing last year. Will the author, Sen. Catherine Blakespear (D-Encinitas), be back with another measure to expand eligibility and loosen requirements in 2025? We will be watching.

## In Prayer

*As we celebrate Thanksgiving and Christmas, let's recall the blessings of the past year.* Father, we thank You for Your provision, for Your blessings too numerous to count, and for the gift of Your Son. We ask you to protect and unite our nation. Let there be unity and love around our holiday tables. Bring us opportunities to serve others and represent Your love to others that they may be drawn to You. We ask this in Jesus' name, Amen.

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