The 2019 General Assembly: OPPORTUNITY!

Difficult issues are facing our Senators and Representatives, so they will need ALL the help they can get! (So, be sure to make your calls.)

Here’s the “Bad News” for the 2019 General Assembly Session: There are 32 brand new Representatives in the State House of Representatives. That’s 32 out of a total of 100 members. And, there is a significant crisis with the funding of the state’s pensions, bringing with it a lot of frustration, generated over the last year, on both sides of the issue. More, this is the election year for the Executive Branch of state government, adding an additional layer of intensity to the pot. All of this adds up to a potential governmental “train-wreck” for the new legislators . . . and perhaps all of the legislators.

Add to that, with Kentucky already suffering from significant addictions to opioids, tobacco, alcohol and crack cocaine, there are some legislators who want to bring in casino-style and sports gambling and legalize recreational marijuana, the nation’s number one “gateway drug” to other more substantial and debilitating drugs.

How is that good policy?

But here is the GOOD NEWS: Kentucky Christians are more interested now in doing their part in governance than they have been in a long time. And THAT is exactly what legislators need – they need people who will encourage them to do righteous things, people who will stand with them as they do righteous things, and people who will pray for them -- asking God to help them -- as they move to stand strong on the righteous things of our day, particularly on the cultural issues of today.

Note that the situations in Frankfort are not “Democrat” situations and they are not “Republican” situations. They are the “lay of the land” for both Parties, and our legislators, regardless of Party, must move forward to solve the state’s (our) problems. The first week of the Session is complete and the bills that have been introduced are evidence that legislators are taking their task seriously. Nevertheless, they will need the support of people from their districts in order to make 2019 a year of significance.

Everyone has a general sense of the truth of Edmund Burke’s cogent, “All it takes for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing.” But it is most applicable in the public policy realm – the realm in which he labored.

Besides those pushing gambling and marijuana, other legislators are promoting bills that will strengthen family values. For instance, there are a number of bills that address the abortion-on-demand philosophy of the 1970s. There is a bill that protects free speech on college campuses, in response to the accusations of some that say conservative views are “hate speech” and should be banned. Still another bill codifies responsibility to direct the up-bringing of their children, something that is being challenged by United Nations activists.

“I believe the bottom line in this Session will be ‘What do the people want?’” said Kent Ostrander, executive director of The Family Foundation. “If they want something and are willing to do the work and make the calls, they will get it!”

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Faith can move Kentucky forward!

NOW is the perfect time for those who are called to be “salt” and “light” to step forward in faith to make a significant difference. Just one individual can make a H-U-G-E difference with just a few hours of volunteer service as they help others in their county to be salt and light. If you would like to “flavor” your community as the “salt” and enlighten your community as the “light,” please go to page 8 and see what we can do together. It is just 2 to 3 hours of time.

YOU can be the difference!
Gambling is bad public policy! – Please CALL!

The efforts to expand gambling are coming from two directions: The Legislature, and the Executive Branch (using the courts).

The gambling industry, using its wealth and influence, is attacking Kentucky on two fronts in order to expand its grip on the finances of Kentucky families. Both of these efforts are coming to a head in 2019, so Kentucky citizens should get involved now.

Expansion through the Executive Branch
First, former Governor Steve Beshear set a gambling court case in motion in 2010. He had his Kentucky Horse Racing Commission, in league with the eight horse tracks, file suit in the Franklin Circuit Court in order to have it authorize “Historical Racing” slot machine-style gambling. The Family Foundation entered the case because, “It smelled a rat.”

The case has had all kinds of shenanigans take place over the last eight years and finally resulted in the judge deciding, last Oct. 24, that pari-mutuel wagering does not have to be “mutual.” (You can wager all by yourself on one of these machines and it is still pari-mutuel . . . and therefore legal.)

What????!!! The Family Foundation’s attorney, Stan Cave, who figured out each of the numerous deceptive arguments made during the case, has appealed the decision straight to the Kentucky Supreme Court, because that’s where it will ultimately belong. If the Supreme Court takes the case, serious questions should be answered before the end of the year.

One of the startling discoveries made by The Family Foundation, through its Freedom of Information Act inquiries, was the fact that neither the Kentucky Horse Racing Commission nor its overseeing Cabinet (The Public Protection Cabinet) had any research documents or white papers on the impact that the six new “Historical Racing” slot machines will have on Kentucky families. That’s terribly strange given it is the “PUBLIC

Therefore, . . . we must make two calls and speak to BOTH the Executive Branch AND the Legislative Branch.

Call 1-502-564-2611

Call & leave this message with the Governor’s receptionist:

“Please, Gov. Bevin, act to stop the ‘Historic Racing’ casinos.”

Call 1-800-372-7181

Call the toll-free Legislative Message Line and leave this message for “all the legislators from my county” (State Senators and Representatives) and copy this message to Senate President Stivers and House Speaker Osborne.

“Please vote against any gambling bill!” And, “Hold a hearing on the new ‘Historic Racing’ casinos.”

Gambling expansion by the legislature
Secondly, pro-gambling legislators are working to expand gambling to out-of-state sports wagering companies as well as to in-state charitable gaming operations. At least these efforts are being done by the correct body – the General Assembly – which is the people’s branch of government, and the correct one for changes in public policy.

Fortunately, the expansion of gambling has been stopped for years by Kentucky citizens who rose to the occasion and squelched all the gambling money’s efforts with their voices, saying “No expansion of gambling.” This same tactic will work again this year if the people of Kentucky let their voices be heard.

The Bottom Line

Reality is this: In truth, government shouldn’t have the right to give asset “hunting licenses” to a few elite “connected” people, authorizing them to rip-off others. Even if it did, why would it? Citizens need to call and let their voices be heard. (See below, left.)

Gambling’s Four Policy Truths

Truth #1: The Family is targeted. Gambling doesn’t create new wealth; it only makes wealth change hands. Then where does all the money come from? Corporations can’t gamble, nor can businesses, institutions, schools, churches, nonprofits, nor civic groups – only Moms and Dads, and a few single people. In other words, all the BILLIONS of dollars that is gambled is just a shift of assets FROM the hands of the family INTO the hands of the gambling industry.

Truth #2: Businesses will lose. As families lose, businesses lose. Think about it – after all the losses, parents can’t afford to take the family out to eat, buy their children new school clothes, purchase a new refrigerator or finance a new home addition. Businesses suffer because money is TAKEN OUT of the economy. Remember, Las Vegas was built by losers – not winners.

Truth #3: Government will be corrupted. With millions going into the hands of the gambling industry, who becomes the greatest contributor and most influential group in the political process? The gambling industry will have the cash! Consider Nevada, home of Las Vegas: Their legislature was elected just like ours but has voted to legalize prostitution (because the gambling industry wanted it). And, there are 13 abortion clinics serving Las Vegas – population 640,000; Kentucky has one serving 4.3 million. Government changes!

Truth #4: The Vulnerable will be destroyed. Though families are targeted (see #1 above), finances aren’t the worst of the costs. Financial loss is just the beginning of a tragedy that all the family members experience. Some lives will be totally destroyed – marriage-damaging financial stress, alcoholism, drug use, child neglect and abuse, spouse neglect and abuse, divorce, depression, suicide, embezzlement, imprisonment and crime (both victim and perpetrator). And worse, children will lose their childhoods and be affected for a lifetime. Doctors have a policy regarding treatments: “First, do no harm.” Policy-makers in Frankfort would do well to apply this wisdom to the gambling question.
HC Resolution 5: Best path forward – **CALL!**

Keep the good (medications) and eliminate the bad (contaminants, hallucinogens, etc.) In other words, do the **RESEARCH FIRST!**

Kentucky legislators are preparing for what will likely be a hot debate over a plant. Two bills to legalize marijuana and a resolution to expedite new marijuana medications were filed the first week of the 2019 General Assembly.

Currently, the federal government categorizes marijuana as a controlled substance and bans its use except for extracts that have gone through the research and approval process. However, many individual states have ignored federal law and acted on their own to legalize either “medical marijuana” or “recreational marijuana.”

“Medical marijuana” means the ingestion of all or part of the plant by smoking, vaping, swallowing or absorbing in some form. Generally, in states where it has been legalized, a doctor’s recommendation allows people to grow marijuana for personal use. Others can be licensed to grow and sell the plant.

“Medical marijuana” supporters point out that the plant has medicinal purposes and insist that those benefits cannot be gotten from any other medicines as effectively as from ingesting or smoking marijuana. They claim that if “medical marijuana” is not legalized, pain and suffering will continue unnecessarily for many Kentuckians.

Despite claims that marijuana is not available in Kentucky, the facts are that three marijuana derivatives have been successfully extracted, properly researched, tested and approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and are available by prescription. A fourth is in clinical trials seeking approval.

In addition, hemp and its extract, CBD oil have recently been legalized. CBD oil is one of the substances in marijuana that proponents claim is an effective medication.

Opponents of both “medical” and recreational marijuana have serious concerns about questionable benefits and the adverse effects on the individual and the community.

Data is coming in from states that have legalized the plant and opponents cite disturbing trends linking marijuana use to increases in truancy, driving under the influence, emergency room incidents, psychotic events (particularly in young adults) and even suicides. Marijuana today is far more potent than it was 20 years ago.

For doctors, legalization creates an ethical dilemma, one reason most are not supportive of legalizing marijuana. Physicians would be pressured to recommend something “blindly,” meaning proper prescribing guidelines such as dosing, drug interactions and adverse effects have not been established. There is also the risk of not knowing the contaminants and potency since chemical concentrations vary. Furthermore, to prescribe any controlled substances, physicians must be registered by the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) and, according to the DEA, “medical marijuana” is illegal.

Medical professionals agree that many medications are plant-based but note they have been extracted, refined, tested and properly dosed. “If a patient has a bacterial infection a physician prescribes penicillin. She does not tell the patient to go eat a loaf of moldy bread,” said Joyce Ostrander, policy analyst for The Family Foundation and a licensed health professional. “Likewise, to treat malaria doctors prescribe one of several medications containing quinine. They don’t tell patients to chew on the bark of the cinchona tree.”

Of great concern is the impact on the 18 to 25-year-old population and those who may be vulnerable to mental health and respiratory issues. Research indicates that their use of marijuana dramatically increases the onset of serious mental health disease (i.e., schizophrenia and bipolar disorder) and/or the incidence of psychotic episodes and depression. Consistently, professional articles warn of danger, question the effectiveness and call for more research.

“There are likely additional medications that can be developed,” said Ostrander, “We just want them to go through the same process as every other medication to ensure people are helped, not harmed.” House Concurrent Resolution 5 directs the federal government to expedite that process.

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The cannabis plant (marijuana) **MAY** contain good medicinal chemicals within it, but those chemicals must be researched and evaluated so they can be used safely and responsibly.

**Call 1-800-372-7181**

Call the toll-free Legislative Message Line and leave this message for “**all the legislators from my county** (State Senators and Representatives) and copy this message to Senate President Stivers and House Speaker Osborne.”

“**Please pass House Concurrent Resolution 5. It requires expedited FDA research and safe guidelines before any legalization.**”
Call 1-800-372-7181

The Adoption/Foster Care Protection Act - House Bill 160

By Rep. J. Pathe. HB 160 ensures that faith-based providers of adoption and foster care services can continue to provide services based on their core beliefs. It states that government should not penalize or punish adoption and foster care providers because of their beliefs about marriage. Advocates say: Many people who provide adoption and foster care services are motivated by faith. The same faith that compels them to believe marriage involves a man and a woman also compels them to believe in the sanctity of life. Opponents say: This is a license to discriminate. Obergefell has affirmed the right of every person to marry who they choose. Two dads or two moms make just as good a family as any other family. It is time to end hate and discrimination.

The Parents’ Bill of Rights - To be introduced in the Senate by Sen. West

This bill affirms parental rights as fundamental rights which includes the right of the parent to direct and consent to the medical care, education, upbringing and religious training of their children. It requires the state to have a compelling interest before it restricts parental rights. Advocates say: It is the parents’ right and responsibility to direct the care of their children. Historically parents’ rights have been considered fundamental rights. But, in 2000 a US Supreme Court opinion opened the door for children to be removed from homes without parental consent or even knowledge. Children have been removed from homes without due process because a government official concludes that a child’s best interests would best be served by removal. Opponents say: This law isn’t needed. The United Nations says that parents already have rights and children must also. Children, in consultation with professionals should be able to make their own decisions. If the parents do not agree, a child should be given other guardians and allowed to determine for themselves what path they wish to take without government interference. This bill overrules parental consent and would allow others to make decisions for children.

Higher Education Free Speech Act - To be introduced in the Senate by Sen. Schroder

This law is unnecessary because most abortions are already reported. This is another attempt to overturn Roe v. Wade. This bill requires state colleges and universities to adopt policies to protect the right of students and faculty to speak, write and learn without the threat of intimidation. It would also double your impact by having your message reach Leadership. You must leave YOUR message for legislators. Note: In fairness, each of these bills will be written as though you favor the bill. If you DON’T want a bill passed, simply add the word “Don’t” before the written message below.

#1 “Pass The Adoption/Foster Care Protection Act – House Bill 160”

This bill will protect groups that do adoptions and foster care so they can maintain their own deeply-held convictions about marriage.

#2 “Pass The Parents’ Bill of Rights – To be offered by Sen. West”

(Include “Sen. West” portion) This bill will protect the family by having government stand in support rather than against parents in tough situations.

#3 “Pass Higher Education Free Speech Act – To be offered by Sen. Schroder”

(Include “Sen. Schroder” portion) This bill guarantees campuses will maintain First Amendment rights for all, contrary to many colleges today.

#4 “Pass these Pro-Life Bills: Senate Bills 9 & 10 and House Bills 5 & 148”

Kentucky should be a leading state on the issue of the sanctity of life. These bills accomplish that objective.

Your call to the Legislative Message Line should take about one minute. Make one call for each bill. Just one for the group of pro-life bills. It节约 you time and effort that you would otherwise spend on making a series of calls. The legislative receptionist will ask you how you favor the legislation. Leave your message for legislators. Note: In fairness, each of these bills will be written as though you favor the bill. If you DON’T want a bill passed, simply add the word “Don’t” before the message below.

Be Direct: You do not have to have the bill number, particularly now in the early stages of the Session when bills have not yet been assigned. It is much easier for workers in the Legislature to be able to process your call by asking a question – “Do you have a specific bill you want to work on?”

Be Brief: You can be firm, but be polite. Your legislator wants to hear from you (he wants your vote next time), so do not give them a reason to think you are less than sincere. Be firm, but be polite.

Be Positive: You have a great chance of success. Be as positive as possible. It is better to keep it light and positive when calling someone who is under the gun in Frankfort.

Be Ready: You have a great opportunity to be the voice of the Lord. Be ready, be prepared and be able to share the truth that you know is the truth.

Before Feb. 5, the Legislative Message Line is open from 7:00 am until 6:00 pm EST Mon-Fri. Beginning Feb. 5, you can call in the evening! It will be open 7:00 am until 9:00 pm EST Mon-Thurs, closing at 6:00 pm Fri.
Once it passes in both chambers, it goes to the Governor for his signature.

When the Governor receives the bill on his desk, he can do one of three things: he can sign it, veto it, or simply not act on it. If he signs it, it becomes law. If he does not sign it, it still becomes law. Not signing a bill, but letting it go into effect is a way for the Governor to express disapproval without actually stopping the bill.

If the Governor vetoes the bill, the bill can only become law if the General Assembly overrides the veto. A veto can be overridden only by a constitutional majority of both chambers. In the House, a constitutional majority is 51 votes (one more than half of 100). In the Senate, it is 20 votes (one more than half of 38). If the veto is overridden in this way, the bill becomes law. If it is not overridden, it does not become law.

**Calendar for the 2019 General Assembly**

- **January 8-11**: Session Begins *(organizational week)*
- **February 5**: Session Reconvenes *(after 3-week break)*
- **February 15**: Last day for new Senate bills
- **February 18**: President’s Day *(holiday)*
- **February 19**: Last day for new House bills
- **March 12 & 13**: Concurrence
- **March 14-25**: Governor’s veto period *(10 days)*
- **March 28-29**: Veto override period and *Sine Die*
They believe “It’s time for us to do something . . .”

The plight of “looking after widows and orphans in their distress” caused this couple to step out . . . and now, step into Kentucky.

When contemporary Christian singer Matthew West wrote “Do Something,” he probably didn’t envision Special Assistants for Adoption/Foster Care to the Governor of Kentucky being hired. But indeed they have.

Chris and Alicia Johnson left a successful church to plant a small Baptist church in Clermont, Florida. Foster care was not on their radar. During a sermon series on the Book of James, Chris preached on the instruction to “look after widows and orphans in their distress.” He sensed God asking “Are you going to preach about this or live this?”

That conviction, coupled with West’s lyrics “If not us then who . . . it’s time for us to do something,” clarified for Chris that it was a call from God.

The Johnsons began by supporting adoptive and fostering families in their own congregation and developing relationships with foster care agencies. Then the day came when the agency asked the Johnsons to be foster parents.

Over a decade has passed since the Johnsons sensed that call. Chris and Alicia, along with their church, have developed a robust relationship with the Florida child welfare system and have fostered over 40 children and adopted seven. Adding their three biological children, they now call themselves “The Johnson Dozen.” Candidly, the Johnsons explain this did not happen “overnight” or without difficulty. They recognize that not everyone in the church is called to be an adoptive or foster parent, but believe there is something that every person and every church can do to “look after widows and orphans in their distress.”

It is that fresh, creative and robust model of personal responsibility and cooperation between the faith community and government that resulted in Governor Bevin inviting the Johnsons to come to Kentucky to share their vision.

To help, reach the Johnsons by calling the Governor’s Office: 502-564-2611

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**The Family Foundation**

Go to our website:

kentuckyfamily.org

Follow us on Twitter:

@KentuckyFamily

Sign up for our email Legislative UPDATEs by emailing to:

kent@kentuckyfamily.org

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**The Kentucky Marriage Movement**

**Lexington, Jan. 28 & Feb. 4**

*Love & Lordship Series for Men* - Greg Williams
Lexington Leadership Foundation
422 Codell Drive, Lexington, KY 40509

**Carrollton, March 1-2**

*Love & Lordship Retreat* - Greg Williams
General Butler State Park
1608 KY-227, Carrollton, KY 41008

**Louisville, Feb. 2**

*Sisters for Life “Marriage for Life”* - Greg Williams
Lake Forest Lodge
511 Woodlake Drive, Louisville, KY 40245

**Louisville, March 8-9**

*Art of Marriage Conference - Family Life*
Shively Baptist Church *(location TBD)*
1599 Sadie Lane, Louisville, KY 40216

For more information, call (859)255-5400 or go to www.kentuckymarriage.org
Please help!

Let’s stand together as one!

Can you be “contagious”? Can you (and your church) stir others to stand and to act? If so, together we will see mountains move.

It is said that “A ship in the harbor is safe . . . but that’s NOT what ships were made for.” (Sitting in the harbor). Similarly, “A Christian in the pew is safe . . . but that’s not what we were made for!” Yes, get filled each week in the pew, but then get out there and share what you know!

Certainly, we all know that we should share the gospel. But shouldn’t we also share the things that God has shown us to be true? Things like the sanctity of human life, the role of parents in a child’s life, the truth about human sexuality and God’s design for marriage.

All of these are coming under attack by those who don’t know God, yet have their own other ideas -- man’s ideas -- and they are pushing them unrelentingly. (Oftentimes, with more fervor than Christians share God’s truths.)

Sure, it’s hard to become an issues expert or a policy analyst in the midst of an everyday busy life. That’s why The Family Foundation has printed this publication. (And is working on another that is designed to be handed out in church congregations in the next few weeks).

Please volunteer and help us get the word out across your county on pieces of legislation that are currently before the Assembly.

Please volunteer and help us get the word out across your county on pieces of legislation that are currently before the Assembly.

Help us raise more voices! **Please volunteer [ASAP] for later this month and make your calls on bills:** (See pages 2-5)

To share our publications with the churches in your county (about 2 to 3 hours), email me as soon as possible.

kent@kentuckyfamily.org (or call 859-255-5400)