

★ AMERICAN CHARACTER BUILDERS ★



But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary *in* doing good.

2 Thessalonians 3:13
(NKJV)

A Look at the 2016 Regular Session of the Alabama Legislature

MONTGOMERY, AL— The 2016 Regular Session of the Alabama Legislature ended at midnight on Wednesday, May 4. In the last 15 minutes of the Session, just before the House adjourned *sine die*, they voted on Senate Bill (SB) 226 which bans the sale of Kratom. The bill was signed into law the next Wednesday by Governor Bentley and local law enforcement officials throughout the state immediately began calling on local convenience stores to remove this product (found under several brand names) from their shelves.



This relatively new drug, coming to the United States from Thailand (where it is illegal to possess it), has the same addictive properties and impacts the brain in the same way as heroin and opioids. The US Food & Drug Administration requires that the leaf from which Kratom is derived be labeled, “Not for human consumption,” but processors would remove the label after passing through Customs. It was being sold over the counter in convenience stores next to 5-hour energy drinks where children could access it. Now, thanks to the Alabama Legislature and Governor, it is illegal in Alabama!

There were three pro-life bills passed during the 2016 Session:

- HB45 (sponsored by Rep. April Weaver) prevents the sale of aborted baby body parts.
- SB363 (sponsored by Sen. Phil Williams) bans abortions by

dismembering the baby under most circumstances.

- HB301 (sponsored by Rep. Ed Henry) prevents abortion clinics from operating within 2000 feet of a school.

On the gambling front, ALCAP was successful in helping to stop all pro-gambling bills from being passed. There were several lottery bills that were introduced and passed out of committees, but not one of them had enough support to be brought to the floor of the Senate or the House.

We were also successful in stopping a daily fantasy sports bill that would have legalized internet gambling in Alabama. Special thanks goes to Attorney General Luther Strange for banning those companies from operating in our state. His action helped stop these bills from moving forward.

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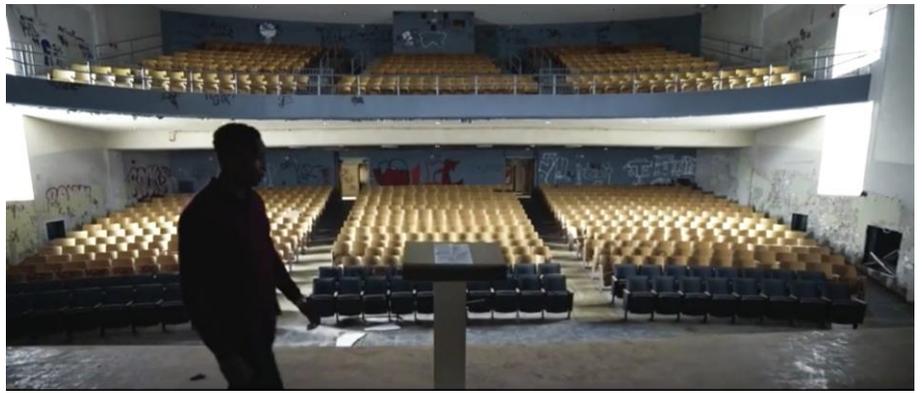
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WHO WE ARE:

The Alabama Citizens Action Program (ALCAP), originally founded in 1937 as the Alabama Temperance Alliance, serves together with local churches as Alabama's "moral compass." This ministry provides an outlet for churches throughout Alabama to fulfill God's command to His followers to be "salt & light" in our culture. (Matthew 5:13-16)

In 2010 ALCAP became a 501c4 organization (non-profit, but NOT tax-deductible) and renamed its school program "American Character Builders," a 501c3 organization (non-profit AND tax-deductible), having its own separate Board of Directors.

Churches are encouraged to support ALCAP while individuals are encouraged to support American Character Builders with their financial contributions and prayers.



COMING SOON!

American Character Builders Online Video Series

BIRMINGHAM, AL— American Character Builders, in our desire to provide quality character building resources for schools and churches, is embarking on an exciting and challenging new journey! We are looking to produce videos that can be used in public school classrooms, by church youth groups, or even by individuals. These videos will provide students with the tools they need to make wise choices in life and they will be free to download, show in group settings and share through social media. Additional resources and discussion questions for use in group settings will be included in reproducible PDF files that will be tied to each video.

The videos will be of the highest production quality and as up-to-date and relevant as possible. A trailer found on our website will show the quality of the videos we hope to produce in the near future.

Currently, we are seeking the funds necessary to produce the first set of videos, which will deal with the problem of bullying. A recent study published by Ohio State University showed that bullies are more likely to get caught up in addictive behaviors than non-bullies.

As funding becomes available, American Character Builders will continue to produce additional

series dealing with issues such as alcohol, tobacco, other drugs, suicide, gang violence, and a host of other topics that are relevant to the struggles facing students today.

We hope that you will visit the website and watch the trailer. Then, answer the question at the end, "What will you do?"

You can help us get this new project started by clicking on the donate button, also found on our website. Once we get the anti-bully series produced and online, the next step you can take is to watch the videos, share them with small (or even large) groups, and then post them on social media. Use the attached resources to further educate yourself and others, and then continue to donate so we can produce future video series.

American Character Builders continues to provide printed resources of our most popular programs. These kits are already available for a minimal charge and shipping cost.

For more information on how your school or church can use resources provided by AMERICAN CHARACTER BUILDERS visit our website:

www.AmericanCharacterBuilders.org

Or, contact Sharon Cook at 205.985.9529, or email her at scook@americancharacterbuilders.org

Transgender debate continues over Obama directive

by Tom Strode

Date: May 17, 2016 - Tuesday

WASHINGTON (BP) -- Legal, policy and pastoral responses are continuing regarding the transgender controversy that reached an apparent peak with the Obama administration's directive to public schools.

Officials with the Departments of Education and Justice directed public school districts, as well as colleges and universities, May 13 to permit transgender students to use the restrooms and locker rooms of their gender identity instead of their biological sex. The guidance is not legally binding, but it implies noncompliance could result in the loss of federal aid.

The governors of Arkansas and Mississippi – Asa Hutchinson and Phil Bryant, respectively – told educators to ignore the directive. Gov. Greg Abbott announced Texas would fight the guidance, and Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick said the state was willing to forfeit billions of education dollars from the federal government.

Even before the directive, officials in eight states in the same week had called for a federal appeals court to reconsider a ruling that supported the administration's position. Officeholders in Arizona, Kansas, Maine, Nebraska, North Carolina, Texas, Utah and West Virginia signed on to a friend-of-the-court brief asking all the members of the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond, Va., to rehear a case in which a three-judge panel sided with a Virginia transgender student who desired to use the boys' restroom despite being a girl biologically.

The Fourth Circuit panel ruled 2-1 in April the ban on sex discrimination in the Title IX education amendments encompasses gender identity – a legal position rejected by conservatives.

The Gloucester County (Va.) School Board, which governs the district in which the transgender student prevailed, asked the appeals court for a rehearing May 3. In addition, Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) – representing 50 students, parents, grandparents and other citizens – urged the full court to take the case and overturn the panel's ruling.

While the Obama administration called for protection for transgender students in its guidance, ADF and others pointed to the safety and privacy of other students in their opposition to government efforts to base restroom and locker room use on gender identity instead of biological sex.

Title IX does the opposite of what foes of the Gloucester County schools' sex-segregated policy argue it does, according to ADF.

"Title IX specifically authorizes schools to have separate restrooms and locker rooms for boys and girls," ADF legal counsel Matt Sharp said in written comments. "The policy accommodates students who aren't comfortable using facilities designated for their biological sex without neglecting the established right of children to bodily privacy and safety."

The Gloucester County school district provided a separate restroom for the transgender student who brought the legal challenge, but she said using the alternative restroom further stigmatized her. The Obama administration backed her position.

ADF also filed federal lawsuits in two states – on behalf of students and parents in Illinois May 4 and in North Carolina May 10 – against the Obama administration in opposition to its interpretation of Title IX.

On Monday (May 16), President Obama defended his administration's position, saying it is society's responsibility to protect vulnerable children.

"Anybody who has been in school, in high school, who has been a parent should realize that kids who are sometimes in the minority, kids who have a different sexual orientation or are transgender are subject to a lot of bullying, potentially," Obama told Buzz Feed News. "They're vulnerable."

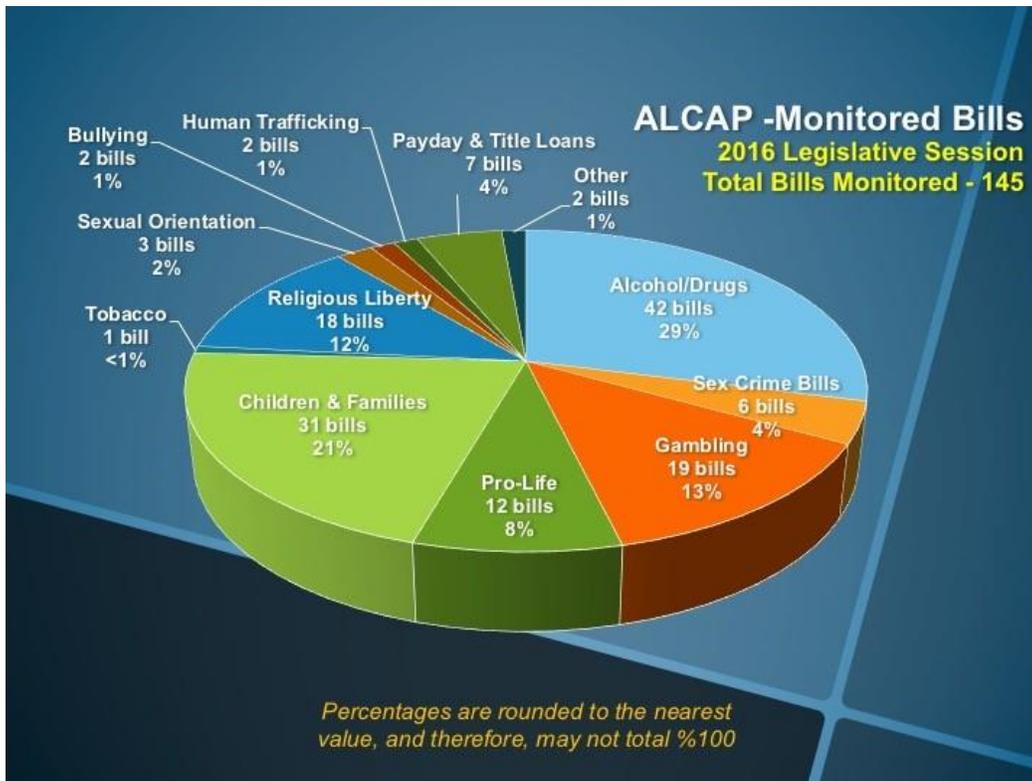
While legal challenges mount, leaders in Southern Baptist life also are offering policy and pastoral counsel.

Andrew Walker, director of policy studies for the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, said in a May 13 blog post for the Southern Baptist entity, "[T]he restroom wars are merely a proxy debate for a larger conflict about what it means to be male and female. God made men and women as equal, but distinct. These distinctions are beautiful, good and a testament to God's wisdom in creation."

Walker went on to say, "Christian parents need to evaluate what this means for them and their children. They need to establish a tipping point. ... What actions taken by your local school will be sufficient for you to re-evaluate public education? Is having a teacher reprimand your child for his or her belief about marriage, sex, and gender acceptable? ... Are you uncomfortable with a biological male having access to the restroom and locker room that your daughter uses? ... It is advisable that spouses have a candid conversation and establish a line in the sand."

Sam Rainer, senior pastor of West Bradenton (Fla.) Baptist Church and president of Rainer Research, stated, "Don't ignore the issue. It's not going away. Most of your people are paying attention to this issue. It affects everyone."

Reprinted from Baptist Press (www.baptistpress.com), news service of the Southern Baptist Convention.



¹³ "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

¹⁴ "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all *who are* in the house. ¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."

Matthew 5:13–16
(NKJV)

A SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ALCAP & AMERICAN CHARACTER BUILDERS:

As we begin the summer months, our ALCAP & American Character Builders budgets will experience the typical "summer slump" unless you and your church will help. These ministries are totally dependent upon churches and Christ-followers who see the importance of God's people serving as the "salt & light" of Christ in a world that needs to hear the Good News of Jesus. Please remember to keep us on your church and personal prayer lists as your missionaries to the Alabama Legislature and to the schools of our state (and even beyond our state). Also, please consider adding us to your church budget and your personal giving plan during the next year.

ALCAP is a 501c4 organization, which means we are non-profit, but NOT tax-deductible. Since churches do not need tax deductions, it would be best if churches make their checks payable to **ALCAP**. If you are an individual and would like to make a contribution, or would like to contribute monthly to our ministry, you can make your checks payable to **American Character Builders**, which is a 501c3 organization that is a non-profit and IS tax-deductible.

If you would like to host an "ALCAP & American Character Builders Sunday" in which you collect a special offering for this ministry, or you would like for me, or another representative of ALCAP or American Character Builders, to speak in your church, please contact me at jgodfrey@alcap.com or by calling 205.985.9062.

May God bless you and your family during these summer months!

Joe Godfrey



Eunie Smith, President of Eagle Forum of Alabama, was presented with **ALCAP's 2016 Dan Ireland Salt & Light Award** at First Baptist Church of Birmingham on Sunday, May 15. Drs. Ireland and Godfrey presented Mrs. Smith with the award during the church's Sunday morning worship hour.

This award is presented annually to individuals who have actively demonstrated Christ's command to His followers to be "salt and light" in our culture.