

★ AMERICAN CHARACTER BUILDERS ★



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

2 Thessalonians 3:13
(NKJV)

August 2016 Special Session of the Alabama Legislature – Will there be another Special Session?

MONTGOMERY, AL— The Governor called a Special Session of the Alabama Legislature during the month of August 2016 to find funding for Medicaid and to push for a Constitutional Amendment legalizing a state-sponsored lottery in Alabama.

After the Senate failed to pass a measure that would have resulted in casino gambling, as well as a lottery, they succeeded in passing a “lottery only” bill with exactly the 21 votes they needed. An amendment was added in the House which defined a lottery as “a paper ticket,” and the Senate voted NOT to concur with the House version. This resulted in the legislation failing to pass, and thus, it did not appear on the November ballot.

Those pushing this bill knew that if the people of Alabama voted on a Constitutional Amendment legalizing a state-sponsored lottery (without the term “lottery” being

defined within the amendment), the legislature could come back and add casinos in the enabling legislation with only a simple majority vote. This could have happened because the Alabama Supreme Court has ruled on several different occasions that a lottery is “any game of chance.” When the House added the definition of a lottery as a paper ticket, the hopes of some for full-fledged casino gambling in this state were dashed.

In November 2016, a “Gaming (a.k.a., “Gambling”) Advisory Council” was formed by the Governor to find a way to expand gambling in the state of Alabama. The Governor claimed its purpose was to clarify the laws and stop the confusion over gambling, but the confusion has occurred because the Governor will not release State Troopers to the Attorney General in order for him to enforce the laws

that are already on the books. In other words, the Governor is the cause of the confusion.

On November 17, 2016, ALCAP paid to bring Les Bernal, national director of Stop Predatory Gambling, to make a presentation to the Governor’s Gaming Advisory Council. Les did an incredible job explaining why gambling is a failed public policy nationwide, but the media attention that day went to the leaders of the Poarch Creek Indians. Tribal leaders made their presentation to the Council and after the meeting, the media spent several minutes interviewing those leaders, while ignoring Les Bernal.

Now, the Governor has suggested he may call another Special Session in January 2017 to tackle the issue of building new prisons. We will watch to see if gambling is a part of that Special Session, as well.

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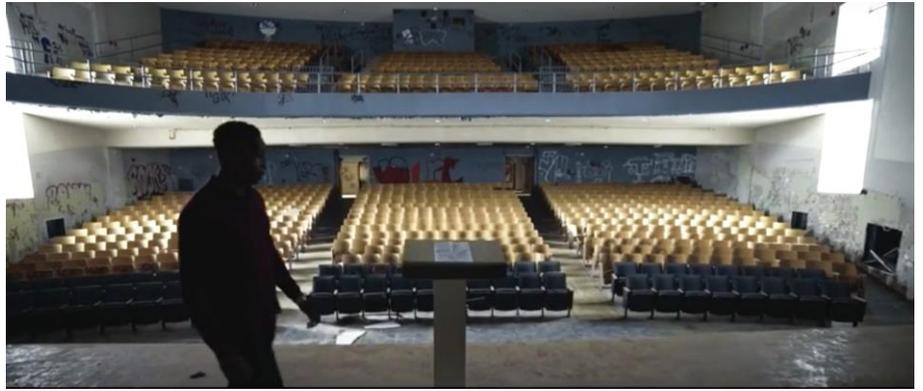
www.AmericanCharacterBuilders.org

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.



UPDATE ON THE VIDEO PROJECT

American Character Builders Online Video Series

BIRMINGHAM, AL— American Character Builders announced in the summer issue of this newsletter that it is embarking on an exciting and challenging new journey to produce a series of 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 shows the quality of the videos we hope to produce in the near future.

To date we have received almost \$2000 in contributions for this project. Each video will cost about \$10,000 to produce and to publicize on social media. We only need 80 more individuals or churches to contribute \$100 in order to begin production on the first video.

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

If you have not already done so, 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.

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

A response to the Governor's Advisory Council on Gaming

by Eric Johnston (Southeast Law Institute), Eunie Smith (Eagle Forum of Alabama) and Joe Godfrey (ALCAP)

The Alabama Supreme Court . . . has ruled consistently in a number of cases in recent years that it is only the gamblers who are attempting to perpetrate illegal slot machine gambling in the name of bingo who dispute our laws. The cases are not inconsistent and there is no dispute among the judiciary. The law is absolutely clear. The Supreme Court ordered on March 31, 2016, that once and for all law enforcement and gamblers should realize there is no question in the law and the law must be enforced. The Governor has ignored this finding.

The problem is, however, on September 5, 2015, Governor Bentley issued Executive Order 13 which told the Attorney General, who had been prosecuting cases statewide, to desist and allow local law enforcement to proceed. As a consequence of that action, Milton McGregor reopened VictoryLand on September 13, 2016. The local DA and sheriff refused to follow the Supreme Court's instructions and have failed to investigate and prosecute clear criminal acts. It is a charade by the Governor to suggest that the operations in VictoryLand are questionable. In fact, he admitted they were illegal in a recent letter, joined in by the Attorney General, to VictoryLand.

So, you see, the Governor has found a way to thwart proper law enforcement of criminal activity in the state, while at the same time suggesting that a council is necessary to resolve these very difficult issues. It is complete fraud, deceit and subterfuge on behalf of the Governor. It works only to the benefit of the gamblers. We know from past legislative experience that the findings of this Council (the Governor's Advisory Council on Gaming) will result in the need to amend Alabama's Constitution and to repeal its criminal gambling laws, while at the same time passing new laws to legalize gambling in the State of Alabama.

Perhaps, Governor Bentley does not believe the people in the state understand this. His very special "Council" will lead the way to broad, sunlit uplands of understanding. Such demagoguery by the morally failed leader of this state will lead only to a dark valley of deceit and crime which will injure not only individuals and families, but the moral fabric of the state.

[To read the entire article, go to <http://www.alcap.com/legislative-news>]

How Casinos Enable Gambling Addicts

Modern slot machines develop an unbreakable hold on many players—some of whom wind up losing their jobs, their families, and even, as in the case of Scott Stevens, their lives.

Did Scott Stevens die because he was unable to rein in his own addictive need to gamble? Or was he the victim of a system carefully calibrated to prey on his weakness? – *READ THE ENTIRE STORY AT...*
<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/12/losing-it-all/505814/>

Surgeon General Issues Landmark Report on Alcohol, Drugs and Health

"How we respond to this crisis is a test for America"

A new, landmark Surgeon General's report (<https://addiction.surgeongeneral.gov>) finds alcohol and drug misuse and severe substance use disorders, commonly called addiction, to be one of America's most pressing public health concerns. Nearly 21 million Americans – more than the number of people who have all cancers combined – suffer from substance use disorders.



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)**

Merry Christmas from the ALCAP & American Character Builders Staff!

As we come to the end of another year, the staff and boards of ALCAP & American Character Builders want to remind everyone that these ministries are totally dependent upon the financial and prayer support of churches and Christ-followers. We are confident that each of you sees 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 add us to your church and personal prayer lists as your missionaries to the Alabama Legislature and the schools of 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 an end-of-year contribution, or you would like to contribute monthly to our ministry throughout the coming year, 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 call our office at 205.985.9062.

May God bless you and your family during this Christmas season and the New Year!

Joe Godfrey