

March 14th, 2016



Dear Friend of the Family,

Thanks to your continued prayers, financial support and active engagement, Alaska Family Council and our political arm, Alaska Family Action, is busier than ever. Although the work of this ministry is not easy, we're blessed to be called to this arena and encouraged by Paul's words to the Colossians to "*work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men.*"

There's More Going On Than The Budget

You could be forgiven for thinking there's nothing going on in Juneau these days except hand-wringing over a budget deficit that's somewhere in the neighborhood of \$4 billion. That issue is certainly crucial. Yet there are other "deficits" that actually have the potential for doing us more harm. We have in our country today a "values deficit" and a "freedom deficit" that actually pose a greater threat to our way of life, in the long term, than any temporary imbalance between spending and revenue.

Thankfully, not all lawmakers have lost sight of the bigger picture.

There are many good bills percolating in Juneau that help protect faith, freedom, and family. There are others that need to be vigorously opposed. For this letter, I'd like to call your attention to two we're supporting. I've enclosed a complete list of good and bad bills as an attachment. Please prayerfully review that list including how and who to contact to engage.

- 1) **Protecting parental rights** – Senate Bill 89. Senator Mike Dunleavy's bill, SB 89, passed the Senate on a vote of 12 to 8, and has been sent to the Alaska House of Representatives for consideration. SB 89 is a crucially important bill to protect the right of parents to direct the education of their children.

SB 89 ensures that parents have the right to prevent their child from participating in tests, classes, and programs they find objectionable. It requires parental permission before a student can participate in sex education instruction, and it ensures that abortion-promoting organizations such as Planned Parenthood are not allowed to teach sex education classes in public schools.

- 2) **Stengthening religious liberty** – House Bill 325. This important bill was introduced recently by Rep. Wes Keller. HB325 protects those who hold certain professional and occupational licenses from being subject to disciplinary action by state authorities when they decline to provide a service that would violate a sincerely held conviction related to their faith or because they express a religious belief.

Across the country, we've seen countless incidents where professionals are retaliated against when they refuse to do something that violates their religious conscience. In Washington, pharmacists were discriminated against when they declined to provide abortion-inducing drugs. In New Jersey, nurses were forced to assist with abortion procedures, even when they were adamantly opposed to abortion as a matter of religious conviction. HB 325 will not end all such discrimination, but it will at least limit the powers of government licensing authorities from taking retaliatory measures against professionals simply because they seek to live by their religious convictions in their professional careers.



In The Hands of a Few Black Robed Attorneys

Two issues regarding the protection of innocent human life are now at the Alaska Supreme Court. Both involve freedoms that are being taken away. Please pray that the Justices will be wise and discern properly as they consider the following –

Parental Notification – you might remember back in 2010 when Alaska Family Action succeeded in passing a statewide initiative known as Ballot Measure 2 that returned the right of parents to know when their teenaged daughters were considering an abortion. Although this measure passed with more than 90,000 Alaskans supporting it, the law was immediately challenged in Court by Planned Parenthood. A ruling by the Supremes could be in the next few months or next few years. While we wait, the law is on hold. Please pray for a decision that would strengthen the right of parents and support young teenagers who need and deserve counsel from those closest to them.

Medicaid Funding for Elective Abortions – One of our top priorities for many years was to keep Alaskans from having to pay for elective abortions through Medicaid. In 2014, Governor Parnell signed SB49 into law after a long, arduous battle in both legislative chambers. The common sense legislation simply identified what abortions are “medically necessary” when taxpayers were being asked to cover the expense. Once again, Planned Parenthood sued and successfully had Superior Court Judge John Suddock (*whose former law firm actually represented Planned Parenthood*) shoot the law down. Oral arguments are being prepared now for the AK Supreme Court and we're identifying MDs across the state to sign an amicus brief supporting of the law. Please pray now for the attorneys as they prepare. If you are or know a pro-life doctor willing to sign the brief, have them contact AFC at 907.279.2825.

Protecting the Faith Community Again in Anchorage

We call them SOGIs, and wherever they arise, religious liberties are at risk. The short history is that we led an effort in 2012 to defeat Prop 5 in Anchorage – a law that would have added sexual orientation and gender identity to the Municipality's non-discrimination code. Because elections matter, a new Mayor and a few new Assembly members forced Ordinance 96 upon the city with very few protections for people of faith. Today, men are legally able to enter women's public restrooms and locker rooms. Today, churches, pastors, faith based social service agencies and businesses owned by people holding traditional views of marriage are susceptible to lawsuits.

Within a few weeks, Alaska Family Action will be submitting to the Municipal Attorney significant amendments to Ordinance 96 as a citywide initiative. While not fully repealing the misguided law, our intent is to bring balance and create equal protections for people of faith who want to live and work in the public marketplace without fear of governmental intrusion and legal intimidation. It's time for the pendulum to swing back our way.

We'll be kicking off our campaign, following approval from the Municipality for the initiative and collection of petition signatures, in May with special guest Alan Sears, President and Chief Counsel for Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF). ADF is the preeminent legal ministry in the country addressing religious liberties with many successful victories at the U.S. Supreme Court. We'll keep you posted as this effort unfolds.

Religious Liberty Advisory Board

In line with our upcoming effort to amend the Anchorage SOGI, we're creating an Alaska Religious Liberty Advisory Board whose purpose will be to provide perspective, direction and prayer regarding religious liberty challenges and solutions as they develop in Alaska.



Our intent is to maintain an on-going group of engaged faith leaders with a traditional, Biblical view of human sexuality and respect for the dignity of life, marriage and religious liberty to bring unity and strength to our movement. Although this is a proactive effort, in part, it is a response to the Christians for Equality group made up of a growing list of community members who take a much more liberal view of Scripture. They have often been portrayed as being representative of the "Church" in Alaska. It's time to provide a different perspective. In the coming weeks, we'll be introducing members to the public.

Ravi Zacharias – Apologetics in the 21st Century

It is with great pleasure that we can announce once again that Ravi Zacharias will be doing a benefit for our ministry. Certainly one of the preeminent apologists of our time, Dr. Zacharias will be doing a lunch lecture at the Beartooth Theatre in Anchorage on Monday, April 18th from 11:30am to 1:30pm. Tickets are \$100 and include a famously delicious lunch from one of the top restaurants in town. Go to akfamily.org and get your tickets now as they are selling quickly and there is limited number of seats. Funds raised from this event will ensure that we can stay focused on transforming the culture through Christian citizenship.

Again, please take a few minutes to review the legislative priorities I've enclosed and be assured we're working hard on your behalf to advance pro-family policies and protect our freedoms when their under assault. Be of good cheer and *"do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God's."* Please also know that we depend upon your prayers and financial support.

Your generosity allows us to stand in the gap. Please help us stay engaged.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Minnerly". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jim Minnerly – President

P.S. To keep receiving our emails, please add president@akfamily.org to your address book. Thanks !



Bills Alaska Family Action supports:

- 1) SB 89 / HB 192 – Protect parental rights to direct education of children. Requires consent from parents before sex-ed and other controversial issues can be taught.
- 2) SB 191 / HB 352 – No access to public schools for abortion businesses.
- 3) SB 179 – Bans certain late-term abortions.
- 4) SB 120 / HB 236 – Pastor Protection Act – reiterates that pastors have no duty to solemnize “marriages” that conflict with convictions.
- 5) HB 127 – Children’s Internet Protection Act – requires public libraries to install internet filters to protect children in order to receive any state funding.
- 6) SB 18 – Protects health care sharing ministries from being regulated as insurers.
- 7) SB 44 – Gives public employee union members ability to choose what charities their union dues go to rather than the union deciding. Strengthens religious liberties.
- 8) HB 325 – Protects those who hold certain professional/occupational licenses from being subject to state disciplinary action when they decline to provide a service that would violate a sincerely held conviction related to their faith.
- 9) SJR 3 – Increases number of public members on the Alaska Judicial Council to decrease unbalanced influence of Alaska Bar Association in selection of judges.



Bills Alaska Family Action opposes:

- 1) HB 19 / HB 42 / SB 20 - Adds sexual orientation & “gender identity” to the state’s nondiscrimination code.
- 2) HB 99 – Legalizes assisted suicide in Alaska.
- 3) HJR 1 - Repeals Alaska’s Marriage Amendment defining marriage as a union between one man and one woman.
- 4) HB 342 - Eliminate terms “husband” and “wife” from state marriage law.

Take Action Now!

Please go to akleg.gov and type in the bill numbers above.
Contact sponsors of bills AFA supports and thank them for standing strong.
Contact sponsors of bills AFA opposes and tell them their bill is bad public policy.
Read through the bill sponsor statements to become a more informed citizen.

“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.” Matthew 7:24

