

The Kentucky CITIZEN

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND THE VALUES THAT MAKE FAMILIES STRONG

Vol. XVIII No. 1

January/February 2009

The Assembly's "Covenant" stirs interest

The "General Assembly's Covenant with Kentucky Families" is a listing of 5 pro-family bills and one key issue on marriage.

The 2009 session of the General Assembly has seen a lot of debate already, but, in some sense, it's just getting started. A bill pushing video lottery terminals to take the wealth of families and one mandating that elementary school girls take a controversial sexually transmitted disease vaccine before entering middle school have claimed the spotlight. The best bills, however, are just now making their appearance.

Five bills and one key issue are being discussed intensely in Frankfort, and they have at least two things in common – they all strengthen the family, and they all require no extra funding from the government.

"We've dubbed this grouping of bills

'The General Assembly's Covenant with Kentucky Families' because together they represent a major step forward for families," said Kent Ostrander, executive director of The Family Foundation. "It's time that the legislators recognize that the family is the state's most precious resource and set their legislative agendas accordingly." (See listing below.)

The realms covered by the five pieces of legislation and the one issue are diverse, and include the sanctity of human life, public decency, adoption, marriage and education – all from a family perspective.

Because they are common sense bills, getting them all passed during this "short" 30-day session should be the toughest factor in their journey; but the bills have

all shown viability in their respective committees and are moving forward. The legislative portion of the session will come to a close on March 11, so time is of the essence.

"I'm convinced that if the people of Kentucky let their legislators know they want these bills, legislators will indeed pass them – they are right in the center of Kentucky values," said Ostrander.

Ostrander went on to point out that, acknowledging notable exceptions, both Republicans and Democrats tout these values and have initiated bills on these topics before.

Each bill must be heard in one committee of each Chamber and on the floor of

each Chamber before passage and before being sent to the Governor for his signature. Time is a key component.

"It's time that the legislators recognize that the family is the state's most precious resource and set their legislative agendas accordingly."

– Kent Ostrander
The Family Foundation

Key legislation of "The Covenant" that will pass or fail by March 11

SB 79 - The Ultrasound Bill - Requires abortionist to offer face-to-face consultation and availability of ultrasound for patient.



SB 42 - Public Decency Act - Bars total nudity in sex businesses and prevents patrons from groping/touching performers.



SB 1 - The CATS Test - Changes CATS test to family-friendly evaluation, not just school evaluation AND it saves millions.



SB 68 - Child Welfare in Adoption Act - Requires that child not be placed in the home of cohabiting, "live-in lovers."



SB 186 - Special Needs Ed - Allows parents access to special needs funds when public school cannot meet the child's needs.

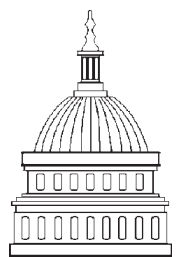


Marriage Sovereignty Act - Protects marriage from an interloper who seduces the wife, then asks for paternity rights. (An issue currently.)



Get Involved!

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Three seminars set for Marriage Movement

Pastors, ministry heads and active volunteers encouraged to participate in order to create sustained momentum.

The Family Foundation is pleased to host a series of three seminars that will focus on marriage enrichment as part of the kick-off for the Kentucky Marriage Movement. The seminars will take place on April 21 in Madisonville, April 23 in Lexington and April 28 in Prestonsburg. The day-long seminar will include topics such as becoming involved in a “marriage movement” in your church or community as well as the state of marriage in Kentucky. The featured speaker is Ron Ball, a Prestonsburg native and former assistant to Pastor Charles Stanley.

Ball and his wife, Amy, have been conducting “Honeymoon for Life”

Marriage Weekends for 10 years. Over 10,000 couples have attended these weekend seminars in which Ball discusses communication, conflict resolution, sex and romance and have learned new principles on enriching their marriages.

“Our goal with these seminars is to encourage couples in their own marriage and to plant seeds on what they can do to encourage others in their churches or communities,” said Sarah Roof, coordinator of the Kentucky Marriage Movement effort. “By offering the seminars in various cities, more people may be able to

attend and they may be impassioned to ignite their own ‘marriage movement.’”

The Kentucky Marriage Movement website was launched in the summer of 2008 and was unveiled with the pre-release screenings of the pro-marriage film *Fireproof*. The website will serve as a touchstone to help unite church and community leaders in the effort to proactively build strong marriages and healthy families in their congregations and communities.

The Family Foundation hosted 10 screenings of *Fireproof* across the state for pastors and their wives prior to the movie’s release on Sept. 26. The movie, now

available on DVD, was highly successful in Kentucky and throughout the nation. By the time the film ended its theatrical run, more than 4 million people had seen it, and it was the No. 1 independent film of 2008. But more important than the financial success are the numerous “marriage success” stories that occurred as a result of a husband or wife being touched by the movie.

“Marriage is hurting in Kentucky,” said Roof. “And it’s hurting both in and out of the church. There is a dire need to encourage married couples in their journey.” Though most people will not take on a project like

creating a movie, Roof points out that there are numerous things that can be done to strengthen and encourage married couples.

“Attending a marriage seminar is one thing couples can do,” said Roof. “Churches and groups can also host a date night, offer a marriage class...the options are endless.”



“Marriage is hurting in Kentucky. And it’s hurting both in and out of the church. There is a dire need to encourage married couples in their journey.”

– Sarah Roof, coordinator
Kentucky Marriage Movement

To Assist:

If you would like to assist with the seminar in your region, or if you desire to work to strengthen marriages in your church and community, please call (859) 255-5400.

For more information visit the website at www.kentuckymarriage.org. Registration information will be available in the next *CITIZEN* that is scheduled for March.

“Racino” advocates lack credibility

The actual revenue they claim keeps changing, and they’ve left Kentucky citizens out of the decision.

Either the “racino” bill, House Bill 158, is rapidly growing in its ability to help all Kentuckians, OR its sponsor is telling everyone what they want to hear in order to get support for a lemon of an enterprise.

Regarding the plan’s real dollar value, House Speaker Greg Stumbo appeared on Jan. 3 on WKYT-TV *Kentucky Newsmakers* with Bill Bryant saying that the bill would “generate probably upwards of 500 million new dollars to the state of Kentucky.” A week later, on Jan. 10, he was quoted in an article by *Lexington Herald-Leader* writer Janet Patton saying it would generate \$700 million annually – a \$200 million increase in just over a week while the economy was still clearly in a downward tailspin.

Then, in the Jan. 31 edition of the *Herald-Leader*, Stumbo was quoted by Patton again, this time estimating that state government would receive \$349 million every year, which by virtue in the formula contained in the bill, \$1 BILLION would have to be the total “raised” every year. (The \$349 million would be government’s 35 percent cut, making \$1 billion the full take.) In essence, in less than a month and during a seriously declining economy, the racino plan had doubled the financial “good” that it will do.

Many miss the painful fact that what the gambling industry calls “revenue” is

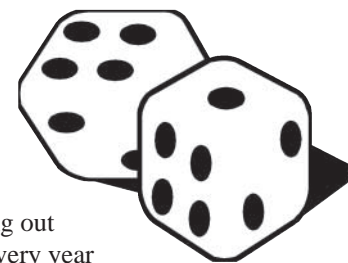
actually “losses” by their customers. Detractors, however, understand the system and maintain that the first figure – \$500 million – was inflated badly, pointing out Kentucky citizens cannot afford to lose \$500 million every year – a half a billion dollars every year.

And again, they say with certainty that \$700 million could not possibly be lost by Kentuckians annually, and now they regard the \$1 billion figure as a joke.

Of equally great concern is the way the “revenues” will be divided. Government claims 35 percent, according to the bill. The new horse industry/lottery alliance gets 65 percent – basically twice as much as government.

Again detractors point out that legislators, if they really needed money for government, could simply raise taxes a small amount and 100 percent of that money would go to government. Instead, this plan gives two thirds of the money to the operators of the slot establishments/race tracks – folks who already are some of Kentucky’s wealthiest.

One of the biggest concerns for most Kentuckians is that they had always been promised that if casinos were coming to the state, they’d have an opportunity to vote on the issue. House Bill 158 bypasses citizens entirely and some believe it is a deliberate strategy by the pro-casino folks to get what they want without any hassle.



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How A Bill Becomes Law



A law begins its journey toward enactment when it is introduced as a bill. It can be introduced in either the House of Representatives or the Senate, but it must be approved by both in order to be sent to the Governor for his signature, at which point it becomes law.

Once a bill is introduced in one of the chambers (either the House or the Senate), the Committee on Committees (both the House and the Senate have one) decide to which committee the bill will be sent. This is an important decision because it is harder to get a bill through some committees than others.

The Speaker of the House is the chairman of the House Committee on Committees, and the Senate President is the chairman of the Senate Committee on Committees.

When the bill has been received by a committee, the chairman of the committee decides whether the bill should be heard by the committee. If the chairman decides that the bill should not be heard, it simply dies. If it is heard, it is either approved or defeated. If it is approved, it goes to the Rules Committee.

The Rules Committee of each chamber is also a powerful committee. There a bill gets its second reading. The Rules Committee decides when and whether a bill gets to the chamber floor for a vote. It can either send the bill directly to the floor or back to another committee for further review.

When a bill finally reaches the floor, before it can be voted on, it must be announced three times. The Speaker of the House or the President of the Senate can refuse to call the bill for a vote, in which case it will eventually die. If the bill is voted on and passed, it goes on to the other chamber and starts on the same entire process for approval there.

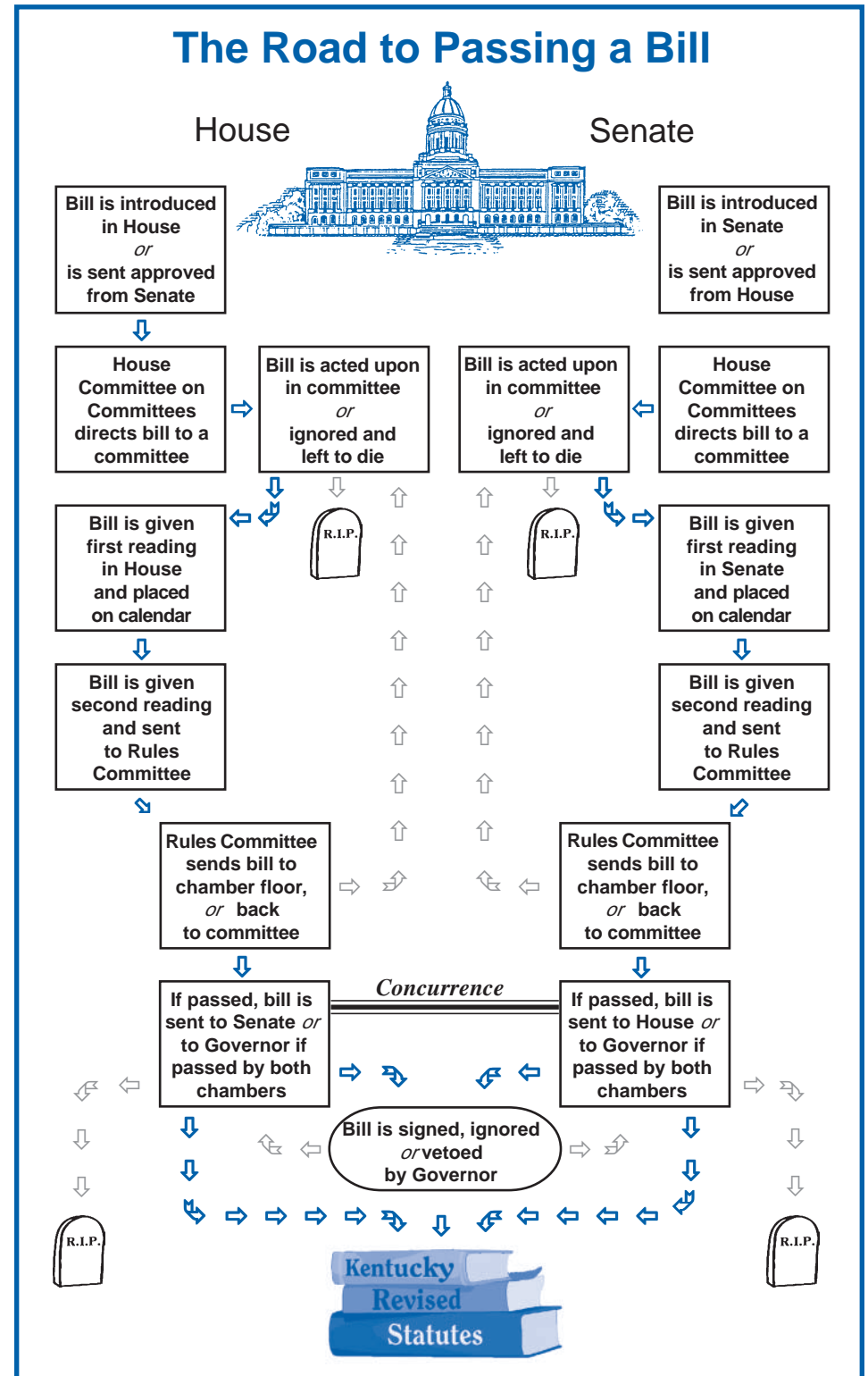
If one chamber passes a bill and the other chamber changes it in any way, the bill must go back to the chamber in which it originated to approve the change. This is called "concurrency."

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 upon 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.

The Road to Passing a Bill



The 2009 General Assembly

Calendar

January 6-9

February 3

February 6

February 13

February 16

February 23

March 12 & 13

March 14 thru 25

March 26-27

Four-day Organization period

Session re-opens for legislation

Last day for bill requests

Last day for new Senate bills

President's Day (holiday)

Last day for new House bills

Concurrency

Governor's veto period (10 days)

Veto override period and *Sine Die*

Lincoln's "prophetic" Second Inaug

After wrestling for 89 years with the issue that violated the founding proclamation of the United States of America, the nation r

Abraham Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address March 4, 1865

Fellow-Countrymen:

At this second appearing to take the oath of the Presidential office there is less occasion for an extended address than there was at the first. Then a statement somewhat in detail of a course to be pursued seemed fitting and proper. Now, at the expiration of four years, during which public declarations have been constantly called forth on every point and phase of the great contest which still absorbs the attention and engrosses the energies of the nation, little that is new could be presented. The progress of our arms, upon which all else chiefly depends, is as well known to the public as to myself, and it is, I trust, reasonably satisfactory and encouraging to all. With high hope for the future, no prediction in regard to it is ventured.

On the occasion corresponding to this four years ago all thoughts were anxiously directed to an impending civil war. All dreaded it, all sought to avert it. While the inaugural address was being delivered from this place, devoted altogether to saving the Union without war, urgent agents were in the city seeking to destroy it without war—seeking to dissolve the Union and divide effects by negotiation. Both parties deprecated war, but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive, and the other would accept war rather than let it perish, and the war came.

One-eighth of the whole population were colored slaves, not distributed generally over the Union, but localized in the southern part of it. These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was somehow the cause of the war. To strengthen, perpetuate, and extend this interest was the object for which the insurgents would rend the Union even by war, while the Government claimed no right to do more than to restrict the territorial enlargement of it. Neither party expected for the war the magnitude or the duration which it has already attained. Neither anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease

with or even before the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible and pray to the same God, and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces, but let us judge not, that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered. That of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes. "Woe unto the world because of offenses; for it must needs be that offenses come, but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh." If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him? Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said "the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.

Inaugural Address should guide us today

Resonated with Lincoln's wisdom as he humbly embraced, as President, the judgment of God. Lord, help us turn today.

Holding fast to that which is true

On July 4, 1776 the leaders of the United States of America proudly, and rightly so, unveiled their Founding Document, changing the history of the world. Reality teaches us that there is a time to proclaim what is good and right – what you will live for and what you will die for; but there is also a time to implement and “walk out” those ideals. Abraham Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address, delivered on Saturday, March 4, 1865, speaks of the tragedy when we as a nation failed to live up to the standard that our Founding Fathers would say was set through the Providence of God.

Recall those piercing words, shining like beacons and unlike any written before: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

“Liberty,” we proclaimed, was an unalienable right endowed by God. Yet at that very time, several hundred thousand Africans were “legally” enslaved, having been dragged against their will onto our shores.

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Though many had worked and prayed for the abolition of slavery, the political and economic conditions were such that national leaders never allowed the issue to be fully faced and fully resolved. Instead, the wrong our nation perpetrated, contrary to our stated convictions, would be used as a plumb line, as Lincoln articulated a month before he would be assassinated on the occasion of his Second Inaugural Address.

“Fondly do we hope,” Lincoln said, “fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman’s two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said ‘the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.’”

Thirty-six years after the Declaration of Independence, America was distracted by many things, including the War of 1812 with our mother country. So as before, our nation’s leaders just rolled the issue of slavery to the next generation as had previous leaders.

Today there is another of those inalienable rights that have been systematically violated. Remember that “life” is one of those rights, one of those self-evident truths. For 36 years since the

1973 *Roe v Wade* decision, more than 50 million unborn Americans have had their lives ended by the “legal” medical procedure of abortion. Even worse, the United States has lead on this issue, pressuring other nations, whose cultures and belief systems would not naturally



Kent Ostrander is the executive director of The Family Foundation

have allowed them, to legislate abortion.

Late last month, shortly after entering office, our new President reversed rules set by previous presidents – the law of the land is now to allow for

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taxpayer-funded abortions *and* taxpayer funding of international groups that push for abortion worldwide.

I implore you, let us learn from history. Let us as Americans truly listen to the words of Lincoln who, most would agree, was one of our greatest Presidents. Lincoln, having led us through the most threatening period this young nation had seen, almost as his swan song, spoke painfully, yet with righteous resolve, that his generation must embrace the judgment that we as a nation had earned. We, instead, still have the opportunity to “turn” from our abortive ways and avoid our just due.

Let us resolve today *that we will not wait* those same 89 years to end abortion, when the Hand of God is fully against us in judgment. And let us not be mired now in the “distractions of 1812” so that we cannot see the bigger picture for which we and our progeny will be held accountable.

Listening to Lincoln once again, “With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, *let us strive on to finish the work we are in . . .*”



The new materials and the DVDs are ready. Volunteers are beginning to inform citizens and churches in a county-by-county effort about the

Kentucky Memorial for the Unborn.

To help in your county, call 859-255-2000

or email tffky@mis.net

Please join with us to help Kentucky lead the way!

Change? Now taxpayers will pay for abortions

One of the President's first acts reverses the Mexico City Policy, allowing federal money to be used for and to promote abortion.

When President Barack Obama was sworn in as president on Jan. 20, he promised to bring change. Three days later he signed an executive order allowing taxpayer dollars to fund groups that promote and pay for abortions abroad, leaving many to wonder if this is the kind of change they bargained for.

Obama's repeal of the Mexico City Policy, which was instituted by President Ronald Reagan in 1984, is the latest in the ongoing battle over abortion between Democrats and Republicans. President Clinton rescinded the rule when he took office in 1993, but President Bush reinstated the policy in 2001 and said, "It is my conviction that taxpayer funds should not be used to pay for abortion or actively promote abortion." Now with the ban lifted, every American taxpayer is helping to fund overseas abortions.

Seventy-eight Congressmen sent President Obama a letter on Jan. 16 urging him to continue the ban. "In these difficult economic times, the American people would not

want us funding groups that are trying to export abortion around the world," the letter stated.

Douglas Johnson, legislative director of National Right to Life, said the change would hurt other agencies that provide international relief. "One effect of Obama's anticipated order will be to divert many millions of dollars away from groups that do not promote abortion, and into the hands of those organizations that are most militant in promoting abortion as a population-control method," Johnson said in an interview with Life News. "So, a president who not long ago told the American people that he wanted to reduce the number of abortions, is already effectively promoting the increased use of abortion as a means of population control." Obama signed the order the day after the 36th anniversary of the infamous *Roe v. Wade* decision which struck down every state restriction on abortion.

Tony Perkins of the Family Research Council harshly

criticized Obama's executive order.

"Yesterday, President Obama issued executive orders banning the torture of terrorists but today signed an order that exports the torture of unborn children around the world," Perkins told *The Washington Post*. "His action today flies in the face of that vow and probably sets a record as the most quickly broken campaign promise ever, leaving the question, 'How many more broken promises to families lie ahead?'"



Offering change many don't want to believe in

Will President Obama push FOCA next?

Those with sanctity of life convictions are already mobilizing to oppose this radical (and promised) abortion legislation.

The Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA) has languished in Congress for 20 years. But the threat of the most radical pro-abortion bill passing into law has pro-lifers riled, particularly after the reversal of the Mexico City Policy. (See article above.) It was on July 17, 2007 when Barack Obama spoke to the Planned Parenthood's Action Fund Banquet and promised, "The first thing I'd do as president is, is sign the Freedom of Choice Act . . ." Now that he's elected, some are concerned that he will make good on that promise.

FOCA would codify the *Roe v. Wade* decision and undo decades of hard-fought, pro-life legislation. "If FOCA were to become law, it would overturn hundreds of state laws that have put limits on abortion," according to Tony Perkins, president of Family Research Council. Perkins is not alone in his concern.

On Nov. 11, 2008, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops urged aggressive opposition to FOCA at their annual conference and released an official statement opposing the bill, which is expected to be introduced in early 2009. Archbishop George Niederauer of San Francisco encouraged his colleagues to oppose FOCA "early and often, both with members of Congress and with the new administration."

The far-reaching pro-abortion law could overturn protections for Catholic hospitals that refuse to do abortions. Some Bishops considered closure of some Catholic health facilities a better option than subjecting them to perform abortions.

Planned Parenthood, FOCA's biggest cheerleader, stands the most to gain. Should FOCA pass, they could perform abortions on minors without parental consent, bypass waiting periods and withhold mandatory ultrasounds in states that require them be offered to women seeking an abortion. If the laws are lifted, the nation's number one abortion provider will easily surpass the \$100 million that they took in last year just from abortions. In 2006, Planned Parenthood performed 289,650 abortions.

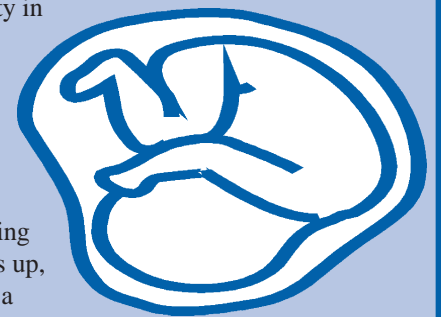
Analysts say that FOCA's prospects of passing are exceptional because of the connections of those behind it. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi favors the bill. So does Planned Parenthood executive director Cecile Richards who served as Deputy Chief of Staff for Pelosi when she was House Minority Leader. With Obama

on record of support, and a pro-abortion majority in both Houses of Congress, the chances of passage are great. But according to Kristen Day, executive director of Democrats for Life of America, FOCA isn't in the best interests of the Democratic Party. She told Baptist Press News that she is taking President-elect Barack Obama at his word that he wants to avoid dividing Americans on cultural issues. "If that bill comes up, it is going to be really divisive," Day said. "It's a radical bill. It would be a big mistake to bring it up. I don't think it would get out of the House."

That hasn't stopped pro-lifers from mobilizing. Americans United for Life recently launched a website called FightFoca.com. Their online petition has accumulated more than 325,000 signatures opposing the bill. National Right to Life also is also conducting a petition drive targeting national leaders. In October 2007, a Harris Poll found that 38 percent of the respondents wanted current abortion laws to be kept the same; 42 percent wanted to see tougher abortion restrictions; and only 16 percent wanted legislation to make it easier for a woman to get an abortion.

According to Family Research Council, a Washington D.C.-based pro-family organization, FOCA would abolish:

- State abortion reporting requirements in all 50 states
- Forty-four states' laws concerning parental involvement
- Forty states' laws on restricting later-term abortions
- Forty-six states' conscience protection laws for individual healthcare providers
- Twenty-seven states' conscience protection laws for institutions
- Thirty-eight states' bans on partial-birth abortion
- Thirty-three states' laws on requiring counseling before an abortion
- Twenty-eight states' laws requiring a waiting period before an abortion, and
- Sixteen states' laws concerning ultrasounds before an abortion



Kentucky volunteer wins presidential award

In this case, credit IS given where credit is due — pregnancy care centers are doing a wonderful work in the Commonwealth.

It's not everyday that a Kentuckian is invited to Washington D.C. to receive a presidential award. So when Tressa Mallard of Oneida got the news that she was one of 150 volunteers from across the country to receive the Presidential Volunteer Service Award, you can imagine her elation. The award, which Mallard received at a Sept. 19 ceremony, was even more heartening since she was being recognized for her involvement in the pro-life movement.

"It is a real honor to be recognized at the national level for volunteering at a pregnancy care center," Mallard said. "Not everybody is in agreement and supports the work of pregnancy care centers. It was very important to us as a center to receive this award and to give recognition to pro-life leaders."

For the past five-and-a-half years, Mallard has driven nearly an hour every Monday morning to get to the Laurel County Life Center, which is located in London. Mallard put in 283 hours of volunteer service last year to win the award, but most of all, she gave her heart to the women who needed help in troubled times.

Besides individual volunteers, 56 pregnancy care centers from across the nation were recognized for their exemplary service. The Presidential Volunteer Service Award is the result of President Bush's Council on Service and Civic Participation, which was launched in 2003 to

increase and recognize community involvement.

Vicki Filiatreau, director of the Laurel County Life Center, traveled to Washington with Mallard and was just as excited about the award as she is with her work. "I love it," Filiatreau said. "The most important thing we do is to share the love of Jesus, to let clients know that there is a strong standard of abstinence until marriage, to comfort them in [their need] and just being able to show them God's love."

The Laurel County Life Center, founded in 1995, sees about 300 clients a year according to Filiatreau. It is a multi-faceted center which offers free pregnancy tests, parenting classes, maternity and baby clothes, abstinence education in the public schools and post-abortion counseling. The Center is one of over 40 located across Kentucky with the goal of helping women faced with untimely pregnancies choose life. And they've been extremely effective according to analysts.

In 1990, during the infancy of the PCC movement, there were 10,921 abortions in Kentucky. Last year, the number was less than half that — 4315. Pro-life advocates attribute the abortion decline to the combined efforts of pro-life legislation, such as parental consent and a mandatory 24-hour waiting period, and pregnancy care center volunteer efforts where women are encouraged to choose

life for their unborn child.

Yet there is much work to be done. Legislation has been introduced in the 2009 General Assembly that would require abortionists to provide women seeking an abortion an ultrasound of their unborn child. Should the bill pass, abortion

numbers are expected to tumble even further — something for which Mallard and Filiatreau have been hoping. In the meantime, they'll continue their work in Laurel County. "It is a joy to fight for unborn babies and to minister to mothers and soon-to-be mothers," Mallard said.



Tressa Mallard with Center director, Vicki Filiatreau

2014 Committee offers recommendations

Finally the tests will give parents and teachers information about the student, not just information about the school.

In late 2008, the 2014 Committee convened to consider what kind of changes needed to take place in the school assessment known as CATS. The committee was named after the year in which schools were to meet the goals set up for them by the 1990 Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA).

CATS (Commonwealth Accountability Testing System) was the successor to the controversial KIRIS test and has proved almost as controversial as its predecessor. Several attempts have been made to make changes to the tests, but the educational establishment in Frankfort and their allies in the General Assembly have derailed

these efforts.

This year, however, the atmosphere seems to have changed dramatically, and the Committee, made up of parents, teachers, state legislators and others seems to have a more receptive audience for its initial proposals. Bills are already making their way through the legislature addressing some of the Committee's recommendations.

"This test has been the center of controversy for years and despite all the calls for change, little has been done to fix the problems," said Martin Cothran, The Family Foundation's senior policy analyst. "It is beginning to look like the time may have arrived."

Several of these changes are a part of Senate Bill 1, a bill that was introduced in the 2008 General Assembly session but made little headway in the House. But this

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The Family Foundation



The 2014 Committee's recommendations include:

1. That because of their subjective nature, writing portfolios should be used for instructional, not accountability purposes.
2. That open-response questions should be removed from the tests and replaced with more objective and easier to grade, multiple choice questions that can be graded more quickly so schools can get their scores back in a reasonable time.
3. That the tests should give parents and teachers accurate student-level scores, rather than just school-level scores. They then can be used to help parents and teachers tell which students need help and where they need it.
4. That the tests should place a greater stress on basic skills.

year those who have stood athwart to any change in KERA seem to be laying down their weapons and admitting that the flaws in the tests require substantial changes.

At press time, the fate of the bill is still uncertain, but it seems likely the House will agree to many of the bill's provisions. "It's been a long, hard fight," said Cothran, who was the chief spokesperson for the opposition to some of KERA's provisions, including the tests, "but we may now be seeing light at the end of the tunnel."

Success begets success

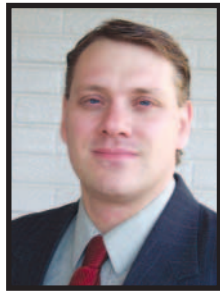
Since last November’s election, left-wing pundits have written the obituary for the pro-family movement. In fact, they’ve gloated. But amidst their merriment, they’ve failed to notice that Kentucky has aggressively shored up community values in recent years.

Consider that less than two months ago Daviess County became the 116th county in the Commonwealth to strictly regulate sexually oriented businesses (SOBs). These are the businesses that reduce women to sex objects in magazines, videos and strip clubs. Defenders of the trade pretend there is some kind of First Amendment right to do this. Come to find out, there is no absolute legal protection to exploit women or wantonly peddle porn in any community.

Both elected officials and the courts agree.

Five years ago only 17 of Kentucky’s 120 counties had solid laws to deter SOBs. Now only four remain without one. At the same time, only 44 of Kentucky’s 306 cities had similar restrictions. Now 141 cities have enacted such laws. This is hardly a retreat from family values—it’s an embrace. In several cases, ordinances were used to shut down illegal strip clubs or porn shops, keeping these communities more family friendly. Now the Kentucky General Assembly is considering The Public Decency Act that would further protect communities from encroachment by sex entrepreneurs.

Several legal challenges have been leveled at these ordinances but most have failed. Last year, the U.S. 6th Circuit Court of Appeals upheld Kenton County’s strip club restrictions. McCracken County’s SOB ordinance was unanimously upheld by the Kentucky Supreme Court in 2006. It was also upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court in 2007 when it declined to hear an appeal by strip club attorneys, which brings up a good point: SOB attorneys play the legal system like a violin to exhaust their opponents. It’s not that they have better arguments; it’s



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because their marathon of appeals allows them to financially outlast smaller cities with limited resources.

Even bigger cities are maligned by the never-ending appeals.

On Feb. 13, the Kentucky Supreme Court heard oral arguments in another challenge to Louisville’s

restrictive ordinance. Since 2004, Louisville has won at the Circuit Court and Kentucky Court of Appeals levels. Another favorable ruling is expected later this year, but don’t expect that story to make the headlines of *The Courier-Journal*.

First Amendment arguments used by porn attorneys to defend their clients are wearing thin, and people see through the charade of those who defend the sexual exploitation of women for profit. It’s never been right, or a Constitutional right to do this. And our leaders agree.

Efforts to strengthen community standards underscore the fact that there are still good people in Kentucky government. It also shows that average citizens can successfully work for policies that preserve their communities and the values that keep them strong. Kentuckians might not be able to control what Washington or Hollywood does, but they can control what they allow into their community. In the end, family values are winning in Kentucky because local citizens and their leaders value families, despite what the pundits on the left say.

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The Kentucky *CITIZEN*

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We’re re-vamping our use of the Internet to maximize efficiency **AND better respect your time and priorities**. Here are the three services we want to offer . . .

#1 eCITIZEN: A brief newsletter that “teases” timely articles, press releases, perspective pieces. It will have links so you only go to those features you desire – with one click. ONE each week.

#2 Action Alerts, which request participation, are **CRITICAL** to making policy. During the General Assembly (Jan - March) we would expect ONE to THREE each week. (The rest of the year? Twice each month – at most.)

#3 Let Us Pray: A brief daily prayer only for those who desire to pray for the state/nation. It directs “the largest daily prayer group in the state.”

These offer one **eCITIZEN** and one to three **Action Alerts** each week. The daily **Let Us Pray** goes only to those who want to pray and specifically requests them. All three are vital, especially during the General Assembly.

PLEASE DIRECT US: We can’t serve everyone perfectly, but we want to improve. Email to us which of the three you want: **eCITIZEN**, **Action Alerts** and/or **Let Us Pray**.

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