



The Washington Flyer
January 8, 2009

"Every thinking man, when he thinks, realizes that the teachings of the Bible are so interwoven and entwined with our whole civic and social life that it would be literally impossible for us to figure ourselves what that life would be if these standards were removed. We would lose almost all the standards by which we now judge both public and private morals; all the standards towards which we, with more or less resolution, strive to raise ourselves."

President Theodore Roosevelt

Marriage Victory in New Jersey

A victory for traditional marriage was won in New Jersey this week, as the State Senate [defeated](#) a bill that would legalize gay marriage with a vote of 20-14. The New Jersey Senate leaders had been trying very hard to bring a same sex marriage bill to Governor Jon Corzine's desk [before he leaves](#) office next Tuesday, January 12.

The bill has been bouncing between the two chambers of the assembly; but after running out of time, Democrats demanded a vote. In early December, Democrat Senate President Richard Codey did not feel that enough support had been gathered to pass the bill, so he [delayed a vote](#) by sending the bill to Democrat Speaker Joseph Roberts in the Assembly. Roberts, however, would not put the bill to a vote in the Assembly before the Senate passed it. Roberts did say that he will immediately call a vote on the bill once it passes the state senate and is then sent to him. Although Governor Corzine has said he will sign the bill into law if it reaches his desk, Republican Governor-elect Chris Christie has said he would certainly veto it. With the bill defeated in the Senate, it will not be brought up in the House; and marriage in New Jersey will remain protected.

The National Organization for Marriage (NOM) had been fighting the bill with radio ads and member networks. "It's not a done deal," NOM Executive Director Brian Brown said prior to the vote, "and anything can happen in politics, but we are confident that marriage as the union of a man and a woman will win in New Jersey."

Meanwhile, the battle over same-sex marriage continues on the federal level. The omnibus appropriations bill that President Obama signed into law in December, according to the Heritage Foundation, "lifts a [longstanding ban](#) on the use of federal taxpayer funds to pay for health care benefits for domestic partners of D.C. employees. Federal funds would also now be used for domestic partnership registration." Also in Washington D.C., in response to the recent vote by the D.C. Council to allow same-sex marriage in the District, 39 Congressmen (37 Representatives and 2 Senators) have [filed](#) a briefing against the D.C. board that voted in favor of same sex marriage in D.C.

- by Drew Meadows, AACS intern. Drew Meadows is currently a senior at Pensacola Christian College earning a B.S. in Journalism. Drew is a graduate of AACS member school Fairfax Baptist Temple Academy and an alumnus of the AACS Youth Legislative Training Conference.

Swedish Government Knows Best?! Dangers for Homeschoolers

In June of 2009, Swedish authorities took a 7-year-old child from his parents because the government did not consider homeschooling to be an adequate education. The Johanssons, a Swedish Christian homeschooling family, though not criminally charged, may [permanently lose](#) their son to the Swedish government. Although the authorities had no warrant to seize the boy, the Johanssons have been restricted from visiting their son. They did not see him on Christmas, and their visitation time has been restricted to one hour every five weeks. The Swedish court has since [ruled](#) that the conduct of the authorities was legal.

“The court ruling is [deeply disturbing](#),” said Michael Donnelly, Director for International Affairs for the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA). “HSLDA is gravely concerned about this case as it represents what can happen to other families who might wish to homeschool their children.”

But the concern of Swedish families very likely could become a threat to American homeschooling families as well due to the basis for the Swedish court ruling. “In response to inquiries from HSLDA,” Donnelly said, “Swedish authorities have cited the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child [CRC] to explain and defend their actions.”

The CRC is a sixteen page document that outlines the “rights” of a child. Nearly every country recognized by the UN, with the exceptions of the United States and Somalia, has signed this document into law. The CRC is harmful because it gives the state the power to intervene in a family when it believes that a child is not treated the way the state deems best. The Johanssons’ arbitrary loss of their son demonstrates the threat of this document.

As of November 20, 2009, (the twenty year anniversary of the CRC), Somalia is now taking steps to ratify the CRC, pressuring the United States to follow. Some members of Congress and the current Administration are hopeful that the United States will also pass the CRC during this Administration, a move that could cause trouble in America.

-by Drew Meadows

Religious Freedom Sunday

Three years before James Madison introduced the Bill of Rights to the first United States Congress, the Virginia Assembly passed a statute, written by Thomas Jefferson, entitled “The [Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom](#).” This document had an overwhelming influence on the creation of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The Religious Freedom Statute stated the following:

That to suffer the civil magistrate to intrude his powers into the field of opinion and to restrain the profession or propagation of principles on supposition of their ill tendency is a dangerous fallacy which at once destroys all religious liberty because he being of course judge of that tendency will make his opinions the rule of judgment and approve or condemn the sentiments of others only as they shall square with or differ from his own...

Be it enacted by General Assembly that no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burthened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief, but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of Religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge or affect their civil capacities.

Every year since 1993, a Presidential Proclamation has been issued on January 16th, declaring the day to be Religious Freedom Day. The Proclamation has also commemorated the statute and urged Americans to reflect on our nation’s rich history of religious freedom and the importance of preserving this freedom in our homes, schools, and places of worship. This year, religious organizations are urging pastors and churches to participate in the [Religious Freedom Sunday](#), set to occur on January 10th, in an effort to “honor the educators within their congregations and inform their congregations about the freedom of religious expression students from

kindergarten through 12th grade have at school. The theme for Religious Freedom Sunday comes from the Bible verse quoted on the Liberty Bell—‘proclaim liberty throughout the land’ (Leviticus 25:10).”

According to Gateway to Better Education, an organization promoting the Religious Freedom Sunday and the Religious Freedom Day, many students and educators are unaware of the freedoms they have to express their faith in a public setting. According to Gateway, “In too many instances, public school teachers tell Christian students they cannot include their faith in their homework assignments or classroom discussions. However, the U.S. Department of Education has issued guidelines explaining students’ religious liberties. Students can pray, read their Bibles, and talk about their faith at school during school hours. They can organize prayer groups and Bible studies and announce their meetings. They can express their faith in their class work and homework.”

Many believe this year’s Presidential Proclamation is needed in order to reaffirm and preserve religious liberty in our nation. The Heritage Foundation noted, “This [proclamation is timely](#), as religious freedom faces new challenges in current public policy debates, particularly concerning the definition of marriage. Preserving this freedom for future generations should be a concern of citizens and government at all levels.”

To learn more about The Religious Freedom Day please click [here](#).

To learn more about the Religious Freedom Sunday and to download helpful sources or bulletin inserts please click [here](#).

Health Care Update

Negotiations between the House and the Senate are now underway behind closed doors on Capitol Hill, after Sen. Ben Nelson (D-NE) gave the Senate Democrats their 60th vote needed to pass the health care bill early Christmas Eve morning. Sen. Nelson had claimed to be against the health care bill because of the lack of pro-life protections in the language, but he eventually caved to the pressure after receiving a deal that would allow the Senator’s state of Nebraska to be exempted from any Medicare cuts.

Both the House and the Senate have now passed a health care bill, but the two versions of the bill remain decisively different, meaning negotiations will play a vital role in the final version of the bill. Concerned with the time a traditional conference committee would take to work out differences and compile a final version of a conference report, Democrats have indicated their intentions of playing a [political game](#) of “ping-pong,” an unconventional means of negotiating between the House and Senate where no committee members are named and differences are worked out primarily by the Leaders of both Houses, Senator Reid and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

Abortion has remained the focal point of discussion and perhaps the most [contentious](#) issue of this bill. Though the House version of the bill contained language that would permanently restrict federally funded abortions, the Senate version contains only watered down language that would be a non-permanent fix to the issue. With the Senate’s language, federal funds would not be used to fund abortions so long as the Hyde amendment, a provision that must be reauthorized each year and applies only to Health and Human Services appropriations, remains alive. If for some reason the Hyde amendment is not reauthorized, then no restrictions will apply and all federal funds could be used to fund abortions. Though many in the House have voiced their opposition to the bill if their pro-life language is stripped from the bill, many are concerned that sell-outs or deals will be made to garner the votes needed, as was seen in the Senate.

A frustrating component of the entire debate remains the lack of bipartisanship and transparency in contrast to what was once [promised](#) by President-elect Obama. C-SPAN and Republican leaders are calling for the negotiations to be [aired live](#) in order to give the American people a look at what will affect each one of them. Though a cry has been made, no efforts have been made by the Majority party or the Administration to make good on their promises of transparency during the decision-making discussions.

Coming Up! March for Life

Since 1974, more than 1.2 million pro-life individuals have traveled to the Nation's Capitol to participate in the March for Life. What began as a means to memorialize the infamous decision of *Roe V. Wade* (1973) has grown over the years into a movement of active individuals determined to stand up and give a voice to the unborn. The idea for the March originally began as a small endeavor; but with the help of a massive grassroots campaign, the first March took place on the one-year anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's decision and saw over 20,000 people in attendance. Since then, the March has averaged over 200,000 individuals in attendance each year. After a long battle over pro-life issues this past year, an even bigger audience is expected to make the trek from the White House up through the National Mall, around the Capitol, ending in front of the Supreme Court. This year's March will take place **January 22, 2010**, on the 37th anniversary of the fateful decision.

Action: *Christian schools and families are encourage to join in the March and the activities throughout the day, as well as pray that the March will have a positive effect on the Nation's leaders.*

To find more information about the March please click [here](#)

In Case You Missed It:

[President Obama Names First Transgender Appointee](#)

[Abortion Tops Evangelicals List of Moral Issues Today](#)

[Pastors Encouraged to Join National Marriage Week Effort](#)

[Fox News Brit Hume Talks about the Christian Faith](#)



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