

May 2015

Dear Friends and Supporters,

The one issue that continues to dominate our efforts relates to same sex rights. In addition, we have been working on sanctity of life legislation, and we are now confronted with a new possibility of legalized gambling in Alabama.

The U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments on April 28 on the same sex marriage issue. Advocates for same sex marriage argued that individuals should not be denied a right to marry, regardless of their sexual orientation. In essence, they argued that it is a fundamental right they have to marry. It violates their equal protection rights under the law, if they cannot marry. The attorney arguing for the states in the case, being supporters of one man one woman marriage, explained marriage is an institution regulated by the state for the purpose of procreation. Even Justice Anthony Kennedy, the judge who has advocated homosexual rights in earlier cases, recognized that no culture or legal code has ever recognized same sex marriage. Other Justices joined in observing that advocates for same sex marriage are wanting nine people (judges) to reverse a millennia of history. That observation has echoes of the order we obtained from our own Alabama Supreme Court, that the argument for same sex marriage “ignores the fact that a millennia of practice stand behind the traditional definition,” and that traditional marriage “is measured in millennia, not centuries or decades.”

We expect the court to issue an opinion by June 30, 2015. It is not possible to predict what the court will do. One thing we believe is clear is that regardless of whatever they do, the battle will continue and there will be many years of litigation and legislative activity to accommodate these issues. This month’s Educational Update gives an interesting history of where we are today and the threat all of this is to our religious liberty.

While we have had a problem getting any traction in the Alabama Legislature this year on protection of religious liberty, particularly in light of the same sex issues, and on the sanctity of life issues, that did not keep the Legislature from proposing gambling legislation. Surprising as it may seem, Republicans are suggesting legislation that might permit a lottery and unlimited casino gambling through a compact with the Poarch Indians and/or non-Indian entities. We have worked over 25 years to keep this scourge from Alabama, but it appears the battle is far from over.

We will keep you informed of the development of these issues. Thank you for your continuing support. With personal regards, I am,

Yours very truly,

A. Eric Johnston