

February 2018

Dear Friends and Supporters,

We have recently been working on the church daycare exemption law. As you recall, a bill was introduced last year to remove the exemption from state regulation churches have enjoyed since 1981 for their daycare ministries. The bill died last year because we could not reach an agreement.

This year, we have reached an agreement. The bill does not require licensure of church ministries. It does not require inspections by the Department of Human Resources. We believe it will serve proper purposes and will not burden religious freedom. It has a long way to go through the legislative process. We will be diligent in our efforts to guard this important aspect of religious freedom. We will provide a more complete report when the process is more fully developed.

You may have noticed a couple of things in the news, one of which is very positive and the other very negative. First, President Donald Trump created the Conscience and Religious Freedom Division in the HHS Office of Civil Rights. HHS, or Health and Human Services, deals with important social issues. For many years, the agency has operated in effect without a conscience. By the creation of this office, federal law should protect important rights of conscience and religion. We are hopeful it will be successful in protecting religious freedom.

In the area of sanctity of life, you may have noticed that scientists in China cloned two monkeys. Not since Dolly the sheep was cloned 20 years ago, has there been any noteworthy developments in this area. It is troubling that a primate, bearing a close resemblance to humans, has been cloned. The cloning took place in China where, as we know, they do not have the ethical barriers of the western world. It may be those ethical barriers will begin to erode more quickly than they have in the past. Human cloning is an experiment in which mankind must not participate.

This month's Educational Update deals with another area of experiment, that is, the rights of gender identity and sexual orientation. This is an ongoing battle involving religious freedom. Thank you for your support which makes it possible for us to engage in this, as well as the other battles.

With personal regards, I am,

Yours very truly,

A. Eric Johnston