

December 2018

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As we come to the end of another year, on behalf of Southeast Law Institute, thank you very much for your support. Your prayer and financial support make possible our ability to engage in important issues in the public square.

The public square has become quite tumultuous. We see an unfortunate disintegration of respect and cordiality that, previously, was seen in the most heated battles. Personal attacks and threats are made on individuals who chose to speak up on most any conservative issue. To us, it seems one-sided. We have not seen in the past, including in the Obama years, conservatives openly showing disrespect and disregard for democratic processes and duly elected persons and commentators. We believe it is due in large part to the erosion of traditional values over the last half century.

We were glad to see good people elected in the State of Alabama. We are also glad to see the passage of Amendment 1 on religious freedom and the Ten Commandments and Amendment 2 on protecting unborn life.

Amendment 1 will not really change anything and, in fact, will make it more difficult for public buildings and public schools to post the Ten Commandments. Within the bounds of existing constitutional law public buildings could display the Ten Commandments. Display in public schools is still an undecided issue. Whatever public authorities could do is the same with and without this Alabama constitutional amendment. Before this amendment, if they were sued, the state would have defended them. However, under the amendment, public funds cannot be spent defending the posting of the Ten Commandments. It will probably not make any difference, since most schools will not be posting the Ten Commandments anyway. The threat of paying attorneys fees for opposing parties usually frightens school board attorneys who advise their clients not to act. The issue is not coming up with private funds to pay a school's attorneys fees, but the likelihood of paying the other side's fees.

Amendment 2, on the other hand, is a very valuable tool toward restoring the respect for unborn life in America. With the changes on SCOTUS, it may be the time is right to address that issue. This month's Educational Update gives some insight into why *Roe v. Wade* has never become settled law.

We wish you a Blessed Christmas Season and a Happy New Year.

Yours very truly,

A. Eric Johnston