

June 2019

Dear Friends and Supporters,

This has been one of the busiest and most extraordinarily successful legislative sessions in memory. Some very important bills passed, whether good or bad, and a number of others failed. Those lobbying these respective interests all do a very good job, but there is no predicting the Alabama Legislature.

There are changing attitudes with the coming of a new generation of legislators. Whereas gambling was a forbidden subject for Republicans and conservatives in the past, they now support various forms of gambling. While abortion was difficult during the Democrat controlled years of the statehouse, the Republican controlled statehouse is amenable to abortion legislation.

The most significant event this year was the passage of the Alabama Human Life Protection Act, prohibiting abortion throughout all nine months of pregnancy. This is a significant victory for Alabama and our legislators are congratulated for standing up for the unborn. This month's Educational Update gives information concerning the new law.

In an upcoming Educational Update, we will review a significant number of other bills which are in process at the time we do the June Educational Update. These include another abortion bill that requires that if an unborn child is born alive through an abortion, efforts must be made to preserve his life. This seems like a common-sense bill, but there was unified opposition from the Democrats to it.

As noted, gambling has now a certain vogue to it. There were three different lottery bills and one fantasy sports contest bill. The lottery bills ranged from having electronic video terminal lotteries, similar to the so-called "bingo" slot machines, and then one paper bingo. The fantasy sports contest bill was an evolution from fantasy sports football, now encompassing virtually any sports activity. All of these would bring significant gambling activities to the State of Alabama and may even allow the Indian venues to have full fledged casino gambling, due to the quirks of federal law.

There were two very important bills dealing with religion this year. One bill allows students in public schools to be released to attend Bible study and receive one hours' elective credit. There is a varying trend across the country to recognize the religious rights of students and to reward them for their activities. This bill has been signed by the Governor. As we have reported earlier, there was an attempt by the Alabama State Department of Education to legalize the teaching of yoga in public schools. Having it stopped there, however, resulted in a bill being filed to legalize it. This would be an obvious violation of the Establishment Clause and we do not expect it to pass.

SLI provided significant drafting and expert testimony on these and other issues. Thank you for your support of our efforts. With personal regards, I am,

Yours very truly,

A. Eric Johnston

AEJ/pmm