

September 2021

Dear Friends and Supporters,

We have addressed many calls related to religious freedom and vaccinations for Covid. There are many opinions on the efficacy of vaccination. There are both medical and religious exemption possibilities. Medical issues should be clearly articulated by a treating physician, although we have noticed some abuse with less than medically responsible opinions. On the other hand, religious exemptions may be harder for various authorities to accept. It is not proper for an authority, whether its government or business, to question the sincerity of a person's religious beliefs. We have been providing guidance on these issues whether it's related to various school positions, or employment related conditions. This month's Educational Update provides an overview, but is not intended to be specific as to every situation or to cite legal authorities.

We have an editor's correction to our June 2021 Educational Update. In commenting on the Yoga bill that was passed, we said that we proposed "an amendment that required parents to sign a disclaimer that recognized Yoga as a part of the Hindu religion." We then said it was edited to say it was part of the "Eastern culture." Actually, the conference committee had recommended that change, but in the end the phrase was that it was part of the "Hinduism religion." After passage, sponsor Representative Gray said he planned to come back next year and remove that amendment. We expect to come back next year with an effort to repeal this statute and to restore the prohibitions previously existing in the Alabama Administrative Code against the practice of Yoga in Alabama public schools.

Recently, we fielded a call concerning the Muscle Shoals Public School System's requirements for a transgender student to use the restroom of his choice. That case is currently unresolved. A recent 11th Circuit case provided a very narrow ruling which appeared to require public schools to permit transgender use of the restroom of choice. It did not do that at all. Chief Circuit Judge William Pryor took the other two judges to task over their blatant efforts to attempt to make this the law. We believe his dissent was well reasoned and is the result of the entire 11th Circuit panel of judges decision to hear the case *en banc*. This will be a very important ruling concerning efforts to maintain traditional recognition of the sexes and not the progressive LGBTQ+ agenda. If you have questions about it right now, please let us know. We will provide additional information and keep you updated on that.

Thank you for your continuing support. With personal regards, I am,

Yours very truly,

A. Eric Johnston