

March 2022

Dear Friends and Supporters,

The Alabama Legislature is hurrying through the 2022 Regular Session. It is an election year and with the primary coming up in June, there is not much time to campaign. We expect the session to be over early in April.

By condensing the session, including three-day meeting weeks, it compresses the time within which to work. Also, being election year, Legislators try to avoid contentious issues.

That will not, we hope, keep VCAP (HB 266 and SB 184) from passing this year. This bill criminalizes sex change operations on minors. It was introduced for the last two years, but principally because of Covid, it did not reach its final destination. We believe it will this year.

Thus far, we have not seen any gambling legislation. There are continued threats that such a bill will be filed. It can happen any day and may have happened by the time you receive this month's newsletter. However, we are watching and prepared to provide legal interpretation and assistance, in opposition to legalization of gambling.

Last month's Educational Update discussed a bill that would prohibit the use of state funds for counseling, referring for or providing abortions. We were concerned that the Hyde Amendment, a law since 1980 prohibiting the use of state and federal funds for abortions except for life of the mother, rape and incest, would not be continued as a result of Biden's campaign promise and his proposed budget. After further research, we had concerns the state may not be able to prohibit such a use of federal funds. Also, we received assurances by two Congressmen that the Hyde Amendment would continue to be in federal law. Consequently, it is unlikely this Alabama bill will proceed.

At the same time, there is a very good bill with which we have assisted that will provide state funded resources to women in problem or unexpected pregnancies. This bill is meant to help women and minister to their many needs by referring them to resources. In 2019, after passage of the Alabama Human Life Protection Act, we were criticized by opponents and the media saying we do not care about women. Then, as now, we do care about women and this is a good measure to protect them, regardless of abortion rights. The bill is HB 349 sponsored by Representative Charlotte Meadows.

Thank you for your continuing support. Until next month, we are,

Yours Very Truly,

A. Eric Johnston

AEJ/pkh

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