



ILLINOIS Family Institute

Boldly Bringing a Biblical Perspective to Public Policy in the Land of Lincoln.

Newsletter | Winter 2024

Your throne, O God, is *forever and ever*;

A scepter of uprightness

is the scepter of Your kingdom.

PSALM 45:6



Merry Christmas!



pro life. pro marriages. pro family.

from the **Executive Director** — **David E. Smith**

The Election is Over, and Our Work Continues

On November 5, Americans from coast to coast chose to return former President Donald Trump to the White House in 2025. Elections have consequences, and this one was no different.

Much was at stake, including the future of the U.S. Supreme Court, the direction of the economy, border security, international conflicts, and so many other values we hold dear.

Under a Harris-Walz administration, we could have expected big government mandates that would have promoted taxpayer funding of abortion-on-demand, transgenderism (even for inmates), housing, food, and healthcare for illegal immigrants, and “free” college tuition.

A Harris-Walz administration would have continued to advance the transgender agenda as they have already been doing. Kamala Harris was the first VP to host a drag queen event at the vice-presidential residence, as well as an LGBTQ event at her home. Governor Tim Walz (D-MN) signed a bill requiring tampons to be placed in girls’ and boys’ school bathrooms in Minnesota.

Under a Harris-Walz administration, we could have expected the U.S. Department of Justice to promote the “civil rights” of biological men in women’s sports, the continued prosecution of Christian pro-life sidewalk counselors, and the promotion (or mandate) of DEI policies across all federal agencies.

The American people spoke clearly. Now, there is much reason for hope and many opportunities to give thanks for our faith, family, and the blessings of self-government in the U.S.



before we refocus on the work ahead.

In Illinois, more than 2.4 million people voted for Donald Trump. Unfortunately, many of them also voted for the three nonbinding advisory questions on the ballot, including more than 3.8 million voters who supported mandated IVF coverage. As for the candidates running for Illinois General Assembly, it grieves me to report that the godless, leftist status quo was re-affirmed.

Yet regardless of the election results, IFI’s mission to “boldly bring a biblical perspective to public policy” remains. We can pause and give our Great God praise and honor every day for His mercies — and they are many. However, we must resolve to redeem the time because the days are evil.

We have much work to do to fulfill the Lord’s command to “make disciples of all nations... teaching them to observe all things” that He has commanded to us. For the IFI Team, this starts in the Land of Lincoln. To say it is a big challenge is an understatement!

Even if the best pro-family candidates had won up and down the ballot, our ultimate hope would not reside in man, in politics, or in government. Our hope is in the finished work of Jesus Christ and in doing His perfect will on earth as it is in heaven.

Getting people to understand the priority of loving God and neighbor and living God-honoring lives takes much more than simply reversing our nation’s political course from the last four years. We must make a renewed push to build up the biblical family because our nation is strong when our families are strong.

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Equipped! Pro-Life Training

For years now, IFI has tried to emphasize the importance of biblical worldview training for ourselves and our families. There is no question about it. With the radical expansion of abortion in Illinois, the need to educate and activate the Body of Christ is now more essential than ever. The problems we face in Illinois are not going to be solved anytime in the near future by good lawmakers in Springfield or in Washington D.C. who file strong pro-life bills.



Equipped! 
SPEAKING UP FOR THOSE WHO CAN'T

We face a problem that is culturally systemic, which is only getting more pronounced the further we drift away from God. We have to understand that the best course of action is to focus on advancing the sanctity of life one person at a time, one event at a time, and one prayer vigil at a time. Educating and activating Christians throughout the state to the cause of human life is crucial.

To that end, we are thrilled to announce Equipped! With the help of a wonderful volunteer named Evelyn, a retired music teacher and active Colson Fellow — and in collaboration with Southside Pregnancy Center — we are taking on pro-life apologetics. Through this initiative, we will provide a variety of presentations designed to equip junior and senior high school age students (and adults) to understand the abortion issue in the culture, and how we can respond to rescue those stumbling toward death.

Evelyn is available to speak to homeschool groups, Christian schools and church youth groups.

To schedule a presentation or learn more, you can visit EquippedForLife.net, call 708-781-9328 or email Evelyn directly at s.evelyn@illinoisfamily.org.

It is absolutely vital that we intentionally pursue worldview training for ourselves, for our children and for our grandchildren. ❄️

Eleventh Annual
WORLDVIEW CONFERENCE
Biblical Training for Today's Culture

THE HIGH CALLING OF
Marriage and Family

SAVE THE DATE!
Saturday, March 8, 2025
Belmont Bible Church / 5430 Belmont Rd. Downers Grove, Illinois

FEATURING SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKERS:



Dr. Brad Wilcox
Professor of Sociology & Director
of the National Marriage Project
at the University of Virginia

&





Scott Phelps
Founder & Executive Director
of the Abstinence & Marriage
Education Partnership



More information: 708-781-9328 / illinoisfamily.org

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Washington D.C.

SENATE

HOUSE

As a result of the recent federal election, Republicans in the U.S. House of Representatives will hold a slim majority, with **221 seats**, while Democrats retain control of **214 seats**.

Republicans officially reclaimed the U.S. Senate majority, picking up seats in West Virginia, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Montana while retaining all their incumbents.

Going into the 119th Congress, Republicans will be in a good position to push through President-elect Trump's agenda, including his judicial, ambassador, and cabinet appointments. ❄️



from the **Executive Director**

(continued from page 1)

If we hope to pass on the American promise to the next generation, it starts by impressing upon their hearts a love for God and His Word. We must also ensure children know the security of the blessing of being in a home with their married mother and father.

We should not be deceived into thinking politics is the answer to what ails our state and our nation. Christians are the salt and light of the world, and we would do well to continually point toward Jesus, “the way, the truth, and the life.” It is Truth that sets us free (John 14:6, John 8:31-32).

It is good to know that we serve a great God who is not affected by election results. Our response to cultural and political challenges should be faithfulness to Him and His Word. Even with many hoped-for outcomes, there will always be plenty of occasions to be salt and light.

As people of faith, we must continually pray for our government officials. This is especially true at this time, as we have an opportunity to pray for Donald Trump, J.D. Vance, and their transition team as they prepare for the work ahead. ❄

Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth; Yours is the dominion, O Lord, and You exalt Yourself as head over all. Both riches and honor come from You, and You rule over all, and in Your hand is power and might; and it lies in Your hand to make great and to strengthen everyone.

— 1 CHRONICLES 29:11-12

Sign of the Times

The first self-identifying “transgender” candidate from Delaware was elected to Congress on November 5th. Democrat Sarah McBride (34 years old) will take his seat in Congress at a time when many in our nation are pushing back on the LGBTQIA agenda, especially on biological males in female sports.

McBride won his race with 57.7% of the vote and raised over \$3.5 million throughout his campaign. It is interesting to note that the *Independent* reports, “McBride is a longtime friend of President Joe Biden and his late son Beau.” McBride also served as a White House intern in 2012 for the Obama Administration.

During the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, he spoke to the delegates, saying, “If you could have told my 10-year-old self that there’d be a room full of amazing Democrats chanting my chosen name, I never would’ve believed it...”

Two weeks before the election, CBS Sunday Morning aired a 5-minute segment celebrating McBride’s “historic” run for Congress, in which he claims it isn’t about his identity as a “trans woman.” Yet the attention CBS freely gave him in advance of the election

was precisely because of the controversial nature of his trans identity. They don’t seem to care that a growing number of Americans are alarmed by the radicalism of the transgender agenda and how it is being forced on families.

CBS activist interviewer Rita Braver didn’t miss the opportunity to be critical of Donald Trump and his concerns about how school administrators are hiding information from parents while encouraging young students down a dangerous, destructive path of sexual mutilation. Braver even complained that “there are people in Congress who have repeatedly railed against trans people.” Yet, in this latest election, it is clear that American voters reject the extremist elements of transgender ideology.

We should not be surprised that the woke media, including ABC, NBC, MSNBC, Ms. Magazine, and other “news” sources, celebrate all things LGBTQIA, especially the lobby’s involvement in school classrooms and government. ❄



Citizen Journalism

Alternative social media is vitally important in our day and age. Elon Musk’s transformation of Twitter into X has proven to provide an invaluable source of news and information. It has become a bastion for free speech, allowing citizen journalism



and direct communication among conservatives without the interference and suppression of woke gatekeepers.

No longer are we subjected to narratives carefully crafted by a centralized group of editors or media moguls. This democratization of news

and information dissemination is viewed by some as transformative, allowing for a broader, more diverse range of voices to influence public discourse – including Christian conservative voices.

As trust in the media evaporates, the opportunities for groups like IFI to fill the vacuum with biblically-based messaging increases. For the third consecutive year, more U.S. adults have no trust at all in the media (36%) than trust it a great deal or a fair amount. Another 33% of Americans express “not very much” confidence.

Americans know they are being lied to and want the truth. We can help meet that demand! ❄

Drug News

Written by David E. Smith

On November 5, voters in Florida, North Dakota, and South Dakota rejected ballot measures to legalize marijuana for recreational use. Even Massachusetts voters rejected a ballot question to legalize psychedelic mushrooms! Praise God!

It may have been inevitable that “progressives” would finally come to their senses about drug policy and legalization, but who knew it would be this soon? Despite this, twenty-four states have already legalized recreational marijuana use, and the so-called medical use of cannabis has now been legalized in 40 states and Washington, D.C.

Thanks in large part to these public policy changes, daily marijuana use has now surpassed alcohol consumption in the U.S. The perception of drug use (in general) is declining just as use is going up. Increasingly, young people today do not consider marijuana use dangerous.

We are pleasantly surprised to report that *The New York Times* has recently expressed some concerns regarding marijuana, particularly focusing on health effects, legalization processes, and societal impacts:

- **Health Concerns:** Articles from the *Times* have highlighted potential risks associated with marijuana use, especially among teenagers. There's discussion about how pot might affect brain development, leading to cognitive impairments when used during adolescence. The potency of modern cannabis strains has also been a point of contention, suggesting that higher THC content could be linked to increased emergency room visits and admissions to treatment programs for marijuana-related issues. Higher THC levels are more likely to lead to addiction and mental health outcomes (*Lancet Psychiatry*, 2022).
- **Societal and Economic Implications:** Beyond health, the *Times* has touched on broader societal issues like the environmental impact of large-scale marijuana production, the economic disparity in who benefits from legalization, and the ongoing debate over whether marijuana should be seen as a gateway drug or a less harmful alternative to other substances.
- **Mental Health Risks:** Recent studies discussed in the *Times* suggest that recreational marijuana use by teens could increase the risk of psychiatric disorders like depression and suicidality. This challenges the perception that casual use of pot is benign or “harmless fun,” especially highlighting subclinical use, which doesn't meet the criteria for cannabis use disorder but still shows adverse mental health outcomes.
- **Antisocial Behavior:** On June 6, 2022, the *Times* published an op-ed by Allysia Finley titled “Cannabis and the Violent Crime Surge” in which the author suggests that marijuana use played a part in mass shooting incidents at the Uvalde school (2022), “at Rep. Gabby Giffords’s constituent meeting in Tucson, Ariz. (2011), a movie theater in Aurora, Colo. (2012), the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Fla. (2016), the First Baptist



Church in Sutherland Springs, Texas (2017), and Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla. (2018).”

This article goes on to report that a 2021 study “found that young people with such mood disorders as depression who were also addicted to pot were 3.2 times more likely to commit self-harm and die of homicide—often after initiating violence—than those who weren’t.” Finley also cites a 2020 meta-analysis which “found the risk of perpetrating violence was more than twice as high for young adults who used marijuana.”

But the bottom line: in the end, and for those of us who want to live to glorify our Lord and Savior, marijuana use clouds our thinking, skews our perception of reality, and slows the complex coordination of muscles, joints, and nerves. Scripture warns us:

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. (1 Peter 5:8)

The use of marijuana is intoxicating. One cannot claim to be sober and clear-minded if one uses it. Moreover, we know that the negative effects marijuana has on attentiveness, memory, fine motor skills, and learning can last for days or weeks after the immediate, acute effects of the drug wear off. Consequently, individuals who smoke marijuana daily may be functioning at a reduced intellectual level most or all of the time. Studies have also documented links between marijuana use and psychiatric illness, cancer, stroke, and decreased fertility in men *and* women.

Simply put, one cannot use this drug and remain sober and alert. Marijuana use leaves people vulnerable to the attacks of our adversary. The Old Testament prophet Habakkuk warned:

Woe to you who make your neighbors drink, who mix in your venom even to make them drunk so as to look on their nakedness! (Habakkuk 2:15)

“Mix in your venom” refers to the ancient practice of adding herbs or drugs to wine to make it more potent. Today, people mix marijuana in punch, lollipops, cookies, and brownies, and even spray THC concentrate on gummy bears. Reportedly, the THC potency is so strong that the recommended “dose” for an adult is one-quarter of a gummy bear! Who eats just one-quarter of a gummy bear?!? It’s no wonder people are rushed to ERs in agony as they experience the dangerous side effects of THC overdose.

We need to shout the truth from the rooftops: *Marijuana is not a benign or beneficial drug*, no matter how vigorously its proponents claim otherwise. Any proposal regarding its legalization should receive serious scrutiny. Moreover, we must warn others, especially children, about the consequences of marijuana use and the dangers of getting high. ❄

An Incredible Prediction *Written by Micah Clark*

I recently read an article with an astonishing prediction. The Learning Counsel, an education research group, has looked at a wide variety of factors and is forecasting "significant shifts in the landscape and structures of education by 2030."

According to their prediction, only 50.26% of American students will remain enrolled in public schools six years from now. This would be more than a 30-point shift from today. They predict that by 2030, there will be 16 million students taught at home!

The Learning Counsel predicted the government school system would respond with several rounds of "consolidations" before attempting a broader restructuring to be more "consumer" focused.

Ultimately, the researchers said, the most significant drivers of the exodus will be "choice" legislation, a preference for remote and flexible learning, political and cultural distrust of government, rising violence and bullying, and impacts of immigration. However, they also warned the lines between "public" and "private" education are likely to become blurrier.

I question this prediction, knowing



personally how difficult and what a sacrifice home education is for families. I also question the researcher's prediction about significant expansions of school choice programs beyond what most states currently have. (The reality is choice programs can only expand significantly if private schools grow and dramatically increase in numbers. Most choice programs do not involve home education.)

Yet, government schools are one of the few entities in America that are a monopoly, and many more are now openly questioning if true competition is needed to improve academic and social outcomes at less cost to taxpayers. For this reason, I think that we are more likely to see different school funding models and

possibly school types emerge than simply a massive increase in home education. Home education has grown steadily but slowly.

What Parents Think

Ed Choice (a school choice advocacy organization) recently conducted its 12th annual Schooling in America Survey of 2,319 parents who currently have children in school. Also included in the poll are 1,502 members of the public. Here are some of their findings:

- Although over 80% of parents send their children to a public school, only 40% would select a public school if they had the option of a charter, private, or home school.
- Less than half (46%) of public school parents give the schools in their area a grade of an "A" or a "B" for school quality.
- Most Americans (70%) say education is on the wrong track, the same as their 2023 survey.
- School transparency and safety are the two most important items parents want schools to address. ❄

In Other News

- West Virginia became the first U.S. state to ban assisted suicide in its state constitution. Huzzah!
- Idaho, Iowa, Kentucky, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Wisconsin passed constitutional amendments stating only American citizens can vote in elections in those states.
- A question about implementing ranked-choice voting (RCV) was approved by voters in Washington D.C. but rejected by voters in Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, and Oregon.

RCV is a complicated election system that would require voters to assign a rank to each candidate on the ballot, regardless of whether they support that candidate. RCV can lead to candidates with little support winning elections. ❄



WANTED

IFI is hoping and praying that some of our supporters can help us by donating or helping us secure the following items:

- Podcast recording studio and equipment
- Funding for large audio/video projects
- Roadside signs for pro-life/pro-family messaging
- Billboard signs for pro-life/pro-family messaging
- Office and/or storage space in the southern suburbs of Cook County or in Will County
- IFI Satellite Office in Springfield
- New or slightly used office desks/chairs

Please note: We can take tax-deductible donations of real estate and personal property like vehicles, equipment, furniture, and other movable property.

Call the IFI office to learn more: (708) 781-9328. ❄



We're available to speak at your church, civic group, or homeschool co-op on a variety of topics including:

The Sanctity of Human Life; Our Christian Duty in the Public Square; Government 101; The Importance of Christian Education; Legislative Update and more!

Call the IFI office to schedule today!
(708) 781-9328.



Gambling Saturating the Public Square Written by David E. Smith

It is almost impossible to listen to talk radio or conservative podcasts or to watch a football game and not be bombarded with gambling ads - especially enticements to bet on sports.

Today, 38 states, including Illinois, allow some form of sports betting after the U.S. Supreme Court overturned a ban on sports gambling in 2018. According to Goldman Sachs, it has grown to a \$10 billion industry since that time, with predictions as high as \$45 billion as it continues to expand. Make no mistake, these "profits" represent the losses of the gamblers.

It is important to point out that families in the United States are on course to lose more than \$1 trillion of personal wealth to commercialized gambling over the next 5 years. That is an average of at least \$150 billion of lost wealth every year.

A study this summer from researchers at the University of California, Los Angeles, found that states with online sports betting have a 28 percent higher bankruptcy rate than states without it.

"We find a substantial increase in bankruptcy rates, debt collections, debt consolidation loans, and auto loan delinquencies," the study notes. "We also find that financial institutions respond to the reduced creditworthiness of consumers by restricting access to credit."

And how about the accessibility of online sports betting platforms that can lead to gambling addiction? This is particularly noted among younger demographics, where the ease of betting from one's phone has been linked to an increase in the rate and severity of gambling problems. The design of these apps, with their real-time betting options, exploits impulsive behavior, leading to what some might call "continuous gambling."

The competitive nature of many young men makes them a particularly vulnerable group. This is compounded by engagement with video games and sports, which often integrate or are closely associated with betting elements like loot boxes or sports betting ads. This exposure can normalize gambling behaviors from a young age,



potentially laying the groundwork for future gambling issues.

The psychological impact of losing money, especially in significant amounts, can lead to stress, anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues. Moreover, the cycle of winning and losing can create emotional highs and lows, which might not be immediately visible but can affect mental well-being over time.

As Christians, this should alarm us. A gambling addiction also creates suffering and strife within families, only exacerbating matters. There are legitimate concerns about individuals prioritizing betting over family or work responsibilities, which leads to social isolation or conflict.

Did you know that gambling is recognized as an addiction on the same level as heroin, cocaine, and opioids in the American Psychiatric Association's DSM V? Moreover, *The Lancet*, one of the most respected medical journals in the world, publicly declared gambling to be "an urgent, neglected, understudied and worsening public health predicament."

As taxpayers, politicians, and corporate media outlets (who benefit from gambling ads) only highlight the tax revenue generated by gambling, they ignore the hidden costs that include increased public spending on addiction treatment, financial counseling, and welfare for those whose lives are wrecked by gambling addiction. This could yield a net negative economic impact if not managed carefully.

In 2022, the *Wall Street Journal* ran an article warning that online gambling

"creates opportunities for criminals to launder money or take part in other financial crimes."

Years ago, Professors Earl Grinols and David Mustard pointed out that for every \$1 of revenue gambling taxes, it costs taxpayers \$3 or more in social welfare, criminal justice, and regulatory costs. One study suggests that the average cost to society per pathological gambler is between \$1,000 and \$5,000 per month, with 90 percent using family savings, 83 percent borrowing money, and many doing both (Ladouceur et al., 1994).

Anyone who suggests gambling is just harmless fun is not being honest. ❄



Ballot Question

Illinois voters in Iroquois County, Calhoun County, Clinton County, Greene County, Jersey County, Madison County, and Perry County gave hearty approval to a question on their ballots asking:

"Shall the board of (the county) correspond with the boards of other counties of Illinois, outside of Cook County, about the possibility of separating from Cook County to form a new state and to seek admission to the Union as such, subject to the approval of the people?"

Many Illinois residents believe that Chicago and Cook County dominate state policies, taxes and fees approved by the General Assembly. It is well known that the politics and values in the exurbs and rural areas of the state are very different. Families in western, central, and southern Illinois do not believe that they have a say in the political process. ❄

STIs: Health or Worldview Crisis?

Written by David E. Smith

Officials at the Cook County Department of Public Health are sounding the alarm about a spike in syphilis cases, particularly congenital syphilis, in which this malady is passed to a preborn baby.

The rise in this sexually transmitted infection (STI) is not just a regional problem but rather a nationwide one. Earlier this year, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services warned that cases of syphilis in the U.S. are at a 70-year high. Apparently, the comprehensive sex ed taught to young children in most public schools is failing miserably since proponents promised it would reduce STIs.

The immoral sex ed being taught to millions of children in public schools includes affirming the LGBTQ+ lifestyle. In Illinois, history classes also teach affirmation of the roles and accomplishments of so-called sexual minorities. In fact, the law requires students to be proficient in this biased “history” to receive an eighth-grade diploma. It’s no wonder STIs are increasing. Children and young adults are experimenting with dangerous sexual behaviors as a direct result of what they have been taught.

According to the most recent STI report by the CDC, there has been an 80 percent jump in the number of syphilis cases between 2018 and 2022. Its spread has been termed a “slow surging epidemic.”

While the majority of recent cases are among gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (MSM), it is a disease that can affect anyone who engages in promiscuous activity. As I said, public school sex-ed and history courses affirm LGBTQ+ lifestyles. Is it any wonder that curious young teens and adults are putting what they learn into practice?

Though less common, syphilis can also spread through blood transfusions, the sharing of needles, and direct, non-sexual contact with a syphilis sore. According to Webmd.com,

“syphilis causes sores, rashes, and other symptoms. If left untreated, it can cause

serious long-term problems that affect the brain, eyes, heart, and other organs.”

According to this site, if left untreated, “syphilis can cause serious health problems and death.”

For pregnant women, syphilis can cause miscarriage, premature birth, and stillbirth. Babies also have a high chance of contracting syphilis in the womb. The disease can cause infant death, organ damage, fetal anemia, heart failure, seizures, damaged vision and hearing, and long-term health and developmental complications for surviving babies.

This alarming trend has triggered a response from local, state, and federal health officials, who are sounding the alarm in hopes of curbing the spread of this preventable disease.

Even the AIDS Healthcare Foundation has been sounding the alarm with a billboard stating, “Eye syphilis is serious,” with a close-up of bloodshot eyes.

The top story on the Cook County Department of Health’s website highlights this concern with the title, “Syphilis Stops with Me.” Unfortunately, the link to “How to Reduce Your Risk of Getting Syphilis Before and During Your Pregnancy” is at the bottom of the page. You would think that this risk avoidance message would be front and center.

Yet, at least they are being honest about the absolute best solution for STIs:

The only way to completely avoid sexually transmitted infections, including syphilis, is not to have vaginal, anal, or oral sex.

This page also includes three bullet points recommending monogamy, the use of condoms (which can be ineffective), and syphilis testing. Of course, the latter two assume non-monogamous behavior.

Some public officials will point to “marginalized communities” comprised of underinsured people. Some will even claim that current (and historical) public policies have disproportionately affected racial and ethnic minorities. Their solution is to spend more tax dollars on free condoms, “safe sex” education, and, of course, expanded public health coverage

(Medicaid).

Throwing more tax dollars at the problem is not the answer. STI screenings are not the answer. “Safe sex” messaging is not the answer.

Following God’s design for sex, marriage, and family is the answer.

Sexually transmitted infections **do not** care about one’s socioeconomic conditions or ethnicity. If we agree that abstinence and monogamy are the unassailable solutions, why promote secondary, less effective measures? Are we that foolish and proud to ignore this standard because it is biblical, traditional, and/or conservative?



The most effective remedy to this outbreak and every social ill facing society can be found by acknowledging and following God’s model for life. Building and holding fast to a biblical worldview will equip us to identify the lies of our culture. We would be wise to make this a priority personally, in our homes, and with our children.

Romans 12:2 urges us not to follow the world’s “pattern” (i.e., worldview) and to instead be transformed by the renewing of our minds. Scripture also warns us repeatedly “not to be deceived” in 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 15:33 and James 1:16.

The only way we can thwart deception – or identify a corrupt worldview – is by knowing God’s Truth. In our day, Christians must understand how vitally important it is to be rooted in the one place we can be confident we will find the truth – the Word of God.

Knowing God’s Word is essential to building a biblical worldview. See also Ephesians 2:1–2, Colossians 2:8, and 1 Corinthians 2:12 – all of which speak to the importance of a Christian worldview.



Important Book Recommendation Written by David E. Smith

I want to highly recommend a new book written by Megan Basham titled *Shepherds for Sale*. I do not often send books and recommendations to key friends and supporters, but in this case, I am unreservedly compelled to do so. Basham says the book title is literal and metaphorical. She explains:

So you have the shepherds who are for sale in terms of being literally partnered up with financial left-wing power brokers who are funneling money into evangelical institutions to create front groups, to move evangelicals to the left on particular political priorities. And then you also have some who I would say are metaphorically for sale in the sense that they're selling out their influence for the acclaim of the secular media, for secular cultural approval. And so, you see them really shifting their rhetoric and doing what we call the punch-right-coddle-left phenomenon because they want to maintain that respectability among the dominant culture. So, really two kinds of selling out...

You will note the subtitle of the book is **"How Evangelical Leaders Traded the Truth for a Leftist Agenda."**

Megan exposes people like Russell Moore, J.D. Greear, Phil Vischer, and Dr. Francis Collins — many of whom can be likened to the shrewd manager in Luke 16, who licks his finger and decides which way the political and social winds are blowing.

Shepherds for Sale will help equip Christians in the pews and the pulpits about leftist ideology that is being intentionally advanced (often in deceitful ways) and how it is affecting evangelicalism and infiltrating churches.

Moreover, you will realize how important it is to shore up biblical thinking on the issues of the day to dispel cultural deceptions. In that way, I see Megan's work in this book as a strong validation of what we do at Illinois Family Institute. We are intentional in "Boldly Bringing Biblical Perspectives to Public Policy" and to the public square — with our Christian brothers and sisters being our main audience.

The older I get and the more I observe the world around me, the more clearly I



see how important it is to equip ourselves and our loved ones with a comprehensive biblical worldview. We must continually ask ourselves, "What does God say in His Word about the issues of the day?" Likewise, we should ask ourselves, "what are the biblical responses to the situations we face?"

Megan does an amazing job helping us get a better understanding of the leftward drifts and unbiblical compromises taking place within evangelicalism. It is a vindication of conservative Christ followers and our concerns about how the fear of man can influence the Body of Christ. Available at **Christianbook.com!**

We need your support to continue our mission! ❄️

Did You Know?

This is no time to be complacent! More and more people are waking up and rejecting the lies that are being sold to them. Christian truth is needed more than ever! Consider:

- More than 9,800 bills were filed during the 103rd General Assembly session—a two-year period—and Gov. Pritzker signed 1,057 of these bills into law. The 104th session will begin in mid-January.

- One out of every three minority voters pulled the lever for Donald Trump this election. That included massive gains among Hispanic voters, nearly half of whom voted for him this time around. That surge in support has left many political types asking what's driving Hispanics toward Republicans and how they can expedite this trend.



- Since 2008, the margins of victory in Illinois for presidential candidates have narrowed significantly. Donald Trump lost our state by 9 percent in the recent election, but in 2012, 2016, and 2020, the Republican candidates lost our state by 17 percent. In 2008, when Barack Obama ran for POTUS, the spread was an astounding 25 percent.

- Nationally, Trump made history again by becoming the first president to win non-consecutive terms since Grover Cleveland in 1892. Trump won the battleground states of North Carolina, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and

Michigan. Trump is the first Republican to win the popular vote and the electoral college since 2004.

- Trump made serious gains with female, Latino, black, youth, and white-and-suburban male voters. These five key demographics led to President-elect Donald Trump's victory, according to an AP analysis.

- CNN's interview with Donald Trump garnered just over 3 million views, but the Joe Rogan podcast received an estimated 38 million views.

- The federal Department of Defense (DoD) failed its annual financial audit for seven years in a row. The latest audit cost taxpayers \$178 million to complete. The FY25 proposed budget is approximately \$850 billion.

- The Chicago City Council has a nine members LGBTQ+ Caucus, the largest such caucus in the nation. ❄️

A Republic, If You Can Keep It: The Brilliance of the Electoral College

Written by James M. Odom, Senior Counsel

After the signing of the Constitution in September 1787, Elizabeth Willing Powel asked Benjamin Franklin, “Well, Doctor, what have we got, a republic or a monarchy?” Franklin responded, “A republic, if you can keep it.”

The Founders of our nation who were present at that convention, Franklin among them, are viewed by historians as, providentially, one of the most uncommonly brilliant groups of men ever assembled for such a purpose—unlike the world has seen before or since.

To help “keep” this republican form of government, those political geniuses put into place many Constitutional checks and balances to keep future majorities from remaking the republic into a government of men (i.e., them).

The Electoral College is the founders' gift to us — the cornerstone of this union of sovereign states.

The Electoral College is really a genius mathematical formula (think the theory of relativity and nuclear power) to count the votes of individuals and states as unique, sovereign governments that still retain their own individual characters.

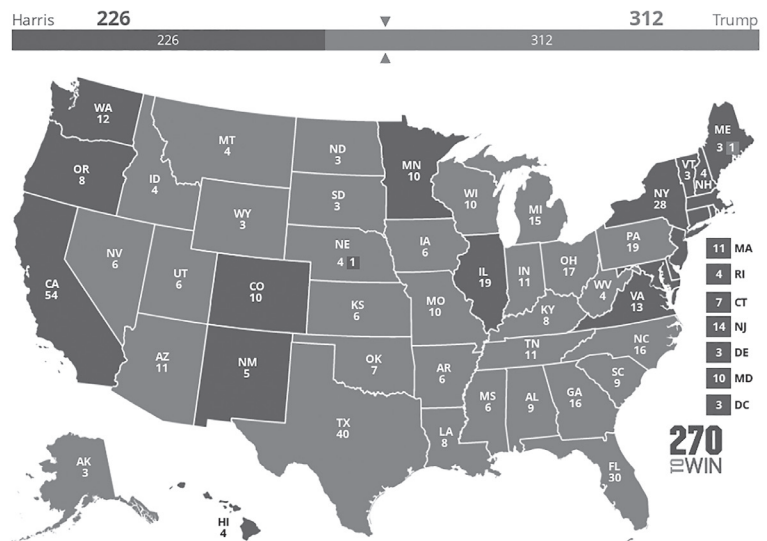
Every state (by its number of senators) gets two electors automatically, while the remainder of electors within each state (by its number of representatives in the House) are proportional to popular votes.

This system ensures that every state's say in the federal government will always be counted separately and proportional to its population.

The Electoral College is one of the main guarantees of a republican form of government.

Article IV, Section IV of the Constitution states the following: “The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a Republican Form of Government.”

So, if one considers the text of the Constitution authoritative, it would



be unconstitutional to eliminate the Electoral College (as it would be to cap representatives at 435, make D.C. a state, or not allow the Vice President to count the electoral votes, but we won't go there now).

In order for state divisions to exist (i.e., we are the United “States,” not one government, but not nations independent of one another either), the Electoral College MUST exist!

Removing the Electoral College is a political strategy based on population concentration.

The concentration of population becomes a concentration of power.

Large populations can be more easily manipulated toward political fads (marijuana, abortion, homosexuality, transgenderism) and tyranny of the majority (think Germany, where to solve the majority's problems, the government was democratically willing to deny the rights — to put it lightly — of a large minority of its population. Consider also American slavery or abortion).

State electors are ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY to preserve the rights of states against a “progressive” tyranny by population concentration.

If the Electoral College were to be eliminated, the power of states would effectively be neutralized and completely subject to federal power.

Take the plausible example of an 81 square-mile area with 75,000,001 people (currently about enough to win a presidential election by itself, about the

population of Guangzhou, China).

With the Electoral College and, say, 100 representatives of the other 75 million voters evenly distributed throughout the other 49 states, those packed into the city of Guangzhou would lose 147-52.

Remove the electors, and Guangzhou wins 75,000,001 to 75,000,000, ruling over the rest of the country and able to enslave, kill, abort, or imprison them.

But these things aren't likely to happen, are they? Governments (of sinful man) don't do such things, right? We are more civilized now. We aren't barbarians.

Does this sound particularly familiar to Illinoisans?

This is what the socialists have done with individual states over time. Without an Electoral College system, they took California, which had been Reagan country and very anti-Marxist. They've taken Illinois. (Imagine the difference if Illinois Senators were 1 per county, a rough equivalent to the federal electoral system.) They've taken New York. On and on it goes. They're working on Texas. Florida seems to have gotten a breather for now.

Until the 2024 election (and possibly 2020, but we'll leave that one alone for now), the popular vote has gone predominantly to Marxist progressives for many years.

Without the Electoral College, Guangzhou would have been in charge for a long time by now.

Don't let them fool you into taking our whole nation at once! ❄️



Your Voice of Opposition is Needed to Help STOP Assisted Suicide!

The Illinois General Assembly is considering a bill that will legalize physician-assisted suicide. I am a 68-year-old disabled woman and proud member of “Stop Assisted Suicide Illinois Coalition,” which vehemently opposes this bill. This organization includes representatives from diverse communities including disability rights, patients’ rights, health care, hospice care, human rights, senior rights, veterans, and various faith-based advocacy organizations. All parties are committed to keeping Illinois a physician-assisted suicide free state.

Since our health care system does not treat everyone equally, the practice of physician-assisted suicide raises the risk for those who often do not get the same access and treatment as others. This includes people with disabilities, veterans, people with mental illness, older people and those who cannot afford high-quality health care. How this manifests in the health care system is illustrated in the movie “Million Dollar Baby,” which feeds into the attitude that many non-disabled people who become disabled are then “better dead than disabled.”

Disability and poverty are two major factors that have the potential of making assisted suicide seem desirable. Regarding mental illness, none of the physician-assisted suicide laws have strong requirements that a person seeking it be evaluated by a psychiatrist.

The doctor/patient relationship is sacred. It is a bond that is strengthened by mutual trust. Legalizing physician-assisted suicide irrefutably erases that trust. Illinois lawmakers must unequivocally reject legalizing doctor assisted suicide. To do less will leave a stain on our state of which we all will be ashamed.

Pam Heavens, Community Access Advocate
United Cerebral Palsy/Center for Disability Services (Joliet).



Some Illinois lawmakers want to expand the death culture in Illinois. A bill to legalize doctor-assisted suicide in Illinois is being considered in the Lame Duck session, (2-3 days prior to the new session beginning in January), and we must do everything we can to voice our opposition.

The sick, the vulnerable, the elderly, the disabled, and people with mental illness and dementia will become targets. No one should be comfortable with promoting a cheaper, easier alternative to life’s struggles in order to ignore their responsibilities to people who need their help.

- **Initially, 79% of Canadians supported the “Medical Assistance in Dying” (MAID) law, but that’s dropped to 30% because they see their country’s disregard of vulnerable citizens.**
- **Canada’s MAID was promoted as a last resort for terminally ill patients suffering from incurable pain. Now it’s made available to anyone with an illness or disability. Even Canadians facing homelessness and poverty are feeling compelled to end their lives rather than be a burden.**
- **Canada is considering expanding assisted suicide to the mentally ill.**
- **Since legalization, there have been 428 failures to comply with Canada’s MAID law, yet not a single case has been reported to authorities.**
- **By 2023, Belgium has seen euthanasia increase by 14,163% since legalization in 2002.**
- **In 2023, 76.2% of Belgium euthanasia was administered to patients with both physical and psychological conditions, including personality disorders, depression, and Alzheimer’s disease.**
- **A new law in the Netherlands took effect on February 1, 2024, that allows parents to euthanize their children even when the children do not want to be euthanized.**
- **In the Netherlands, in 2023, 282 people with dementia and 115 with psychological disorders requested euthanasia.**

*Things that cause people to sin are bound to come, but woe to anyone through whom they come. — Jesus, Luke 17:1 **



TAKE ACTION: Call your state lawmakers and urge them to oppose assisted suicide!
Look up their name(s) and contact info here: voterveice.net/ILFI/Address.

Transgender Contagion

In the last ten years, the number of individuals in America aged 18–24 who identify as "transgender" increased by 422%, and the increase is similar for those who are aged 25–34. During this same period, there has also been a sharp rise in activism, celebrating this lifestyle and fighting for trans "rights."

According to psychiatrist, author, and public speaker Dr. Miriam Grossman, there has been "a social, political crusade that very aggressively marched through our institutions, our medical institutions, educational, political, and obviously our entertainment and media and so on."

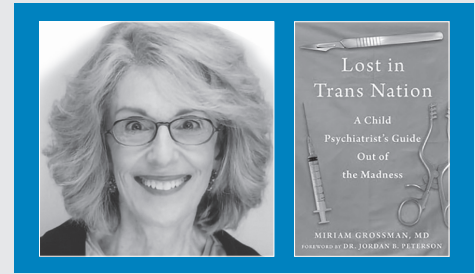
The goal of this crusade? "To eliminate the fact that humanity is divided into male and female. That is a biological truth, that

is an eternal truth. But the proponents of this ideology wish to eliminate that truth," Dr. Grossman points out.

The left is laser focused on pushing the ideological envelope further and further in terms of deconstructing truth and fighting against biological truths. They succeeded in 2013 with the U.S. Supreme Court agreeing to redefine marriage.

The next campaign was the transgender agenda and erasing male and female.

To be successful, they must reach young minds and hearts at the earliest possible time. That is why we can find dozens of books that have been published and made available in schools and libraries. These books are for the youngest ages—including picture books for kids that can't



even read yet.

Proponents want to instill doubt in the minds of malleable minds about biological distinctions between male and female.

Dr. Grossman's new book dispels these lies and equips readers to deal with this sinister agenda. We highly recommend, *A Child Psychiatrist's Guide Out of the Madness* which is available at **Christianbook.com!** You can also follow her on X, [@Miriam_Grossman](#) ❄️

Observations from Springfield Written by by David E. Curtin, IFI Lobbyist

The Democrats will still have supermajorities in each chamber of the Illinois General Assembly in the 104th General Assembly (2025-2026). It seems that they are primarily focused on legislative ways to "Trump-proof" Illinois, whatever that entails.

However, during the lame-duck session to close out the 103rd session in early January, they may try to pass legislation relating to health care, "reproductive rights," assisted suicide, and perhaps migrants.

As for the November election results, President-Elect Trump is making major plans at the federal level that may affect the upcoming regular session here in Illinois. The state is heavily dependent on federal money – which passes through this state to local units of government.

If Gov. Pritzker actively tries to block President Trump from carrying out his constitutional duties, such as securing the border, deporting illegal immigrants, and returning power to parents in education, Gov. Pritzker and his supermajority may find that some federal money they are dependent upon will dry up.

It goes without saying that Gov. Pritzker and his supermajority in Springfield cannot look to Washington,

D.C. for a bailout, either. Rather, they will be faced with reaping what they have sown over decades of reckless and irresponsible fiscal management.

That is not the only source of friction.

Gov. Pritzker has vowed to fight President Trump on deporting illegal immigrants. Some center-left Democrats



might oppose Pritzker and far-left Democrats, given the backlash in Chicago and many other communities where the migrants have been placed.

Trump has promised to get the illegal aliens out; Pritzker wants to showcase Illinois as a "sanctuary state" and give them a pathway to citizenship. Of course, that would make them future voters. While Trump favors orderly, *legal* immigration, open border proponents will attempt to make Trump look cruel and indifferent. It certainly will be an interesting fight.

President Trump may also abolish

the U.S. Department of Education. Gov. Pritzker and big government liberals will scream and holler, demanding that \$80 billion in education funds come back to the states. Maybe it will, maybe it won't. If it does, there will be conservative strings attached, which will upset progressive legislators.

We hope and pray that Trump will follow through on his promise to get rid of indoctrination in our schools and universities. Even though he's at the federal level, he has some financial levers to do that. Gov. Pritzker and progressives will oppose these efforts, too.

All the while, Gov. Pritzker and Illinois Democrats must somehow pull a rabbit out of a hat. They must come up with \$3 billion to balance a new budget of current spending priorities, not to mention the \$1 billion being demanded by Mayor Brandon Johnson for Chicago Public Schools and another almost \$1 billion to fill a mass transit budget hole.

Looking ahead, I suspect that we're in for a tumultuous session in 2025. **Please keep us in prayer as we try to uphold what is good and expose what is evil. Stay tuned for updates by subscribing to IFI E-Alerts. Your support is very encouraging to all of us.** ❄️

Prayer Requests . . .

And this is the confidence that we have toward Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, **He hears us**. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, **we know that we have the requests that we have asked of Him**. — 1 John 5:14-15

With yet another critical election cycle behind us, it would be wise for followers of Jesus Christ to continually offer up thanksgiving and praise for His mercies.

It would be wise to recognize that it is God Who rules and keeps watch over nations. (Psalm 22:28, Job 12:23, Psalm 66:7) It is God Who raises up leaders (Daniel 2:21) and changes their hearts (Proverbs 21:1). Therefore, we must continue to pray for our state and nation over the next several months and years —

PLEASE PRAY:

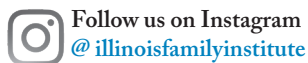
- For God's hand of protection over our nation and its newly elected leaders and their families;
- For God's divine wisdom and discernment for President-Elect Donald Trump as he makes decisions regarding staff, judicial appointments, and ambassadors;
- That many godly counselors and advisers will surround our elected officials and that local pastors and Christian leaders will intentionally seek opportunities to visit and minister to these men and women (Proverbs 11:14);
- That lawmakers in Washington, D.C. would continue to work toward defunding Planned Parenthood;
- For unity among believers — that they would have a renewed sense of purpose in sharing the gospel in their spheres of influence;
- For an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, inspiring repentance and a return to Jesus, our Lord and Savior (Malachi 3:7, Isaiah 55:7, 2 Peter 3:9);
- For church leaders — that they have a sense of resolve and urgency in teaching/preaching the Word of God and how it applies to our lives;
- For our Illinois lawmakers as they go into a new session in January;
- That state lawmakers will uphold parental rights and reject attempts to regulate homeschooling in Illinois;
- For God to thwart Illinois lawmakers' plans to legalize euthanasia and prostitution;
- For God to turn the hearts of Illinois lawmakers toward Him and His truth;
- For God's conviction upon Illinois lawmakers to oppose all bills that are contrary to the will of God;
- For God's equipping of the saints in order to know how to respond in every situation, overcoming evil with good;
- That people everywhere would recognize their need for a Savior and repent. (Acts 17:30; 1 Tim 2:4; John 3:16-17);
- That God would continue to provide the resources for IFI to do the work necessary to boldly bring a biblical perspective to the public square.
- For the peace of Jerusalem (Ps. 122:6) and against rising antisemitic attitudes.



especially for our newly elected officials.

The Lord has repeatedly extended His mercy and grace to our nation. We believe that God heard our fervent prayers and has given us more time to get back on track with Him. Even as our work continues, we must be faithful in working to overcome evil with good, remembering that we are in a spiritual battle (Ephesians 6:12), and that our weapons are far different than the world's (2 Corinthians 10:4). ✨

Stay up-to-speed on news impacting the family



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