



ILLINOIS Family Institute

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

Newsletter | September 2024

GO VOTE Nov 5th

illinoisfamily.org



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

At IFI, the core team and I have a combined ninety years of experience on the cultural battlefield, striving to uphold the sanctity of human life, biblical marriage and family. Every so often, we tend to think we've "seen it all." Every session of the General Assembly we tell ourselves that it cannot get worse.

But it does. The depravity of man knows no bounds (Jeremiah 5:28).

The policies they sponsor and pass are jaw-dropping wicked. Currently, they are gearing up to pass physician assisted suicide and legalize prostitution! More death and disease are just what our adversary ordered.

These big government liberals want us to believe these things are good liberating policies. The truth is they are sinful, destructive and counterproductive to a healthy culture.

Of course, the state will happily tax and regulate these activities in hopes of another revenue stream. Bars, brothels, mini-casinos, and weed shops will soon be the prominent shops on Main Street in towns across the state.

We now know intuitively and intellectually that the nature of Big Government is tyranny.

If you are a Star Trek fan, you know about a cybernetic alien group linked in a hive-mind called "The Borg." They seek to assimilate individuals into the collective. They warn would-be victims that "resistance is futile."

What an amazing metaphor for the godless Left! Big government types, the Apostles of Wokeism, want us to acquiesce. They want submission. They want unquestioning conformity. They want us to stop fighting and stop telling the truth.

I appreciate the way **Elon Musk** identifies this:

"Wokeness is oppressive cruelty designed to crush descent, all under the guise of false virtue ..."



They want to make the cost of dissent so high that we'd rather just keep our mouths shut to avoid persecution and penalties.

They want us to adjust our behavior and language. They want us to fall in line and be conformed to the godless collective, so to speak.

It certainly would be easier for Christians to keep our heads down. That way we could avoid headaches, personal attacks, and disruptions.

But for serious Christians, our consciences will not allow us to remain silent. We refuse to trade our integrity for a little peace of mind.

If you consider yourself a patriot and know our history, you know how high the historic price of liberty in the United States is. It is so profoundly valuable that hundreds of thousands of soldiers have laid down their lives to secure the liberties God gave us.

If you are like me and the amazing members of the IFI Team, we are unwilling to trade that in for temporary peace.

Standing up to the godless Left requires us to stop worrying about what it will cost us personally. Yes, they can censor us, call us names, and label us as "haters." But they can't shut us down if we have an army of supporters behind us. That is why we hope you'll consider becoming a monthly supporter of our work and ministry.

But don't just support *us*. Support defenders of freedom wherever you find them. Subscribe to X Premium, Ditch Disney, and subscribe to The Daily Wire.

Instead of the evening news, listen to Relatable with Allie Beth Stuckey,



continued inside...



from the **Executive Director** — **David E. Smith** *(continued ...)*



the Worldview in 5 Minutes, The Briefing, the Self-Evident podcast, and IFA's Spotlight. Have you checked out the Fight, Laugh, Feast Network?

Back anyone bold enough to say what's true, even if it comes at a cost — especially if it comes at a cost. We will all be that much more fearless

and that much harder to stop if we have a whole army of freedom-loving patriots at our backs.

Of course, more than anything else, we must immerse ourselves in the Bible, hide God's Word in our hearts, teach it to our children and grandchildren, and uphold this truth in the public square. ★

“On behalf of the seven kids we're still raising at home, my wife & I praise God for His bountiful blessings, provisions, and challenges in our lives. We praise God that our son and daughter-in-law made us grandparents this year. Additionally, we're tremendously grateful for God's calling in our lives as we serve at IFI and for the confidence and unwavering support of the boards of directors.”



— David E. Smith

American Parents Coalition: A Breath of Fresh Air for Parents

By Mae Arthur



Culturally speaking, there is perhaps no more concerning trend these days than the attempts of the far Left to undermine parents and divide them from their children. From schools and libraries to the courts and the medical profession, radical forces are coming with the authority we've given them, and they're coming for our kids.

The transgender agenda is one example of a concerted effort to give kids information and freedom they were never meant to have; telling them that their bodies as created are broken, pushing independence from those who love them most, and abandoning them when they inevitably regret their decisions.

On a larger scale, sexual liberation in general, normalization of marijuana use, radical political philosophies, and abortion as birth control (just to name a few) are being forced upon our kids by adults who, even a few decades ago, we could trust to protect them and uphold parents as the final authority on their lives.

One of the forces “greasing the wheels” on the many threats families face in today's environment is social media. As parents, there are ways we can control who has a voice in our kids' formation and upbringing, but those influences that come through their devices are harder to monitor.

For instance, TikTok, the much-debated social platform backed by the Chinese Communist Party, is full of content glorifying self-harm, eating disorders, and pornography. It's the single largest source of videos that fuel “social contagion” among young girls, convincing many that they were “born in the wrong body” or that they suffer from neurological disorders like Tourette's syndrome.

Some parents simply don't involve themselves as they should, to their shame and the endangerment of their children, but the majority of moms and dads take their responsibility seriously.

The difficulty comes in getting the information we need so we can head threats off before our kids are already in harm's way. Some of this can and should be accomplished through

simple vigilance, but we are not perfect, nor do we have time to run down the facts on every bit of information we hear.

Organizations like the American Parents Coalition are a breath of fresh air to those of us who want to be informed but not overwhelmed by this cultural moment. Led by **Alleigh Marré**, a mom of three with a background in government, politics, private industry, and education advocacy, the APC's mission is:

“to reclaim parental authority because we recognize that nothing should stand between a parent and their child — not the government, not our schools, not the medical establishment. Our organization wants to empower parents to determine how to raise their children and provide practical resources for doing so.”

Addressing the challenges parents face under three broad categories, Education, Health Care, and Culture, the APC website states the organization works to accomplish incremental change by educating parents, promoting parental consent, and demanding transparency.

The group also makes available a library of parental resources that include helpful charts, talking points, sample letters to elected officials, and how-to guides for standing up for kids' innocence and safety. Another excellent resource is The Lookout parental notification system, which sends texts on applicable developments in policy and culture.

Visit the American Parents Coalition website today (americanparentscoalition.org), sign up for their updates and The Lookout, and tell other parents about this helpful resource. The content produced by the APC is not a replacement for parental involvement and wisdom in kids' lives, but it is certainly a welcome weapon to place in our arsenals. ★

SkyTree Book Fairs: A Pro-Family Replacement to Scholastic

By Alyssa Sonnenburg

I remember clearly the Scholastic Book Fairs that took place during the school year when I was growing up. I loved getting out of class early to peruse the books. I even convinced my mom to buy me a few.

Sadly, Scholastic turned down the path of radical ideology a while ago, and they continue to push anti-family, anti-God messaging.

Recently, on May 21st, Scholastic published an article entitled, “Celebrate Pride With These LGBTQIA+ Books.” The author’s opening two paragraphs read:

Shining a light on LGBTQIA+ characters and life experiences is crucial in ensuring that all students are able to see themselves reflected in the literature they read. It also helps to create and nurture a culture of positivity and collaboration in the classroom and beyond.

These books incorporate and celebrate LGBTQIA+ themes and experiences. They present thoughtful stories around concepts like acceptance, truth, love, and identity. These stories will help young people to connect, build empathy, and learn that everyone’s story deserves to be told.

Unfortunately, it is abundantly clear that Scholastic’s mission has changed since I was a student. Scholastic no longer strives to be a source of real learning and imagination for children.

Rather, the company’s new mission is to make sure that students are bombarded with books that “incorporate and celebrate LGBTQIA+ themes and experiences.”

Numerous articles have been written exposing their mission and ideology—especially the effects on impressionable, innocent children. So, rather than repeat this information or focus on the consequences of this ideology, I want to optimistically point parents to a wonderful resource: **SkyTree Book Fairs**.

SkyTree’s mission is simple and worthy of support: to “celebrate literacy while ensuring that books are wholesome and trustworthy.”



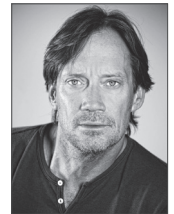
Unlike Scholastic, SkyTree was formed by parents just like you, who seek to protect their children’s innocence and contribute to their education.

When you become a donor or host a book fair, you don’t have to worry about explicit content assaulting your child’s mind and heart.

You, as a parent, will be able to rest assured that your child is reading wholesome content that teaches biblical values and appropriately stimulates their wonderful imaginations.

Actor **Kevin Sorbo**, in discussing SkyTree, states:

“This is how we turn the tide in our culture. We will uproot evil and plant the seeds of truth, goodness, and beauty.



No more whining or complaining about our culture.

With SkyTree Book Fairs, we are focusing on offering a solution to the problem. It’s time to act.”

This is, indeed, how we turn the tide.

We stop supporting companies like Scholastic, and instead, we give our support to wonderful, God-honoring companies like SkyTree. ★

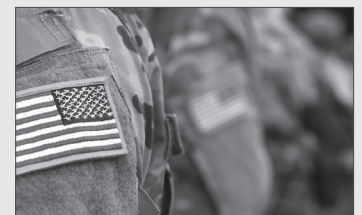
VOTER GUIDES ARE AVAILABLE!

Order them in bulk today to give to church members, family and neighbors. **Call the IFI office at 708-781-9328 or go to illinoisfamily.org.**

This non-partisan guide is legal for churches to distribute and includes the positions of candidates and incumbents based on their voting records, public statements, returned questionnaires, and endorsements. ★

Weaponization of Government

North Carolina’s Fort Liberty (formerly known as Fort Bragg) conducted a training on anti-terrorism, and one of the slides from this presentation was leaked.



This slide, entitled “Terrorist Groups,” listed several pro-life activities and organizations. In addition to the outrageous claim that pro-life groups are “terrorists,” independent journalist Sam Shoeman shared on X that this presentation also “falsely attribute[s] the bombing of abortion clinics to National Right to Life.” ★



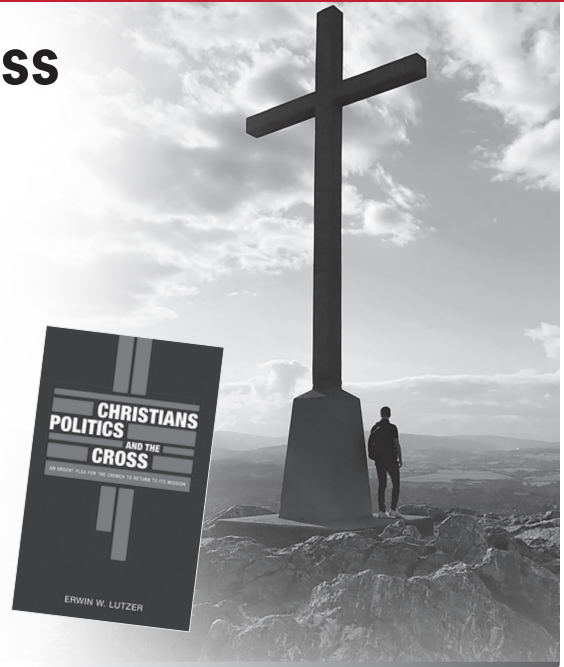
Christians, Politics and the Cross

Pastors around the state are concerned about how their churches will handle the upcoming presidential election cycle. To say that 2020 was rough is an understatement.

We want to help equip you—and especially pastors as they lead their congregations through this political season. That is why we are encouraging you to get this book for yourself, your pastor, and your friends: *Christians, Politics and the Cross: An urgent plea for the church to return to its mission* by Dr. Erwin Lutzer.

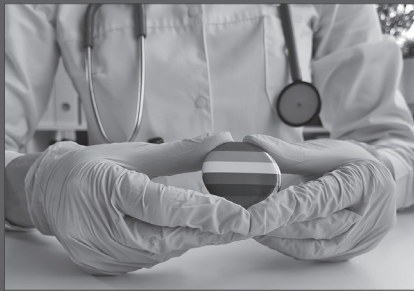
Dr. Lutzer encourages Christians to set aside the ways of the world and use Scripture as their guide for political engagement. He effectively messages the importance of civic engagement while reminding the audience to keep the gospel the main thing. This resource will bless you and your church as you point your congregation to Jesus, the Chief Shepherd.

Our prayer is that, even during a divisive election cycle, those in our churches will remain united in the gospel of Jesus Christ. You can get this book for \$15 by filling out the enclosed reply slip. ★



Biden Administration Sued

Attorneys General in Arkansas, Idaho, Iowa, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Utah, along with the American College of Pediatricians are suing the Biden administration over threats to withhold federal funding from healthcare providers who refuse to perform or cover “transgender” procedures. The plaintiffs contend the rule violates physicians’ rights, overrides state authority, and is rulemaking without statutory authority.



At a minimum, doctors should never be forced to violate their medical judgment. They take an oath to do no harm, and if a doctor knows that a treatment or a surgery will actually harm a patient, then he or she should have the freedom to refuse to administer the treatment or perform the surgery. These elective treatments and surgeries are not “health care,” but elective mutilations. ★

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Equipped!

With the help of a wonderful volunteer, a Colson Fellow and former music teacher – and in collaboration with Southside Pregnancy Center – we have launched *Equipped!* Through this initiative, we seek opportunities to teach junior and senior high school students about the sanctity of human life and the realities of abortion. We want them to be equipped to make the case for life at every opportunity they have.



➔ Visit EquippedForLife.net for more information. ★



... IF My people, who are called by My Name, will humble themselves and pray and seek My Face and turn from their wicked ways, THEN I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land. — 2 Chronicles 7:14

In the spirit of corporate repentance, acknowledging our offenses before God as a nation, it is wise to prayerfully appeal to God, asking Him to forgive our national sins and to heal our land. There’s nothing too big that He can’t correct.

Many churches across Illinois will be participating in 40 days of prayer beginning on **September 26th**.

For more information and to submit your church event so others in your area can join you:

➔ Humilityandprayerillinois.com

Scan the code to learn more ➔





Elections Have Consequences

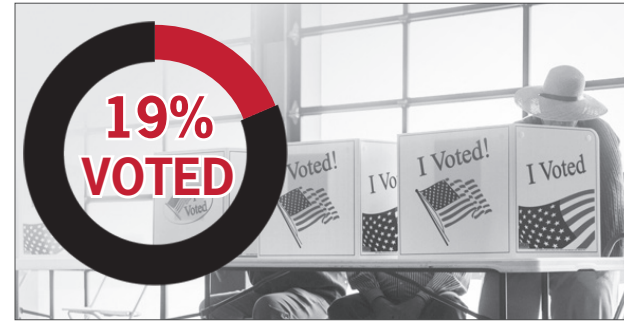
As usual, political news is front and center during this important election cycle. You've heard it before, but it is true, we are in midst of what may be one of the most important election seasons of our lifetime. The November 5th election will play a consequential part in determining the future of America. As we continue to fight to protect the preborn, defend parental rights, stand up for religious liberty, and expose woke ideology in our school systems, we need elected officials willing to stand up and defend those same principles at the local, state, and federal levels.

To suggest that our culture and our political systems need a huge dose of salt and light may be the understatement of the decade. It is the absence of biblical influence in our culture that has brought us to this low point in Illinois. I know you agree with us that this must not continue. The reins of government must be regained.

Historically, we know that Christians do not always turnout for elections in Illinois. Too many voters write these elections off as unimportant and inconsequential, but that couldn't be further from the truth. One study found that nearly 80% of all registered voters fail to participate in primaries. **In Illinois' presidential primary in March of this year, only 19% of voters cast a ballot.**

As we work to engage more Christian conservatives in the voting process, please know that these numbers mean your vote in November's election has even more power to change the tide of our state. In some districts, there may be as few as just 200-

300 voters showing up to cast a ballot, and your single vote can have an incredible impact on protecting faith, family, and freedom.



Before you vote, please visit our website (illinoisfamily.org) for information about the three referenda questions that will be on ballots statewide. You can also find our IFI Voter Guide for state and federal candidates on our website. We hope you take advantage of this opportunity to engage in our state's political process.

Your voice is critical in defending our shared values of God's plan for marriage, family, life, and religious liberty. Please encourage your like-minded friends and family to get out to the polls on or before November 5th. ★

Did You Know?



"Enrollment at Illinois public schools this year dropped by nearly 10,000 students from the previous year," reports

the *Daily Herald*. The article goes on to report, "It continues a trend that has seen enrollment drop by nearly 200,000 students in kindergarten through 12th grade statewide over the past decade." Yet many Illinois home owners are still paying enormous amounts of property tax to local schools.

Did you know that Illinois currently spends \$18,927 per student on average? If you think that is ridiculous, you will be shocked by the fact that of the 88% of students who graduate from government schools, only 35% are proficient in reading, and only 27% are proficient in math. From the perspective of a Christian and taxpayer, homeschooling seems like a really good deal.

➔ Find out how your local schools are performing by visiting IllinoisReportCard.com. ★



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



IFI Special Forum

The Great COVID Con:
WHAT WENT WRONG AND WHY

Friday, October 18, 2024

7:00 – 9:00 PM

Families of Faith Church / 24466 W Eames St., Channahon, Illinois 60410

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

Prayer Requests . . .

We are in an intense spiritual battle. Most would agree that our state is so far gone that only God is able to restore it. But know that we serve an all-powerful God who is *“able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us”* (Ephesians 3:20).

Naturally and spiritually speaking, our state is a field severely overgrown with the weeds of violence (including abortion), sexual immorality, addictions, greed, apathy, etc. And these are decimating families.

We see in the parable of the wheat and the tares: *“While men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way...”* (Matthew 13:25). The church has been asleep far too long. Now it’s time to get on our knees and ask God to move in the hearts and minds of church leaders and church attendees—the Church.

As praying people, we are the watchmen who can hinder our adversary from sowing further destruction (James 5:16; Colossians 4:2). ★



Please Pray...

- Pray for mighty revival, a sweeping move of the Holy Spirit to bring millions to the foot of the Cross.
- Pray that the Lord would cause POTUS nominees to choose to defend the preborn and that God’s Word might reign in their hearts and minds.
- Pray for Biden and Harris as they finish out their term. Pray for their staff and families, “that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.” It is our duty as Christians to do so, and we know that this is good and pleasing to God. (1 Timothy 2:2)
- Pray that God would make the next White House administration serve in humility, seeking to honor God and upholding religious liberty, so we might continue to freely exercise our God-given human rights. Pray they would recognize the grave danger posed by the degradation of families and faith due to the culture’s views of sex and human identity.
- Pray that ungodly officials would have their authority stripped from them and another more righteous person take their place according to Isaiah 22:20–22.
- Pray that Planned Parenthood and other groups that profit through human suffering and immoral activities, wither and dry up immediately and that their employees would leave the heinous practice of child sacrifice.
- Pray that the judicial system will uphold First Amendment rights of sidewalk counselors and crisis pregnancy centers.
- Pray that in the 2024 election season, pro-life candidates will have the time, energy, and funding needed to saturate their districts with their pro-life campaign messages and materials.
- Pray that parents/grandparents and church leaders will rescue impressionable young children from government schools and prioritize the discipleship of these children in the Christian faith.
- Pray that we might be found faithful to our calling and God’s mandate on our lives to be ambassadors of the gospel.
- Pray that whatever the future holds, we will be found honoring God’s truth and His Word, so that He will always have a witness of His power on this earth. ★

To You, Lord, I lift up my soul.

My God, in You I trust,

Do not let me be ashamed;

Do not let my enemies rejoice over me.

Indeed, none of those who wait for You will be ashamed;

Those who deal treacherously without cause will be ashamed.

— Psalm 25:1–3

Stay up-to-speed on news impacting the family



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Visit our website: illinoisfamily.org

Illinois Family Institute is a non-partisan, non-profit 501c3 organization. Gifts to IFI are tax-deductible. IFI has a working relationship with the American Family Association, Alliance Defending Freedom, Family Research Council, Public School Exit and the Thomas More Society.

Illinois Family Institute | P.O. Box 876 | Tinley Park, Illinois 60477

phone: 708-781-9328 | fax: 708-781-9376 | web: illinoisfamily.org | e-mail: ContactUs@illinoisfamily.org

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