

CHRISTIAN LIFE REPORT

A NEWSLETTER OF THE ALABAMA BAPTIST CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMISSION

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A LOOK AT FOCA

by
Joe Bob Mizzell

The Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA) is a proposed law before the U.S. Congress (H.R.1964 and S.1173) that would remove all local and state laws that restrict abortion. If FOCA passes and is signed into law by the president, the government will not be allowed to interfere in any way with abortion decisions. Nor can it treat abortion differently from any other health procedure. It will also allow women to sue any governmental body that attempts to restrict or interfere with a woman's right to get an abortion.

After the Supreme Court upheld the Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act on April 18, 2007, Planned Parenthood immediately went to work trying to get FOCA passed. As of this date, they have 120 Congressmen in the House and Senate who are cosponsors of the bill. Planned Parenthood wants absolutely no restrictions on abortions.

If FOCA becomes law, hundreds of state laws will be nullified. All informed consent laws would be overturned. Consent laws require that a woman be given accurate medical information about the abortion procedure, alternatives, and her rights. All parental notification laws would be eliminated, girls would not have to tell their parents before having an abortion and doctors would not be required to inform parents.

FOCA would eliminate laws requiring waiting periods before abortions. Even

the partial birth abortion ban would be reversed. The Hyde Amendment, which restricts taxpayer funding for abortions would be eliminated. Abortions would no longer have to be performed by a licensed doctor.

FOCA would require military hospitals to perform abortions. Religious hospitals that do not currently allow abortions in their facilities would be forced to perform abortions, or go out of business. Health insurance for federal employees would have to cover abortions.

FOCA would require any government hospital that provides, pays for, or insures childbirth or healthcare services to do the same for abortion procedures. Taxpayers would be required to pay for elective abortions with their tax dollars under the Medicaid program and in the military.

Can we do anything to stop FOCA from passing Congress? We can certainly try! In this Christian Life Report there is a list of our two senators and seven congressmen from Alabama who serve in Washington along with their addresses, phone numbers and websites. I encourage you to contact them asking them to work and vote against FOCA.



(Mizzell is director of the Office of Christian Ethics/Chaplaincy Ministries for the Alabama Baptist Convention, State Board of Missions)

*The articles in this issue were gathered from various sources
The opinions in the Christian Life Report are not necessarily the opinions of the Christian Life Commission*

FREEDOM OF CHOICE ACT

by
A. Eric Johnston

In 2009, America faces the biggest abortion challenge since *Roe v. Wade* legalized abortion in 1973. The Freedom of Choice Act ("FOCA") is poised to expand and federalize all abortion rights.

Background

After *Roe* was decided a 20 year legal strategy was developed to reverse it. In the late 1980's, court opinions seemed to be leading to a prohibition of abortion. Fearing this, pro-abortionists responded in 1989 by filing the first FOCA in the U.S. Congress. It did not pass.

In 1993, the 20 year strategy came to an end with the decision of *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, when the United States Supreme Court dashed our hopes for prohibiting abortion. However, the court would permit states to regulate abortion services.

To keep states from regulating, FOCA was again filed in 1995 and 2004, but did not pass. When *Gonzales v. Carhart* upheld the federal partial-birth abortion ban and anticipating the presidential election, the latest version was filed in 2007 and 2008, which did not pass, and will again be filed in the 2009 Congress.

Why We Are Concerned

We are concerned about FOCA because of the sweeping changes it will make removing all impediments to abortion on demand:

- It will apply to all present and future state and federal laws.
- Any law that burdens or restricts a woman's right to abortion will not apply.
- It will overturn more than 550 existing state and federal laws that

regulate abortion; for Alabama, that includes the Parental Consent and Woman's Right to Know laws.

- FOCA could even result in regulation of crisis pregnancy centers.

If FOCA passes, our present laws will have no effect. We will not be able to regulate abortion in any meaningful way. As a result, more unborn baby's lives will be taken and the standard of healthcare for women at abortion clinics will diminish.

Why We Are Concerned Now

Why are we concerned now, since FOCA has always failed? During his campaign for the presidency, Barack Obama told Planned Parenthood that the first thing he would do as President would be to sign FOCA into law. Pro-abortion Representatives and Senators are now in control of Congress. FOCA now has an excellent chance of passing.

Action Items

- (1) Sign up on a pro-life mail or email list, or contact us, to keep informed on FOCA.
- (2) Use the information you receive to contact your senators and representatives in Congress (to oppose FOCA) and in the Alabama Legislature (to support a resolution against FOCA).
- (3) Pray diligently and constantly for the defeat of FOCA, the changing of the hearts of abortionists, the women who make these decisions, and the saving of the lives of the unborn.

abortion doesn't make you "un-pregnant" - it makes you the mother of a "dead" baby

(Johnston is president of the Alabama Pro-Life Coalition, Inc.)

United States Senators

Senator Richard C. Shelby (R)

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Phone: 202-224-5744
Fax: 202-224-3416
Website: www.shelby.senate.gov

Senator Jeff Sessions (R)

335 Russell Senate Office Building
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Phone: 202-224-4124
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Website: www.sessions.senate.gov

Senators:

The Honorable _____
[State] Senate
[Address]
Dear Senator _____:

President

The Honorable (name)
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500
Dear Mr. President:
Website: www.whitehouse.gov/president

Representatives:

The Honorable _____
[State] House of Representatives
[Address]
Dear Representative _____:

Vice President

The Honorable (name)
Vice President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500
Dear Mr. Vice President:
Website: www.whitehouse.gov/vicepresident

Proper Forms of Address



HOW TO BE A PRO-LIFE CHURCH

by
Karen Cole

Let's think about some practical ways your church members can be pro-life.

REMEMBER SENIOR ADULTS

"You are to rise in the presence of the elderly and honor the old." Leviticus 19:32

TEACH YOUR CHILDREN

"Impress these words of Mine on your hearts and souls...teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road." Deuteronomy 11:18-19

PRAY FOR A PRO-LIFE MINISTRY

"In everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God." Philippians 4:6

SUPPORT A PREGNANCY CARE CENTER

"Rescue those being taken off to death, and save those stumbling toward slaughter." Proverbs 24:11

ESTABLISH A MENTORING ORGANIZATION

"Whoever welcomes one little child such as this in My name welcomes Me. And whoever welcomes Me does not welcome Me, but Him who sent Me." Mark 9:37

PROVIDE RELIEF FOR STRESSED CAREGIVERS

"Blessed are the merciful, because they will be shown mercy." Matthew 5:7

SUPPORT FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE FAMILIES

"Pure and undefiled religion before our God and Father is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress." James 1:27

VOLUNTEER WITH A HOSPICE

"Carry one another's burdens." Galatians 6:2

EXPRESS YOUR OPINION

"You are the light of the world...let your light shine before men." Matthew 5:14,16

CELEBRATE SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE SUNDAY

"A truthful witness rescues lives." Proverbs 14:25

Go to work for Him. Caregiver, mentor, prayer warrior, or parent with enough love for one more - He is calling you to be His hands and feet in the world today. "Here I am" are words He is longing to hear.

(Taken in part from Faith and Family Values, a newsletter from the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, SBC)

United States House of Representatives

Robert B. Aderholt (R – 4th)

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Jo Bonner (R – 1st)

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When communicating with the President, Vice President, or federal agency officials, follow these general principles: know your facts, be brief, refer to specific legislation (if applicable), and state how federal legislation or other federal action will affect you and/or your organization or community.

FACTS & ISSUES

Compiled by Joe Bob Mizzell, Director
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ALCOHOL ABUSE

Alcohol abuse or dependence affects about one-third of Americans at some point during their lives. *But:* Only 24% of people receive help. *Reasons for the gap:* Stigmas associated with alcohol disorders and lack of awareness about alcohol problems and treatment options. Symptoms of abuse include cravings for alcohol, loss of control when drinking and physical dependence. *More information:* National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, 301-443-3860, www.niaaa.nih.gov.

Bridget F. Grant, PhD, chief of laboratory epidemiology and biometry, National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, Maryland.

Bottom Line, February 1, 2009

RISE IN TEEN PREGNANCY ALARMING

Few public health issues have more—and more serious—implications than teen pregnancy. It is on the rise in Alabama after years of steady decline, and that is a deeply worrisome trend.

For a decade, Alabama saw an encouraging decline in teen pregnancy, which fell from a rate of 57.1 births per 1,000 teenage girls in 1996 to 37.5 such births in 2005. But the rate then began to rise again, to 39.6 births in 2006 and 39.7 births last year.

Teen mothers are more likely to deliver prematurely and to deliver low birth weight babies. Both situations present numerous potential threats to the infant.

Such problems are reflected in infant mortality statistics, which also are showing a disturbing upward trend. Last year, the infant mortality rate among teen mothers was a startling 47 percent higher than the overall rate.

Montgomery Advertiser Editorial, November 13, 2008

STATISTICS ON TEEN ALCOHOL ABUSE

- There are an estimated three million teens in America who are alcoholics. Several million more have a serious drinking problem they cannot control on their own.
- On average, boys first try alcohol at age 11 and girls at 13. By 14, 41 percent of kids have had at least one drink. Teens who begin drinking before age 15 are five times more likely to become dependent on alcohol than those who start at 21.
- Adolescents who abuse alcohol, particularly binge drinkers, have problems with memory, verbal skills, and perceiving spatial relationships. Research suggests such effects could persist into adulthood.
- “The impact of one drink on a girl is roughly equivalent to the impact of two drinks on a boy, so girls who are keeping up with the boys are actually subjecting themselves to far worse consequences,” says Susan Foster, a director at the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse in Columbia University.

Family Circle Magazine, December 2008

THE CHURCH’S ROLE IN HELPING MARRIAGES

Statistics show that today’s marriages are struggling to come anywhere near the ideal state that God intended for them. In 2001, researcher and cultural commentator George Barna reported that born-again Christians were divorcing at the same rate as their non-believing neighbors. Unfortunately, that embarrassing statistic was unchanged in Barna’s 2008 report. Ouch!

Faith & Family Values, 2008—Issue 3



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