

June 2013

Dear Friends and Supporters,

This month, we will give a report on the completion of the 2013 regular session of the Alabama Legislature. We are pleased to report a very good outcome on a number of important bills.

The June, July and August Educational Updates review the Women's Health and Safety Act (HB57), the American and Alabama Laws for Alabama Courts Act (SB4), and the Alabama Student Religious Liberties Act of 2013 (HB588). Some other bills of note:

- The Religious Liberty Act of 2013 would have addressed the "Hobby Lobby" type of situation, by exempting employers from Obamacare requirements to provide employees' insurance for contraceptives and abortifacients. It did not pass. These issues are still being litigated on the federal level and it may be necessary to re-file the bill again next year.
- The Accountability Act of 2013 permits parents to remove their children from failing public schools and put them in nonpublic schools receiving tax credits. Foundations for scholarships would be permitted. The bill passed, but is sure to be embroiled in legal controversy.
- Common Core Standards are federal standards meant to be adopted by all states in public education. These standards are misdirected and injurious to good academic health. They were approved by the Alabama Department of Education, but there were several unsuccessful efforts to forbid their use. There will be more efforts to correct this problem.
- Midwifery is an alternative means for childbirth. Several midwifery bills were introduced. Our concern was that midwives not perform abortions.
- The District Attorney Pre-Trial Diversion Program would permit nonviolent offenders to avoid criminal records and confinement by participating in various programs to restore them as good citizens. We worked to be sure there was a provision that would permit churches and ministries to participate as program alternatives.

If you wish more information on the session, please contact us. SLI's efforts are a combination of drafting, reviewing, advising and testifying. We do not lobby the bills as such, but provide our unique expertise on these constitutional issues.

We are very grateful for the financial and prayer support you have given us earlier in the year. We have spent a great deal of time and resources on the efforts mentioned above and others. We appreciate your remembering us at this time.

Yours very truly,

A. Eric Johnston