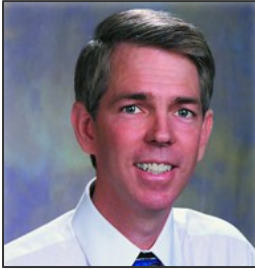


Recent Congressional Successes (or, “Why Christians Must Vote in This Election!”)

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Despite the remarkable progress made in recent weeks on pro-faith and pro-family issues, virtually all the mainstream media news about Washington politics has been almost completely negative. Apparently, the liberal media does not consider progress on traditional religious and moral values to be newsworthy, but only news about the Mark Foley scandal, being bogged down in Iraq, conservative voter discouragement, etc. Unfortunately, highlighting the negative news while ignoring the substantial progress made in the culture war tends to disengage values voters (which, by the way, certainly might be part of the reason for their selective reporting). Nevertheless, many good bills have been signed into federal law in recent weeks:

- The Internet Gambling Prohibition Act closes down a huge anti-family industry. Four federal laws already prohibit Internet gambling, but since all major gambling sites operate outside the United States, federal enforcement is virtually impossible. This Act now requires financial institutions to block credit card and other payments to Internet gambling sites. The impact of the bill was immediate: the value of stock in Great Britain’s online gambling companies dropped fifty percent upon passage of the bill; two Internet gambling firms sold their American operations for only \$1; the directors of a major Internet gambling company simply resigned and walked off, leaving the company in the hands of creditors. Internet gambling – one of the fastest growing forms of addiction in America – is now dramatically curtailed, if not completely stopped.
- The Broadcast Decency Act imposes significant penalties on networks and stations for public broadcasts of indecent incidents (such as the infamous “wardrobe malfunction” at the halftime of the Super Bowl) and indecent speech (such as the egregious language used by Howard Stern on his programs). Instead of a maximum FCC fine of \$32,500 per program, the fine is now raised to \$325,000 per incident/word, with no cap on the amount of total fines per program. Already, Howard Stern has been dropped from broadcast TV, and many other programs and networks are also cleaning up their act.
- A religious liberty measure was signed into law that reverses the current Pentagon policy preventing military chaplains from praying according to their faith – a policy that specifically kept them from using words such as “Jesus” or “Christ” in their prayers. Military chaplains once again have the freedom to pray in the manner they choose – as they did during the first 230 years of American history.
- The Fetal Farming Ban prohibits the creation of fetuses solely to be aborted for research purposes. As embryonic stem-cell research continues to falter and persists in proving unsuccessful, researchers are seeking new sources of embryonic stem

cells; this bill shuts off one significant venue by prohibiting the creation of human embryos for the purpose of harvesting their stem cells. (Incidentally, during the past decade, congressional leadership has allowed over 170 votes on pro-life issues, the overwhelming majority of which have ended favorably.)

- The Stem Cell Therapeutic and Research Act increases availability to patients of cord blood stem-cell treatments, a rich source of stem cells (a source obtained without destroying any human embryo) that has already successfully been used to treat at least 85 diseases.
- The Disaster Recovery Personal Protection Act prohibits government at any level from using federal funds to confiscate guns from law-abiding citizens during emergencies (as happened in Louisiana after Katrina, when 1,300 guns were confiscated from law-abiding citizens, directly resulting in many of those specific homes and businesses being stripped by looters).
- The defunding of a \$300 million grant to build a gay-lesbian center in Los Angeles.
- The Freedom to Display the American Flag Act ensures that an individual has the right to display the U. S. flag on residential property, even if condominium associations and homeowner groups object.
- The Child Pornography Prevention Act strengthens and enhances prosecution of child pornography. Previously, *interstate* pornography (i.e., instances where child pornography is transmitted from one state to another) was prohibited, but this Act now prohibits *intrastate* child pornography (i.e., material that stays within the same state). Additionally, it prohibits prosecutors from making additional copies to distribute to defendant's attorneys, thereby limiting its use and exposure of exploited children even in appropriate prosecutions.
- The Mount Soledad Veterans Memorial Act transfers possession of a 29-foot high cross (part of a Korean War memorial in San Diego under assault from the ACLU) to the federal government. A federal judge ruled that the cross violated the California constitution and ordered it be torn down or the City of San Diego to pay \$5,000 per day in fines until it was removed. With this Act, the Memorial will no longer be subject to that judge's opinion of the California constitution and thus will remain proudly standing, as it has for the past fifty years.

There have also been many other good bills passed during this Congress, including bills strengthening faith-based programs, limiting judicial powers and thus restraining judicial activism, etc. Furthermore, there have been some very, very close "near misses," whereby only one individual has prevented complete success. For example:

- The "Child Custody Protection Act" prohibits minor girls from being transported across state lines for an abortion without their parents' knowledge. This bill passed the House twice this session, and the Senate once; yet, despite the 4-1 margin of support from the American public, Democrat Minority Leader Harry Reid has blocked the Senate from having a Conference Committee with the House on this measure, thereby effectively killing the bill. If not for the procedural maneuver from Reid, this bill would now be law.

- The House passed a constitutional amendment to prevent flag desecration, and the vote in the Senate was 66-34 – one vote short of the two-thirds needed for final approval. This constitutional amendment would forever prohibit activist federal judges from addressing this issue.
- The House voted (for the fourth time) to abolish the immoral Death Tax, and the Senate came within one vote of passing the repeal. Only 50 Senators are needed to rescind this outrageous anti-family tax, and 59 Senators currently support the repeal; but the measure has been filibustered, and the vote to break the filibuster failed by one vote as anti-family liberals hung together to keep the filibuster alive.

Furthermore, one of the most significant (and unheralded) successes in this Congress has been the confirmation of scores of strict-constructionists to the federal bench – an achievement that may be directly attributed to increased Christian voter activity in the past two elections. Over the last four years, Christian voter turnout increased 82 percent, and the result of that increase has been apparent in the changed composition of Congress.

For example, of the 94 freshmen elected to the House in those two elections, 61 were pro-life, pro-faith, and pro-family (i.e., about two-thirds of the new members). Similarly, of the 19 freshmen elected to the Senate during that time, 15 were pro-life, pro-faith, and pro-family (about 79 percent of new members). These new Senators provided the margin of victory needed to confirm the appointment of two new strict-constructionist pro-life Justices to the Supreme Court; and the Court has already begun to change, including this year's decision reversing a pro-abortion policy implemented twenty-five years ago in 1981. In addition to these two Justices, those Senators have confirmed dozens of other strict-construction judges to the federal Courts of Appeal.

These are just some of the many pro-faith and pro-family measures that have recently passed through Congress – measures very encouraging to most Americans, but measures almost completely ignored by the national media. Nevertheless, be encouraged! Good things are happening! Therefore, encourage your friends in states across America to stay engaged in this election! The results of this year's contest will determine whether America will keep moving forward in winning the culture war, or whether we will start retreating. Be active this election! Much is at stake!

In closing, while I've approached this article from a positive viewpoint, allow me to offer a thought for those who are better motivated by negatives than positives: What will Christians say to themselves (and to the Lord) if: (1) they don't vote this election, (2) we lose pro-family champions in the House and Senate, (3) after the election, a Supreme Court Justice announces his retirement (two-thirds of the Court is now older than 65), and (4) we no longer have the necessary votes to confirm a fifth strict-constructionist Justice to the Supreme Court and thus begin bringing the culture war to its well-deserved demise? I certainly wouldn't want to try to explain that one to my friends or family (or especially to the Lord!). Just a thought for those who might need additional motivation!

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(If you do not know where your federal candidates stand on pro-family issues, you can find candidate positions at websites such as Project Vote Smart and On The Issues, where you can see what each says about abortion, judges, marriage, etc.; or you can go to

www.wallbuilders.com and click on “Election Resources and Information” at the bottom of the page for links to voting sites and other organizations that provide information about candidates’ views on pro-family issues.)