

FALL 2023

FAMILY

north carolina

CREATING A SPACE
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Coffee, Community,
and Celebrating Every Life

Attack on Childhood Innocence
The State of the Pro-Life Movement
Legislative Session Recap

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I'm here for every biological female athlete behind me. My little sister, my cousins, my teammates. Allowing biological males to compete against biological females is dangerous. I may be the first to come before you with an injury, but if this doesn't pass, I won't be the last.

— Peyton McNabb, a North Carolina high school volleyball player who was severely injured by a male student identifying as a female on an opposing team, testifying in favor of the Fairness in Women's Sports Act

This bill provides resources for the pregnant woman. It provides broad resources and a significant knowledge base to enable her, to equip her in finding a path forward — a path forward for her, and a path forward for her unborn child.

— State representative Kristin Baker, a Cabarrus County Republican and psychiatrist, on SB 20, NC's pro-life bill

If we forget what we did, we won't know who we are. I'm warning of an eradication of the American memory that could result, ultimately in an erosion of the American spirit.

— Ronald Reagan

A child who has been administered blockers and hormones for the purpose of cross-sex mimicry is not a patient, they are a victim.

— Chloe Cole, anti trans-procedures activist and former cross-sex identifier in a Twitter Post

The true cost of [casinos] will be paid by the most vulnerable among us.

— Doug Isley, a resident of Rockingham County, on proposed casino that would be located in his county under a massive gambling expansion proposal in the N.C. General Assembly

Every young American needs to learn the story of a nation with a glorious vision of unity, freedom, and dignity for all. Our story is not straightforward. It is not all good. But at least so far, it is not a tragedy. And if we can restore a common love of our nation - the kind of love that seeks to make her into her best self - it need not become one.

— Timothy Goeglein, *Toward a More Perfect Union*



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FEATURES

5 **Attack on Childhood Innocence**
 Over the last decade, the innocence of children has been under attack. Between troubling curricula in schools and strategically circumventing parental rights, children are often forced to grow up much faster than they should. Brian Balfour, Senior Vice President of Research for the John Locke Foundation, expounds on this, drawing parallels to Chairman Mao’s Cultural Revolution in China.

8 **The State of the Pro-Life Movement**
 Ever since the *Dobbs* decision overturned *Roe v. Wade* last year, abortion laws have changed drastically both in North Carolina and across the country. We’ve rounded up the latest information about where abortion stands and compiled it into a helpful infographic so that you can see the progress that has been made over the last year.

12 **Coffee, Community, and Celebrating Every Life**
 The pro-life movement is often accused of only being pro-birth, failing to pursue efforts to protect and value human life after the child is born. This is far from true and a community of entrepreneurs has found an innovative way to truly celebrate every life. These coffee shops across North Carolina are strategically designed to offer employment opportunities to people with a variety of abilities and welcome everyone who walks through their doors with open arms.

20 **2023 Legislative Session Recap**
 This has been a busy year at the General Assembly! From pro-life measures, to gambling, to parental rights, legislation has been passed that will significantly impact the future of North Carolina. NC Family President John Rustin covers the most significant pieces of legislation, offering helpful insights into the impacts they will make.

etcetera **2**
 Quotes, quips,
 and cartoons

at issue **4**
 What’s in this magazine

front lines **10**
 NC Family in action

perspective **23**
 A word from NC Family
 President John L. Rustin

DEPARTMENTS



Prioritizing What Matters

This has been quite the year so far! The North Carolina General Assembly has been busy working on bills covering everything from the sanctity of human life, to parental rights, to fairness in women’s sports, to gambling expansion, and we have been right alongside them the entire time, fighting to support good legislation and oppose bad legislation. Nationally, our country has been having heated conversations about the definition of “sex” and “gender,” what counts as free speech, and the proper role of parents in the lives of their children. We’ve hit a point in history where cultural challenges are coming at us from every angle, and, as Christians seeking to be salt and light in the culture, we have to be ready and willing to stand up for the issues we truly care about – speaking the truth in love.

In this issue, you will find articles addressing some of the most pressing issues we’ve been standing up for this year. Brian Balfour, the Senior Vice President of Research for the John Locke Foundation, has written a piece highlighting the importance of parental rights, especially when it comes to maintaining the innocence of children. In an age where children are being inundated with woke ideologies and inappropriate topics at schools, prioritizing parental rights and protecting children’s innocence is critical.

If you’ve followed the news in North Carolina over the last year, you have seen that the abortion industry has been changing rapidly. After the *Dobbs* decision, which overturned *Roe v. Wade* last year, there have been laws and lawsuits attempting to either protect life or protect abortion. We’ve taken a look at where abortion stands today in both North Carolina and the United States and created an infographic so that you can see the progress that has been made to protect the lives of the unborn and their mothers. The right to life is a fundamental priority, and we are excited to see so many states standing up to protect it.

My contribution to this edition features what I have fondly dubbed my “Coffee Tour,” where I traveled to four unique coffee shops across the state. As a coffee lover, this was a bit of a dream come true for me, but what I loved even more was the unifying goal of these coffee shops. Each of them is uniquely designed to offer dignified employment opportunities to people with intellectual or developmental disabilities (IDD). During these trips, I got to taste some amazing coffee, meet some amazing people, and witness the amazing work that they are doing. The way a society treats its most vulnerable members is a good indication of the society as a whole, and I absolutely loved seeing how these businesses prioritized the lives and dignity of the IDD community.

Finally, as I mentioned earlier, the General Assembly has been debating a wide variety of issues this spring and summer, and NC Family President John Rustin has provided an informative recap on the actions our state lawmakers have taken on some critically important issues. During this session, our state has made substantial strides in defending unborn life, honoring parental rights, expanding school choice, and protecting children from the dangerous effects of gender-affirming drugs and surgeries, among other things. At the same time, these same state lawmakers have expanded predatory gambling and have given serious consideration to the legalization of marijuana in North Carolina. The 2023 Session has been full of ups and downs, and this article chronicles this year’s legislative roller coaster ride.

Thank you for reading *Family North Carolina*. We hope you enjoy the content found inside this edition. Please reach out to us at NC Family to request more copies to share with friends, family, neighbors, churches, and more! 🏠

AnnaScott

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Internet

Visit us online at NCFamily.org, where you can read selected stories from this issue, including endnotes. Publication of website addresses of other organizations featured in our stories does not constitute endorsement by the North Carolina Family Policy Council of those groups or the contents of those sites.

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Attack on childhood innocence

By Brian Balfour

“Innocent is a neutral word. It shows a lack of class awareness.”

The above quote says a lot about the current cultural divide in North Carolina and across the country regarding the teaching of gender ideology and sexuality to young school children. North Carolina is one of many states introducing Parents’ Bill of Rights [legislation](#) to ban such topics from the curriculum in early grades.

Supporters of the bill argue that it’s wholly inappropriate for such topics to be introduced to children at such a young age, in part spoiling childhood innocence. But to opponents of such bills, childhood innocence itself is problematic.



In her book [“Red Scarf Girl: A Memoir of the Cultural Revolution,”](#) author Ji Li Jiang recounts her childhood in China at the dawn of Chairman Mao’s Cultural Revolution. In one passage, she describes the time she and her friend An Yi joined a mob of communist revolutionaries in destroying the signs of businesses in their community that failed to sufficiently display pro-revolutionary language.

“Here’s another one. The Innocent Child Toy Shop,’ An Yi exclaimed. ‘Innocent is a neutral word. It shows a lack of class awareness. What should we change it to? How about the Red Child Toy Shop?’”

At even a young age, Jiang and her friends understood that to be innocent would show a lack of revolutionary spirit. One must be well aware of the concept of class status and choose sides.

There’s no room for childhood innocence when there’s a revolution to wage.

Jiang and millions of other Chinese children joined millions of adults in Chairman Mao’s campaign to destroy the “Four Olds” and usher in a new society.

“Our beloved Chairman Mao had started the Cultural Revolution in May. Every day since then on the radio we heard about the need to end the evil and pernicious influences of the ‘Four Olds’: old ideas, old culture, old customs, and old habits,” Jiang wrote. “These remnants of old society interfered with the creation of a modern, socialist society.”

While history may not be repeating precisely, we’re certainly hearing a lot of it rhyming.

Children at a very young age must be introduced to the new, modern culture, ideas, and habits, argue today’s “woke” teachers and their allies. Old ideas and habits, like the traditional nuclear family, biological sex, and men not being able to get pregnant, must be [smashed and replaced](#).

And because the family unit is the strongest vehicle for passing down old ideas, culture, customs, and habits, the bond between parent and child must be severed in order to disrupt the transmission of these “Four Olds.”

Indeed, perhaps the loudest objection to the Parents’ Bill of Rights is that the bill would “force” teachers to “out” students to their parents if they are experiencing gender or sexuality confusion. One legislator expressed concern that the requirements of the bill would force young people to be [“outed to an abusive parent.”](#)

[NOTE: This article was originally published [here](#), and is being reprinted with the permission of the author]

A Parents’ Bill of Rights is a critical measure to fight against the forces that want to sever the ties and trust between parent and child and subvert the ideas, culture, habits, and customs you would like to instill in the next generation.

Notice the positioning of parents as the enemy of their own children, and woke government school employees being the trusted ally. When Jiang discovered her family was considered to be a part of the “wrong” class, she was so ashamed she went to a government office to change her name. The government official was pleased to hear this news, and in response said to her, “tell your parents you’ll follow Chairman Mao, not them.”

Creating mistrust between children and their own parents is critical to destroying the Four Olds.

Relatedly, under Mao’s Cultural Revolution, families’ class status was placed into one of two groups: red and black. “Red” families were considered to be revolutionary, while “black” families were enemies of the revolution, and included landlords, rich peasants, counterrevolutionaries, criminals, and rightists. Members of these categories were considered “the worst enemies of Communism and the common people,” wrote Jiang.

The similarities to today should be readily clear, but instead of more economically based categories, identity is used to distinguish the “red” from “black.” Those members of the disfavored identities are compelled to feel guilt and shame, and are identified as perpetrators of the Four Olds. Either confess to your “privilege” and enemy status and join the revolution or face scorn and social ostracization. “Leniency for confession, severity for resistance” was the motto for Mao’s roving Red Guard seeking out class enemies to punish, wrote Jiang.

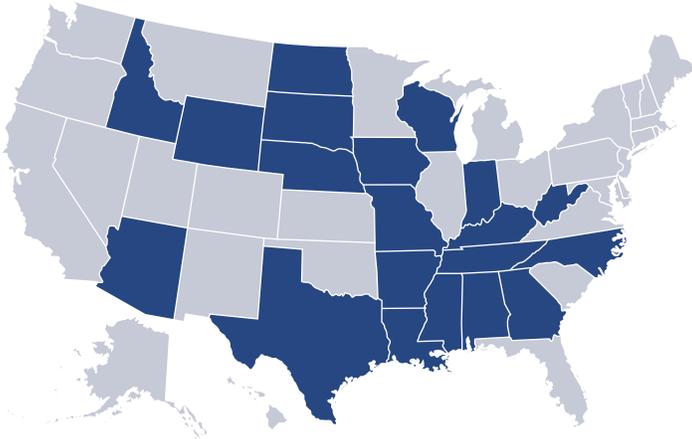
Childhood innocence is too neutral, and being neutral is not sufficiently revolutionary. Neutrality also defaults to the status quo of the Four Olds, which is unacceptable for today’s “woke” movement. A Parents’ Bill of Rights is a critical measure to fight against the forces that want to sever the ties and trust between parent and child and subvert the ideas, culture, habits, and customs you would like to instill in the next generation. 



Brian Balfour is the Senior Vice President of Research for the John Locke Foundation

Abortion in the United States

This summer marked one year since *Roe v. Wade* was overturned! Here are some of the ways that abortion has changed across the country.



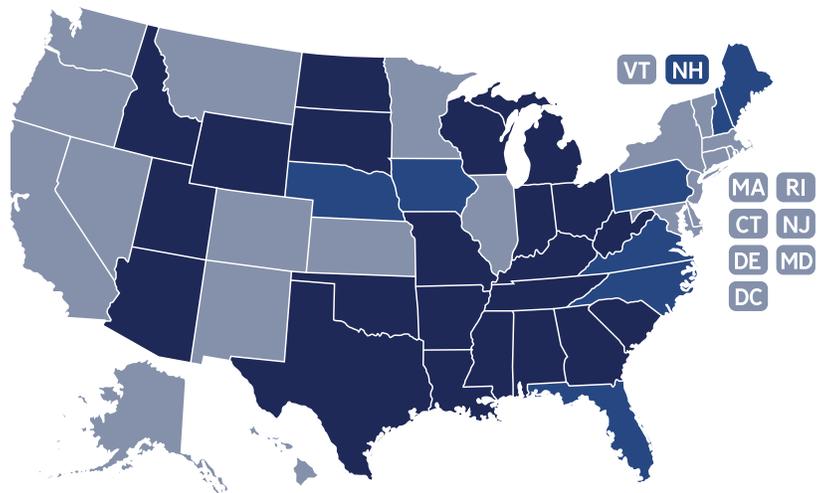
More than **25,000** fewer legal abortions in the U.S. in the nine months following the *Dobbs* decision in June, 2022.

[Data as of June 15, 2023 from the Society of Family Planning](#)

Pro-Life Legislation

Since the *Dobbs* decision, **20 states** have enacted laws, or have laws that took effect, increasing abortion restrictions, some even enacting a complete ban.

Data from Family Policy Alliance



“The Constitution does not confer a right to abortion; *Roe* and *Casey* are overruled; and the authority to regulate abortion is returned to the people and their elected representatives.”

Syllabus for *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, June 24th, 2022

Where States Stand Now

MANY PROTECTIONS

These states provide robust protection for children in the womb, and they generally respect parental rights and help families thrive through their laws and policies.

ID, WY, UT, AZ, ND, SD, OK, TX, WI, MO, AR, LA, MS, TN, AL, GA, SC, KY, WV, OH, IN

SOME PROTECTIONS

These states have some abortion restrictions, but they will also have a journey ahead before their laws and policies truly reflect the value of human life, both in the womb and in families and communities.

ME, NH, PA, VA, NC, FL, IA, NE

FEW PROTECTIONS

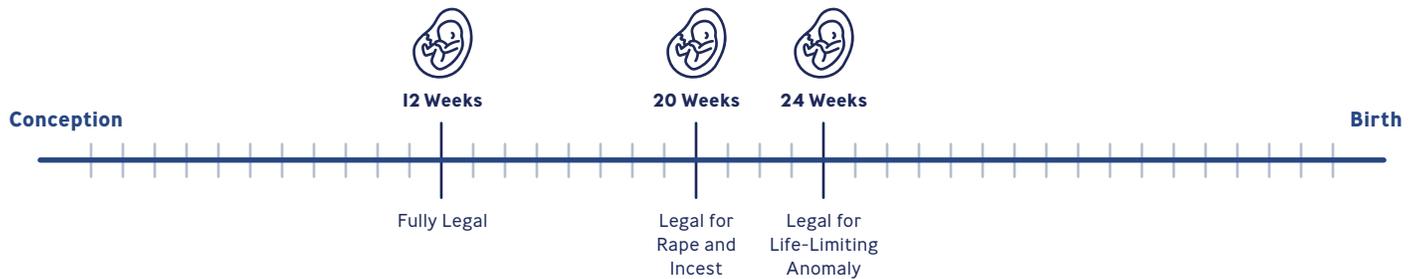
These states provide comparatively few protections for unborn children. Some have even established a so-called “right to choose,” guaranteeing access to abortion.

WA, OR, NV, CA, MT, CO, NM, MN, KS, IL, MI, NY, VT, MA, RI, CT, NJ, DE, MD, DC, AK, HI

Data from Family Policy Alliance

Abortion in North Carolina

This spring, the North Carolina General Assembly enacted Session Law 2023-14, also known as Senate Bill 20—Care for Women, Children, and Families Act. This law reduces the legal time for abortions from 20 weeks to 12 weeks, with limited exceptions including when the mother’s life is at risk. While many pro-life advocates were calling for a bill to protect unborn life at conception or when a fetal heartbeat is detected, the passage of SB 20 will still save thousands of lives and support women, children, and families across the state.



Prohibits partial-birth abortion and abortions on basis of race, sex, or Down syndrome diagnosis



72 hour waiting period after in-person counseling before abortion can take place



Conscience protections for healthcare providers



Protects babies born alive after a failed abortion



Increased paid parental leave for state employees



Mother has the right to view ultrasound before abortion



Money for maternity homes in NC



Expanded Safe Surrender of Infants program



Increased medicaid coverage for pregnancy care



Resources to expand childcare access



Increased resources for foster care and adoption



Unlawful to provide abortion-inducing drugs through mail or internet

This summer, NC Family’s weekly radio show and podcast featured a series of interviews highlighting some of the pro-life work being done across North Carolina. Scan the QR code with your phone or visit [NCFamily.org/family-policy-matters-radio-show](https://www.ncfamily.org/family-policy-matters-radio-show) to learn more!



ON THE FRONT LINES



Raleigh and Greenville Dinners

This past spring, NC Family welcomed our supporters and friends to dinner events in the Greenville and Raleigh areas. Coach Joseph Kennedy, who recently won his prayer case at the US Supreme Court, spoke in Greenville about his seven-year legal battle that resulted from his commitment to say a private prayer at the end of each game that he coached. In Raleigh, award-winning creative professional Ryan Bomberger shared his story and the inherent value of every human life. You can watch both of these presentations at NCFamily.org/past-events.



2

Salt and Light Seminars

This spring, we had the pleasure of hosting a number of Salt & Light Seminars, welcoming high school students from across the state. After spending time learning about how Christians can effectively engage in advocacy and public policy, students had the opportunity to go down to the General Assembly and meet with their representatives.



3

Down at the General Assembly

Whether testifying at a committee meeting or speaking at a press conference, John, Jere, and Sharon have been busy advocating for or against a variety of bills relating to issues such as the sanctity of human life, protecting women's sports, gambling, and prohibiting transgender procedures on minors. You can learn more about our work on these issues and others like them at [NCFamily.org/blog](https://www.ncfamily.org/blog) or in the 2023 Legislative Session Summary article in this issue of *Family North Carolina*.



4

The Newest Members of Our Staff

This spring, **Sharon Sullivan** joined us as our Government Relations Associate! She has been practicing as a nurse in Wake County hospitals for the past five years and is eager to use the knowledge she has gained through her work as an RN on important health legislation at the General Assembly. In addition, **Adamo Manfra** has joined our team as the Director of Research and Education. His diverse work experience includes 6 ½ years of active-duty service in the Marine Corps, graduate theological studies, faith-based leadership training, and teaching middle and high school classes. Finally, **Lucy Conley** has joined us as our new Administrative Assistant. She graduated this spring with a BA in Psychology from North Carolina State University. We are so excited to see the NC Family family grow!



Coffee, Community, and Celebrating Every Life

By AnnaScott Cross

At any given point before 3 p.m. each day, I probably have a cup of coffee on hand. Hot, cold, fancy, or simple, I am a coffee person. In addition to my passion for coffee, I also have a passion for public health, entrepreneurship, and creative problem solving. Imagine my delight when I heard that there are coffee shops that intentionally employ people with a disability. I recently got the chance to visit several of them and learn more about how they work. Please join me on what I have fondly dubbed my Coffee Tour.

Challenges Faced by the IDD Community

Before we launch into these unique coffee shops, let's talk about why they matter. There are approximately 6.5 million people with an intellectual disability in the United States, and the resources available to them are greatly reduced after they finish high school.¹ The intellectual and developmental disability (IDD) community

includes a wide range of abilities and challenges, such as communication, interpersonal skills, and occupational skills, which can limit their ability to participate in everyday activities, including employment. One study found that the unemployment rate for adults with an IDD was more than twice as high as the rate for those without a disability.²

For the average adult, a large portion of their sense of purpose and social interactions stems from their job. Combining the high unemployment rate for adults with an IDD with the fact that there aren't many programs designed to accommodate them, it can be a challenge for them to participate with and engage in society.

Individuals with an IDD are human beings and, like all human beings, they need meaningful social interaction. So, what's available for them once they finish high school?

¹ <https://www.specialolympics.org/about/intellectual-disabilities/what-is-intellectual-disability>

² <https://www.specialolympics.org/our-work/research/national-snapshot-of-adults-with-intellectual-disabilities-in-the-labor-force>



Employment for the IDD Community

While there are some challenges that a person with an IDD may face in the work environment, the saddest part about this situation is that some of their biggest barriers to employment are other people's perceptions of their abilities, not their actual abilities. This includes discrimination, stigma, employers' and employees' attitudes, management style, and working environment.¹ The IDD community is made up of some of the most wonderful people I've ever met, each of whom can make an excellent addition to almost any company.

¹ <https://europepmc.org/article/med/36214017>

² <https://www.bittyandbeauscoffee.com/about/our-story/>

Over the last decade, people have started to realize this and intentionally found solutions. In 2016, Amy and Ben Wright opened Bitty & Beau's Coffee in Wilmington, North Carolina. They designed their business model to employ people with IDD's after two of their children were born with Down syndrome. The coffee shop quickly received national attention, and has now grown to include 25 shops across 11 states with over 400 employees.² This idea quickly caught on, inspiring many others to start similar businesses. On my Coffee Tour, I had the privilege of visiting four coffee shops right here in North Carolina inspired by the desire to lower the unemployment rate for the IDD community.

Miller's Brew Coffee Shop

LOCATION: Fayetteville, NC

OPENED: 2023

CO-FOUNDER/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Kim Molnar

DRINK RECOMMENDATION: Espresso Milkshake

Miller's Brew Coffee Shop is a part of a larger organization known as Miller's Crew. Kim and Karl Molnar started this organization in 2016 after realizing just how few career opportunities there were for adults with an IDD. Kim is a speech therapist, and their son, Miller, has autism, so they have seen up close the barriers facing the IDD community. Miller's Crew has now grown to offer vocational training labs for adolescents, a food truck (which serves as a mobile training lab), and most recently, a coffee shop. In addition to employment opportunities, they also offer bimonthly parent support nights, and are working to build partnerships with other businesses in their area so that their employees have places they can work once they've finished the job training program through Miller's Crew.



Moji Coffee

LOCATION: Winston-Salem, NC

OPENED: 2019

PROGRAM DIRECTOR: Dan Wellman

DRINK RECOMMENDATION: Iced Chai Latte

This coffee shop was started in 2017 when a group of parents of children with an IDD were concerned about the lack of opportunities available to their children after they finished high school. They formed a coalition along with Tim Flavin, a community advocate and Special Olympics coach, and Natalie Hughes, a community advocate from the restaurant industry. They opened their doors in 2019, and now they have a five-component training program focusing on life skills, technological skills, communication, comprehension, and integration/adaptability. They also work one-on-one with employees to meet them where they are and help them become the best they can be. Now some of their original Mojistas (what they call their baristas) have been promoted to be job coaches or have gone on to pursue further career opportunities. In addition to delicious coffee, their dog-friendly location in downtown Winston-Salem also sells art and jewelry made by individuals with an IDD.

Awaken Coffee

LOCATION: Greenville, NC

OPENED: 2023

PRESIDENT/CO-FOUNDER: Carol Preston

VICE PRESIDENT/CO-FOUNDER: Jennifer Dyson

DRINK RECOMMENDATION: Iced Mocha

Carol and Jennifer started their vision for this organization in 2018 after Carol had visited Bitty & Beau's coffee shop in Wilmington. Carol has a nephew who has Down syndrome, and Jennifer has a son with autism, so both were familiar with the challenge of finding employment opportunities for the IDD community. They have worked tirelessly since then to make this vision a reality. Even in the short amount of time Awaken Coffee has been open, they have found their employees are making better eye contact, communicating more effectively, smiling more, and taking more initiative, even at home. The Greenville community has embraced them, and they are already thinking about how they can continue to grow and expand in the future.



A Special Blend

LOCATION: Greensboro, NC

OPENED: 2018

BOARD PRESIDENT: Deedee Ungetheim

DRINK RECOMMENDATION: Mango Smoothie

A Special Blend began in 2016, when Deedee had the opportunity to visit Bitty & Beau's in Wilmington. She was stunned by their work, especially as the parent of a child with a rare syndrome and her experience working with a Christian organization for high school kids with disabilities. On the drive home, she realized she needed to start something similar in Greensboro, and thus A Special Blend was formed, creating 'a special blend' of people with all types of abilities and disabilities. Their structure includes monthly goal setting, equipping employees with life skills and career skills, and strategically adjusting to create a work environment that accommodates different needs. Now they have dreams of expanding, potentially including a second location or kiosk locations, catering coffee at events, and starting a food truck.



Why This Model Works

It's true that there can be some job skills that some individuals with an IDD do not have, but there are many things they can do if we are willing to meet them where they are. In many ways they are far more gifted in what is truly important. They are some of the friendliest, kindest, and most loving people I have ever met. Working at a coffee shop gives them the opportunity to do what they're already good at while learning new skills.

Clearly, this model is effective. There are coffee shops like the ones mentioned above across the country. Bitty & Beau's now has 25 locations nationwide, and North Carolina has at least 11 coffee shops that share in this vision. Much of this movement can be traced back to Bitty & Beau's when they opened their first location in Wilmington.

Building Career and Life Skills

All of these coffee shops include training programs for their employees that are intentionally designed to meet them where they are and help them grow at their own pace. They offer a safe and encouraging environment that allows individuals with an IDD to learn new things. As we all know, getting a new job is often largely based on past work experience, and these programs enable these

individuals to get that initial experience so they can go on to pursue new opportunities in the future.

Bigger than this, though, is the opportunity it provides for individuals with an IDD to experience another part of life. They have the chance to work hard and earn an income, and it gives them something to talk about when people ask how their day went. There are so many things that these beautiful people are capable of doing, and coffee shops like these celebrate abilities rather than fixating on disabilities. This community has been told what they can't do, and it's time to start focusing on what they can do.

The Opportunity to be Social

As mentioned above, after high school, there are few opportunities for individuals with an IDD to engage with their community, especially if they are unemployed. The social skills they learn and practice every day at these coffee shops translate to the rest of their lives, with parents commenting that their children are making better eye contact, smiling more, taking more initiative, and communicating better. In addition to social skills, every person I interviewed mentioned the beautiful relationships that have formed between staff members, volunteers, and customers. They have truly created some of the most welcoming environments I have been in.

Coffee Shops Across North Carolina



Creating a Special Blend of People

One of the most amazing components of these businesses is that they bring people with and without an IDD together to build a community. Deedee shared the story of one of the employees at A Special Blend who had been kept behind closed doors at a previous job. In situations like these, as Deedee explained, "Everybody misses out." She added that creating an environment where people with and without an IDD work together gives the community "a wonderful opportunity to interact with a segment of the population they often just don't."

Oftentimes, people without a disability can feel uncomfortable interacting with someone who has a disability, but this is largely due to the fact that the average person doesn't have the opportunity to interact with a person with a disability on a regular basis. Facilitating these interactions helps both parties be more comfortable and confident talking to all kinds of people.

These coffee shops have given their employees the opportunity to shine, all while creating a safe and welcoming environment for everyone who walks through their doors. Parents made multiple comments about how comforting it was to be able to drop their child off at work and know that they would be safe and taken care of while still living a rich life.

Worth the Work

While these coffee shops are incredible, there are still many challenges that the leaders and staff members must overcome. For example, many of these employees struggle with transportation. If they aren't able to drive or don't have someone to take them, they might have to navigate public transportation or get an Uber, which can be expensive and tricky with schedules. From a leadership position, these coffee shops have to be run a bit differently than the average coffee shop. Managers must be more hands-on, and they generally need more employees than usual for each shift. In addition to this, there are the different accommodations that they make to enable their employees to have as much independence as possible. Despite the extra work, these organizations have created a beautiful culture, and it is clearly making an impact.

What People are Saying



GOOGLE REVIEW: Awaken Coffee

"We were greeted by some amazingly friendly people and showered with smiles and brightness from behind the counter. The coffee was hot and delicious but the best part was the community vibe I experienced. I walked out of there with a smile on my face and in my heart ❤️."

— Kelly B.

GOOGLE REVIEW: A Special Blend

"I absolutely love this place and everything that it stands for! The people are amazing and the coffee is as well ❤️."

— Tiffani B.

GOOGLE REVIEW: Moji Coffee

"This place is awesome!! The shop is so lovely and bright, it was so cool to look at all the art up on the walls. The coffee was absolutely delicious, strong and not overly sweet. Our pup loves their treats and their pup of joy. We will absolutely come back for more!"

— Susan B.

GOOGLE REVIEW: Miller's Brew

"Amazing coffee and an even better staff! Everyone is so friendly and so patient! I couldn't immediately decide what I wanted and was met with nothing but kindness and a smile."

— Keira B.

Coffee With a Purpose

These coffee shops are doing amazing work, and are changing lives one cup of coffee at a time. If you are interested in learning more, check out the coffee shop closest to you! Whether you donate financially, volunteer, or even just drop in to get a cup of coffee, you can play a part in celebrating the value of every individual and be a part of their welcoming community.

In the words of Deedee, "Everyone deserves a place to belong." 🏡



Anna Scott Cross is the Communications Director for the North Carolina Family Policy Council and is Editor of Family North Carolina.



Dr. Jean Twenge, Author and Professor of Psychology at San Diego State University



Traci DeVette Griggs: Talk about what you think is causing this increase in depression, mental health issues, among our younger people because this is just alarming.

Jean Twenge: It's very, very concerning. So when I first started seeing these increases, I had absolutely no idea what might be causing them. It was very clear it wasn't economic issues because the US economy was improving quite a bit between 2011 and 2019, for example. So that left other things, and I was trying to think of something that happened around that time that then reverberated throughout the decade.

Then I realized from some other polling data, the end of 2012 was the first time that the majority of Americans owned a smartphone. It's also around the time that social media use among teens moved from relatively optional to something that almost all teens, like 85% or so, were doing every single day. So the same time period when the way teens spent their time outside of school fundamentally shifted.

Erika Bachiochi, Senior Fellow at the Abigail Adams Institute



Traci DeVette Griggs: I dare say that in some circles, the word "feminism" might be interpreted in a bad way. Do you understand why that is, and should we have that sense of that word?

Erika Bachiochi: Yeah, there's actually been really good polls recently that have showed that most women do not understand themselves to be feminists, they don't call themselves feminists. Yet at the same poll, the vast majority of people, both men and women, just as you said in your introduction, would say that women and men should have equal rights.

So there's a way in which feminism is a word that people don't want to associate with, and I think there's good reason for that in the sense that modern feminism, I think, is really a cause of a lot of our ills in society today, and the way that it's really taken a pretty false understanding of both equality and freedom, which are really the things I look at, but also with regard to rights as well. And so I think without reclaiming an older understanding of both equality, freedom, and rights, then we're going to see a lot of reaction against even women's rights potentially. So we've got to really re-ground those on a much better basis.

Dr. Stan Goldfarb, Board Chair at "Do No Harm"



Traci DeVette Griggs: Are you saying that some of the people that originated these kinds of treatments aren't in full support of what's happening these days?

Stan Goldfarb: Well, let me just say that in Europe in three countries now, in Norway, in Finland, and in the United Kingdom, this whole approach to supporting children that decide to go through this process has been now banned, and it's only going to be used under very extreme circumstances and only in the context of a clinical trial. And the reason for this is that the original protocols that were proposed have been abandoned by a number of different organizations and the whole process has been really corrupted is the only way to put it. And what was originally a process to deal with a very unusual condition in which very young children express so-called gender dysphoria from very early periods in their lives and then those children persisted that approach, were evaluated carefully by psychiatrists, were found not to have other mental disturbances, and were started down this path. This has transformed into a situation where, particularly in the United States, there's virtually no careful psychological evaluation. It's been performed much more commonly on young girls, who rather

than have a lifelong sense of this so-called gender dysphoria develop this right before they go through puberty or in the early stages of puberty. And these children have not been screened carefully and treated for underlying mental conditions before they're begun on a path that can eventuate into surgical procedures that I mentioned.

Tim Goeglein, Author of *Toward a More Perfect Union* and Vice President of External and Government Relations for Focus on the Family



Traci DeVette Griggs:
So let me ask your opinion, with the rates of suicide especially among our young adults just going through the roof, do you feel like there's a connection? Is there a hopelessness in this kind of philosophy that's being put forth through our public schools?

Tim Goeglein: I believe very strongly that we are living in an era of moral relativism. That is the cancer upon our body politic. It's the cancer upon the teaching of American and western history and of our culture, and I think we have to stand up to this lack of teaching and propaganda if we are to preserve America.

There is a writer, Bari Weiss, and she says very simply keeping the spirit of liberty alive in an age of creeping illiberalism is nothing less than our moral obligation. Everything depends on it, and I think she's exactly right. To the heart of your question, I think we are now in a battle for the soul of our nation, and I believe firmly that it begins in our home, which will then hopefully transform our schools and restore the proper teaching of American history and civics.



Family Policy Matters is a 15-minute radio show and podcast hosted by Traci DeVette Griggs, featuring interviews with local, state, and national experts on a wide range of policy issues impacting North Carolina families. *Family Policy Matters* airs on over 20 radio stations across North Carolina, and is available as a podcast on your favorite podcast app. You can listen and read full transcripts of every episode of *Family Policy Matters* at NCFamily.org.



Family Policy Matters is available as a podcast on your favorite podcast app!

SEARCH FOR "NC Family's *Family Policy Matters*."

Radio Stations Airing *Family Policy Matters*

Belmont/Charlotte	WCGC 1270 AM	Sunday, 11:45 AM
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Charlotte/Gastonia	WCRU 960 AM/ 105.7 FM	Saturday, 6:00 PM
Charlotte/Harrisburg	WOCR 1540 AM/ 88.3 FM	Saturday, 3:45 PM
Durham	WDRU 105.5 FM	Saturday, 6:00 AM
Fayetteville	WCLN 105.7/ 107.3 FM	Saturday, 7:00 AM
Greensboro/ Winston-Salem	WTRU 830 AM/ 97.7 FM	Saturday, 6:00 AM
Raleigh/Durham	WETC 540 AM	Saturday, 11:00 AM
Raleigh	WDRU 1030 AM/ 105.7 FM	Saturday, 6:30 AM
Rocky Mount	WLQC 103.1 FM	Sunday, 11:00 PM
Salisbury	WOCR 93.3 FM	Saturday, 3:45 PM
Sanford	WLHC 103.1 FM	Sunday, 11:00 PM
Taylorsville	WACB 860 AM	Wednesday, 5:00 PM
Troy	WJRM 1390 AM	Sunday, 8:15 AM
Wake Forest	EPIC 103.5 FM	Saturday, 1:00 PM
Wilmington	WDVV 89.7 FM	Sunday, 5:30 AM & 6:00PM
Winston-Salem/ Piedmont Triad Area	WPIP 880 AM	Sunday, 4:15 PM

2023 Legislative Session Summary

By John Rustin

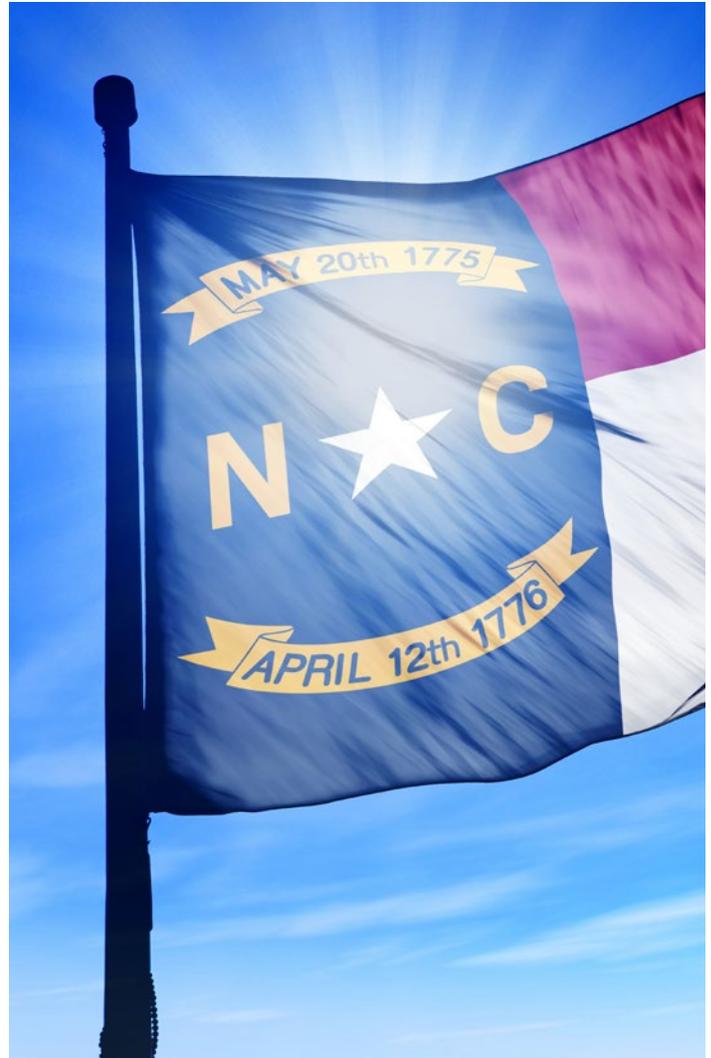
The 2023 Legislative Session of the N.C. General Assembly proved to be an incredibly busy, intense, and drama-filled session with quite a number of “highs” and “lows.” State lawmakers returned to Raleigh on January 11, 2023, to jump-start the session by swearing in members and electing officers. Senator Phil Berger (R-Rockingham) was elected to a seventh term as President Pro Tempore of the N.C. Senate, while Rep. Tim Moore (R-Cleveland) was chosen to serve a record fifth consecutive term as House Speaker. These elections set the stage for a showdown on many issues between the GOP-led legislature and Democratic Governor Roy Cooper.

VETO-PROOF SUPERMAJORITY

The N.C. Constitution requires a supermajority three-fifths vote of members present and voting in each chamber to override a gubernatorial veto. This means that if all members are present and voting, 30 votes are required in the 50-member State Senate, and 72 votes are required in the 120-member State House to override a veto. When the Regular Session began in earnest on January 25, Republicans held the requisite 30 seats in the Senate but were one seat short of a supermajority in the House. This made overrides possible in the Senate but uncertain in the House unless one or more Democrats voted to override. This all changed in early April when Mecklenburg County Democrat Rep. Trisha Cotham switched parties and gave Republicans a 72nd seat in the House and the ability to override Gov. Cooper’s veto at will. And override they have. In fact, the Republican supermajorities have overridden every bill vetoed by Governor Roy Cooper during the 2023 Legislative Session – 19 in total, as of this writing.

2023 BUDGET BILL

A major initiative every session is the passage of the state budget. While the state’s fiscal year begins July 1, the General Assembly did not approve this year’s budget bill, [HB 259—2023 Appropriations Act](#), until September 22, 2023. The 625-page budget bill appropriates just shy of \$30 billion in the 2023-24 state fiscal year and close to \$31 billion in 2024-25. As would be expected with such a voluminous piece of legislation, the 2023 Budget contains a plethora of spending items as well as a number of significant policy changes, some of which are mentioned below.



SANCTITY OF LIFE

One of the most significant pieces of legislation enacted over the veto of the Governor was [SB 20—Care for Women, Children, and Families Act](#). This 46-page bill was sought following the U.S. Supreme Court’s historic decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*, which struck down *Roe v. Wade* and returned decision-making authority about abortion to elected representatives. SB 20 reduced the legal timeframe for most abortions in N.C. from 20 weeks to 12 weeks gestation, except in cases of rape and incest, when the life of the mother is at risk, and when an unborn child has been diagnosed with what the bill defines as a “life-limiting anomaly.” The bill also:

- Bans “partial-birth abortion;”
- Prohibits “eugenic” abortions sought because of the race or sex of the unborn child or a diagnosis of Down syndrome;

- Enacts the “Born Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act” requiring health care providers to care for babies born alive after a failed abortion attempt;
- Requires abortion clinics to be inspected annually and meet the same standards as ambulatory surgical centers;
- Establishes more detailed informed consent requirements for surgical abortions, chemical abortions, and abortions involving a “life-limiting anomaly;”
- Makes it unlawful for abortion-inducing drugs to be provided through the mail or over the internet; and
- Provides millions in funding to enhance foster care, adoption, child care, and other vital services in North Carolina.

The 2023 Budget made good on the funding commitment in SB 20, by appropriating \$160 million over the next two years to protect and provide care and resources to unborn babies and mothers facing unplanned and crisis pregnancies. The budget also appropriates \$6.5 million in each of the next two years to the **Carolina Pregnancy Care Fellowship** (aka LifeLink Carolina) to provide grants to pregnancy care centers to purchase durable medical equipment—including ultrasound machines—and to provide training and other services. The budget bill, House Bill 259, also provides \$1.5 million this year and next to the pro-life nonprofit organization **Human Coalition** to help fund its statewide Continuum of Care Program.

Furthermore, while state law already **prohibits state tax dollars from being used to pay for abortions**, HB 259 contains a new provision that also prohibits the state from renewing, extending, or entering into contracts “for the provision of family planning services, pregnancy prevention activities, or adolescent parenting programs with any provider that performs abortions.” This will help to ensure that state funds are not indirectly being used by abortion providers to fund abortions.

PARENTS’ RIGHTS & GENDER ISSUES

Three other bills enacted by the General Assembly over the veto of the Governor are designed to honor parental rights and protect the health, safety, and welfare of children and families. **SB 49—Parents’ Bill of Rights** clarifies and codifies the rights of parents to direct the upbringing of their children, especially in the areas of education and healthcare, by ensuring that parents have ready access to information about what their children are being taught in school and requiring parental consent before medical services are provided to children. Of particular note, SB 49 requires that parents are notified “prior to any changes in the name or pronoun used for a student in school records or by school personnel.” The bill also prohibits instruction on “gender identity, sexual activity, or sexuality” in kindergarten through 4th grade.

HB 574—Fairness in Women’s Sports Act requires sports teams in middle school, high school, and at the collegiate level to be designated as male, female, or co-ed on the basis of biological

sex and prohibits biological males from participating on female sports teams. **HB 808—Gender Transition/Minors** prevents the administration of puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones, and gender transition surgeries on minors, and it provides broad conscience protections for healthcare practitioners who do not wish to participate in these often irreversible and experimental procedures. HB 808 also prevents state taxpayer dollars from being used to pay for any of these gender transition procedures.

State lawmakers also approved a provision in **HB 8—Various Statutory Changes** to enact the “Pornography Age Verification Act,” or “PAVE Act,” which requires **age verification for access to pornographic websites** and has been effective in a number of other states in reducing the incidents of minors accessing pornographic websites. Additionally, **SB 579—Prevent Harm to Children** increases the scope and penalties for disseminating obscenity to minors and for the sexual exploitation of minors.

EDUCATION

On the education front, a provision in the 2023 Budget Bill greatly expands North Carolina’s **Opportunity Scholarship Program** to ensure that all students are eligible to participate in the state’s school choice program, provided that funding is available. The measure directs that grant amounts are determined on a sliding scale based upon household income, and it significantly increases state funding in future years to provide grants to as many children as possible (see graphic below).

Opportunity Scholarship Eligibility

	Maximum Household Income (adjusted each year)			
Federal free & reduced lunch eligibility	To receive full tuition up to yearly allocation	To receive 90% of tuition	To receive 60% of tuition	To receive 45% of tuition
	up to 100%	100%–200%	200%–450%	<450%

Note: Allocation from the State is per pupil

Opportunity Scholarship Funding





The Budget Bill also establishes the **School of Civic Life and Leadership** at UNC-Chapel Hill to provide course opportunities for students on the “development of democratic competencies informed by American history and the American political tradition, with the purpose of fostering public discourse and civil engagement necessary to promote democracy and benefit society.” The budget also contains a provision that enables **home school students** the opportunity to sit for Advanced Placement and PSAT exams at a public school within their local school district.

State lawmakers also enacted **two charter school bills** over the veto of the Governor. **HB 219—Charter School Omnibus** expands enrollment rules for charter schools and also permits counties to use property tax revenue for charter school capital costs. **HB 618—Charter School Review Board** creates a new Board that is charged—in place of the State Board of Education—with reviewing and authorizing charter school applications. The State Board retains authority over the rulemaking and funding of charter schools and can hear appeals from decisions of the Charter School Review Board.

One education measure that passed the House but was not considered in the Senate was **HB 96—NC REACH Act**. REACH stands for “Reclaiming College Education on America’s Constitutional Heritage.” This bill would have required three credit hours of instruction on American Government and our nation’s founding documents in order to receive a baccalaureate degree from a constituent institution of the UNC system or an associate’s degree from a community college.

GAMBLING

One of the big “lows” of the session was the passage of **SB 347—Sports Wagering/Horse Racing Wagering**, which legalizes gambling on amateur, electronic, collegiate, and professional sporting events and effectively turns every computer, tablet, mobile phone, and smart TV in the state into a potential gambling device. The bill also authorizes parimutuel wagering on horse racing. NC Family strongly opposed this bill, because it will inevitably lead to an increase in gambling addiction and related social and economic problems.

And, if that were not enough, one of the major items contributing to the delay in the passage of the state budget was an effort by legislative leaders and the gambling industry to legalize **four commercial gambling casinos** and tens of thousands of **video lottery terminals (VLTs)** across the state. Fortunately, this effort was abandoned after weeks of intense lobbying when it became apparent that the votes did not exist in either the State House or State Senate to approve the budget if the gambling expansion proposal was included. An attempt to coerce support from Democratic lawmakers by pairing casinos and VLTs with Medicaid expansion fell flat after Democrats in both chambers rejected the effort. In the end, a coalition of Republicans and Democrats in the House and Senate who faithfully stood against gambling expansion, proved to be too high of a hurdle for gambling proponents to overcome.

MARIJUANA

Another bill that failed passage was **SB 3—NC Compassionate Care Act**. This was one of the first bills introduced in the N.C. Senate and would have established an extensive framework for the licensing, manufacture, distribution, sale, possession, and use of marijuana as a “treatment” for a wide variety of “medical” conditions. Despite the fact that the U.S. Food & Drug Administration has not approved marijuana for medical use and the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Neurology, and the American Psychiatric Association do not support its use as medicine, proponents of the bill continued to push hard for its passage. Although this bill passed the State Senate in early March, it was not voted on by the State House.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the 2023 Legislative Session was a great success for pro-life and pro-family interests, but these exciting and important gains were somewhat overshadowed by an unprecedented push to significantly expand predatory gambling and to legalize marijuana in North Carolina. These latter issues are likely to reappear when the General Assembly reconvenes for the “Short” legislative session in May 2024, so we must remain ever vigilant!

NC Family has been privileged to represent North Carolina families and serve as a voice for family values in North Carolina’s policy and political arenas for the past 32 years. Please don’t hesitate to reach out to NC Family through our website at www.NCFamily.org or via email at mail@ncfamily.org if you have any questions about this report or any of our other work. 🙏



John L. Rustin is President of the North Carolina Family Policy Council

Opposing an Inherent Evil

If you have read the 2023 Legislative Session Summary article in this edition of *Family North Carolina* magazine, you will recognize that this has been an epic year for the N.C. Family Policy Council and for the people of North Carolina. From the passage of historic pro-life legislation, to securing parental rights, to protecting the health and welfare of children, to expanding school choice in North Carolina, there was seemingly no end to the positive advancements that were put into law this session. We thank God for the will of our state lawmakers to enact positive change and for the engagement of people across our state who helped to advance policy initiatives that are consistent with Godly principles and in the best interest of our fellow citizens and our families.

One of the most hard-fought battles of the session was not an effort to advance positive change, however, but to stop the spread of an inherent evil—a massive expansion of predatory gambling in North Carolina. Right on the heels of the state legislature approving sports gambling and parimutuel wagering on horse racing in June 2023, legislative leaders went “all in” on a bid to legalize four massive commercial gambling casino developments and tens of thousands of video lottery terminals (i.e. “VLTs” or video poker machines) across the state.

Reports indicate the gambling industry hired an unprecedented 70-plus paid lobbyists, and that gambling executives donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to the political campaigns of certain well-positioned state lawmakers during the first six months of 2023. Needless to say, the stakes were incredibly high, and the political pressure being applied on state lawmakers was as intense as we have seen it in over 30 years of work in North Carolina’s policy and political arenas!

In one plan, supporters would have wrapped casinos and VLTs into the \$30 billion state budget in order to provide “political cover” and create even more pressure on lawmakers, especially Republicans, to vote in favor of it. The assumption was that even if they personally opposed gambling, they would be forced to back the measure, because politically, they “can’t afford to not vote for the budget.”

Locally, especially in Rockingham and Nash counties, where two massive casinos were proposed to be located, it came to light that local government officials and gambling developers had been working behind the scenes for months to “grease the skids,” so that as soon as authorizing legislation was passed, the land would be

secured, permits would be fast-tracked, and development would commence. After all, the sole function of gambling casinos is to separate citizens from their hard-earned dollars, so the sooner the casinos could be up and running, the more profits they could generate.

Tragically, the bulk of this gambling money comes from individuals who are victimized by wagering and who suffer from pathological or problem gambling issues. In fact, history shows the more forms of gambling that are legalized, the more citizens are going to gamble. And decades of research clearly shows that gambling addiction manifests itself in increases in theft, embezzlement, job loss, personal bankruptcy, substance abuse, domestic violence, child abuse, divorce, and even suicide. These are the human costs of predatory gambling, and this is why so many who understand the reality of gambling oppose it so vehemently.

Fortunately, by God’s grace and what can only be described as a miracle, the casino and VLT effort turned out to be a bust. In the end, citizens from across the state (especially in Rockingham and Nash counties) joined together with faithful Republican and Democratic lawmakers in the State House and State Senate, along with organizations like NC Family, to stand against this misguided proposal. Ultimately, it was jettisoned from the budget and set aside... at least for now.

As a preview to what we are likely see when the General Assembly reconvenes for the “Short” Legislative Session next April, the *Raleigh News & Observer* recently published an article entitled, [“Sin session? Gambling, marijuana and alcohol likely to resurface in NC legislature.”](#)

We know the gambling effort is going to return. Remember, the stakes are incredibly high and the money is immense!

With that in mind, we can take great encouragement from our experience this year—when citizens get involved, when lawmakers stand by their convictions, and when God hears the cry of His people and intervenes on their behalf, great things can happen and evil can be thwarted! 🙏



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“And let me offer lesson number one about America:
All great change in America begins at the dinner table.”

- Ronald Reagan, FAREWELL ADDRESS TO THE NATION



Learn more about how you and your family can get involved at [NCFamily.org](https://www.ncfamily.org)