

further from the truth. The bill is actually called the Parental Rights in Education Act and only addresses Kindergarten through 3rd grade. These are 5-9 year olds. Specifically, it forbids sexual orientation and gender identity indoctrination, which some school districts across the nation have pushed. There are many dangers with controversial sex-ed summer camps that indoctrinate young grade-schoolers with free sex and gender ideology. It breaks down modesty barriers and makes kids vulnerable to predatory groomers. Kentucky Attorney General Daniel Cameron has an office focused on sex trafficking right here in Kentucky. Just a few months ago, Hazard High School held an assembly in the school gym where several boys dressed in drag. One was caught on video simulating a lap dance with the principal. This kind of behavior doesn't happen in a vacuum. Neither does child trafficking. When the most intimate and private aspect of one's personhood becomes fodder for public musings in group settings, it breaks down healthy boundaries and makes children more vulnerable to sexual predators. A pillar of civilization is that sex is reserved for a man and woman within marriage. When husbands are monogamous and faithful to their wives, and when fathers devote their time and energy to raising their children, society does well. We are losing this foundational belief. If we wish to protect our children, and our overall well-being, adults need to draw the line and intercede. And it begins with the kind of things children are exposed to, including sex-ed summer camps.

*Richard Nelson is the founder and executive director of CPC. This article first appeared in Kentucky Today on March 14.*

## Dr. Mohler Joins CPC for a Special Evening

CPC's Evening with Dr. Mohler in Lexington was a hit. Nearly 160 attended and heard Dr. Mohler's perspective on how our culture and political climate has gotten to where it's at. He then



presented a way forward for Christians. Q&A time with Richard Nelson was particularly insightful as Dr. Mohler helped to navigate our culture from a biblical worldview. "Christians are not allowed to be pessimistic or optimistic," Dr. Mohler helpfully reminded us. "We're called to be hopeful. Optimism is always shocked when bad things happen. Hope is constant in Christ in whom we have overcome the world." Both of these sessions were recorded, and are available to watch on CPC's Youtube Channel. Our 2021 Christianity & Culture Conference videos will also be sent to our eNewsletter subscribers.

## Major Legislative Victories for CPC and the Commonwealth

Prior to the 2022 General Assembly session, we outlined our priority legislation. CPC had a tremendous impact in influencing the passage of the following bills:

- ✓ *HB 9 (Charter School Expansion)*: Passed the House
- ✓ *HB 43 (Church as an Essential Entity)*: Passed the House and Senate
- ✓ *SB 83 (Save Women's Sports Act)*: Passed the Senate and House
- ✓ *HB 3 (Healthcare in Humanity Act)*: Passed the House
- ✓ *SB 138 (Teaching American Principles Act - Forbids CRT related teaching)*: Passed the Senate and House
- ✓ *SB 321 (15-week abortion ban)*: Passed the Senate

CPC also influenced the opposition to the following legislation:

- ✗ *HB 136 (Medical Marijuana Legalization)*: Passed the House, dead upon arrival in the Senate

## March Madness in the Legislature

March Madness is once again upon us, and a cloud hangs over the Big Blue Nation as the beloved Wildcats were knocked out in the first round by a school most of us never knew existed. There's also a little March Madness going on in Kentucky's legislature, where four gambling-related bills were heard in the Licensing and Occupations Committee last Thursday. HB 606—legalization of sports gambling passed the entire House on Friday.

State Rep. Adam Koenig (R-Erlanger), the sponsor of HB 606, wants to "dry up the black market" and protect people from bookies who might rip them off. He also wants to generate revenue for the state's general fund. Out of this, and other gambling proposals, come many concerns, contradictions, and recommendations.

A major concern is that legalized sports gambling will corrupt sports. When people have more than their emotions invested in the outcome of the game, it increases the likelihood of cheating. And when big money is involved, big bribes and payoffs come into play. That's what happened in 1919 when the Chicago Black Sox succumbed to a big bribe by a gambling syndicate to throw the World Series. It nearly destroyed the sport.

Stephen Marche said in his Atlantic column last November "America's Gambling Addiction is Metastasizing" that "gambling produces corruption the way saltwater produces rust. You can fight it for a while, but it wins in the end." Marche points to the corruption of soccer after online Asian gambling was legalized in the 2000s. Marche predicts "another fixing scandal will rock American sports eventually; it's only a matter of time."

Les Bernal of STOP Predatory Gambling contends that sports

gambling is a gateway to more lucrative and addictive online casino gambling, which can take place 365 days a year. All you need is a smartphone and a credit card. Once signed up on a sports betting app like Draft Kings or FanDuel, be prepared to receive incessant ads and incentives to gamble on online video poker.

Consider the contradictions amongst the bills considered in the Kentucky House, namely HB 609, which addresses problem gamblers by establishing the Kentucky Problem Gambling Assistance Board. It proposes to fund the state board at \$225 million next year. This implies at least two things: 1) there are many problem and compulsive gamblers in Kentucky who need help, 2) a lot of Kentuckians are losing money to gambling—enough to fund \$225 million next year to help those with addictions.

Through verbal contortions, the Kentucky legislature redefined the term "pari-mutuel" and "games of skill" to allow video slot machines called Historical Horse Racing (HHR) into the state last year, under the auspices of helping the horse industry. Since then, "Gray Machines," essentially video poker, which is now considered a game of skill, are proliferating throughout the commonwealth. HB 608 bans these video slots machines found in gas stations and truck stops in 71 Kentucky counties. Small business owners get more revenue from the Gray Machines than they do from selling lottery tickets. The bill passed the Kentucky House on Friday and clearly favors the horse industry monopoly on video slots.

Kentucky is in the midst of a gambling proliferation disaster sponsored by the state government. The tragedy is that it's mainstreaming an activity once associated with organized crime, and it opens the commonwealth

to a plethora of problems that will unfortunately be worked out in the lives of real people—the same people who'll be calling on the government for help.

Now, for a couple of recommendations. The legislature should look for ways to grow the economy in ways that don't create losers. Big gambling, including state-sponsored sports gambling, is dependent upon people losing. Some vulnerable to addiction will lose it all. According to Les Bernal, 50 percent or more of casino revenue comes from those considered problem or compulsive gamblers.

Why not cap loss limits? According to rentdata.org, the average fair market rent price for a two-bedroom apartment in 2021 was \$733. Kentuckians spend an average of \$300/month per person on food. When people lose their rent and grocery money, they turn to others, including the state. Why not limit gambling losses? Individual budgets can only absorb so much in the "entertainment" category. If such limits were in place, the Kentucky Problem Gambling Assistance Board wouldn't need \$225 million next year.

Here's a final thought. While there are strong differences of opinion on state-sponsored gambling, can we find common ground and look out for the well-being of our fellow Kentuckians? Children, the poor, and the vulnerable, all need advocates. Those caught in the throes of addiction need help. Let's look for ways to protect them. Let's work to make it easier for all Kentuckians to succeed. After all, we live in a commonwealth where we share the same space, enjoy a fair playing field, and should care about each other's well-being.

*Richard Nelson is the founder and executive director of CPC. This article first appeared in Kentucky Today on March 22.*

## 2022 Christianity & Culture Conferences



CPC set summer and fall dates for the popular Christianity and Culture Conferences. Bob Scott, Director of Community Outreach for CPC said, "I am excited that once again CPC will be bringing our informative and very popular conferences to audiences around our commonwealth."

The conferences will be held in Owensboro and Lexington where nationally recognized speakers and authors will address some of the most controversial issues facing the culture. Jonathan Butcher, education

researcher at the Heritage Foundation, will shed light on Critical Race Theory. Andrew Walker from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary will share his perspective on transgender ideology.

CPC Executive Director, Richard Nelson said "at a time when truth is assaulted on a daily basis, Christians need a framework for how to think and act. These conferences will help us understand these pressing issues and engage better on these very difficult subjects."

Nelson will lead a question-and-answer session following each presentation. The Owensboro conference will be held on June 30th. The Lexington conference will be held on September 29th. To reserve your table or for more information, please contact Bob Scott at bob@CommonwealthPolicy.org.



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## Director's Corner

May this message find you well and focusing on the good, the true, and the beautiful. I say this at the outset because of the temptation for us to wallow in the discouragement of the news of the world—refugees fleeing Ukraine as Russia invades, inflation on our home front, and various news stories about general societal decay. May I remind you that both good and bad are happening in this moment.

While the daily news spits out the bad, reflections of the goodness of our Creator are outside our front door: the birds sing, the sun shines, and the flowers bloom. This is a grace of God. The question before each of us, is where does your spirit trend? Is it toward despair or hope? If you are a follower of Jesus, you have a supernatural measure of hope that all that is wrong in the world will one day be made right. If you are without Christ, I encourage you to consider the claims of Christ and the promise he makes, not just about a renewed world, but a renewed soul for you! He is good and stands ready to receive you as one of his children.

Our Evening with Dr. Mohler event in Lexington on February was a hit. Nearly 160 attended and heard Dr. Mohler's perspective on how our culture and political climate has gotten to where it's at. He then presented a way forward for Christians. We held two legislative briefings at the CPC office. Jonathan Butcher of the Heritage Foundation briefed legislators on the dangers of Critical Race Theory. Dr. Gary Houchens, former state school board member, led a briefing on school choice. Earlier that day, I interviewed Commissioner of Education, Jason Glass.

A variety of guests joined us for several editions of CPC Live in February. Attorney General Daniel Cameron invited us to his office and shared an update on his work. I interviewed State Sen. Max Wise to talk about his 15-week abortion ban bill and his Teaching American Principles Act, which would prohibit the teaching of CRT in public schools. We've also been working with Sen. Robby Mills and Rep. Ryan Dotson behind the scenes on the Save Women's Sports Act and helped secure key testimony.

So far, this has been a productive legislative session. HB 3—the pro-life Humanity in Healthcare bill passed the House by a wide margin. SB 321—15-week abortion banned passed the Senate. And HB 43—the Church as an Essential Entity Act passed both chambers. All of these bills were sponsored by CPC allies—legislators that we helped get elected.

As you may recall, last year we hosted several Christianity & Culture conferences across the Commonwealth. Our goal was to cast a vision on how Christians should think and engage the culture biblically. This year we plan to host two Christianity & Culture conferences focussing on two of the hottest issues: critical race theory and transgender ideology. The first will be on Thursday, June 30 in Owensboro. The second will be held in Lexington sometime in the fall (date and time to be determined). Please save the date. In the meantime, please pray that we'd finish strong with our influence in the General Assembly.

Yours in Christ,

*Richard Nelson*

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# COMMONWEALTH POLICY

Reinforcing the Commonwealth's Founding Principles - Renewing the Commonwealth's Future Promise

## SEXY SEX-ED SUMMER CAMP IN EASTERN KY CROSSES BOUNDARIES

There's a summer camp in Eastern Kentucky that's getting the nation's attention. Usually, summer camps feature swimming, hiking, canoeing, and other outdoor activities for kids. But this one is making waves because the theme is sex education. It's called Sexy Summer Camp, and it is open to all ages, according to Sexy Sex-Ed's website.

The camp is receiving national attention because of controversial lessons it held last year on "gender exploration," "being a sex worker," "BDSM," "self-managed abortions," and "sexual activity while using licit and illicit drugs." The camp is based out of Hazard and is for children in Kentucky's rural mountains. The pretense is that kids need to understand their sexuality, but do minor children really need summer camp lessons that transgress public decency and break down moral barriers?

Tanya Turner, the leader of the camp, makes it more edgy and uncomfortable when she says in a Youtube promo video that "masturbation is really healthy and I recommend it to people of all ages. All ages. As soon as my nephews could talk, they were doing that." Turner identifies as a "magical pleasure worker" and was raised by witches in a "coven-like mountain matriarchy"—not exactly the role model most parents would entrust their kids to.

Eastern Kentucky has seen its share of evil but the mainstreaming sexualization of children in a sum-

mer camp setting gives us a front-row seat to hell. So when has it been normal and healthy for child development to encourage toddlers, who might not even be potty trained, to pleasure themselves sexually? How is teaching bondage, sadomasochism, and being a sex worker good for healthy child development?

Eastern Kentucky isn't the only place such summer camps are being held. LGBTQ activists in Indianapolis are hosting a "gender-inclusive sex-ed summer camp" for elementary school kids in 3rd-5th grade. Sexualizing young children has been pushed by influential groups like GLSEN (Gay Lesbian and Straight Educators Network) and Sex Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS). Their website moniker says: "SIECUS: Sex Ed For Social Change." Is anyone asking whether this is the kind of social change that makes for healthier people and a better society?

LGBT activists have pushed the boundaries of healthy human sexuality to the degree that they will misrepresent and condemn those who stand for any moral boundaries. The most recent example comes from Florida, where Gov. Ron DeSantis just signed a bill into law that protects public school children from being instructed in gender ideology. The mainstream press has misrepresented and dubbed it the "Don't Say Gay Bill" because it is anti-LGBT youth. This couldn't be

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