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events. But there is in-game betting, where gamblers can bet on plays in real time with their phone in hand. Exhilarating, yes. Compelling, definitely. But should lawmakers neglect the dark side of a potentially addictive activity to everyone with a smartphone—an activity previously confined to physical locations? Once Draft Kings or Fanduel Apps are on user’s phone, and the game is over, gamblers can expect ads for video poker, video blackjack, and sundry other games.

Rep. Meredith argued that there are control structures to prosecute corruption and potential bribery. But how do regulators monitor in-game bets? How does one keep cash-strapped college athletes from taking a hundred bucks to strike out or miss a free throw that would not easily be detected?

Finally, how will mainstreaming sports gambling affect our children? How does one keep teenage boys off of gambling apps? Their pre-frontal cortex, not fully developed, lacks impulse control and cannot discern the consequences of present actions. Normalizing gambling to kids, many of whom will be ensnared in its throes, should be of great concern to all of us.

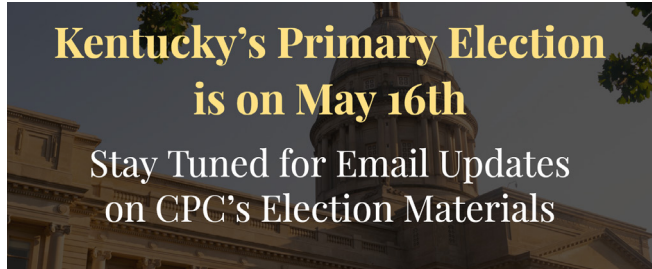
The tide of gambling expansion is pushing strong in the Commonwealth. But do we jeopardize the social and economic fabric of the Commonwealth we so love by current trends and desires and opinion polls? Is expanded gambling a healthy way to build our economy? Is it a reliable revenue stream? And will it build communities in a way that benefits all? These are questions that deserve answers.

To view Richard’s debate on sports gambling with Sen. Damon Thayer, go to www.ket.org/program/kentucky-tonight/. The episode aired on February 27, 2023.

Richard Nelson is the founder and executive director of CPC. This article first appeared in Kentucky Today on March 8th.

Kentucky’s Primary Election is on May 16th

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Status of CPC’s Priority Legislation			
Bill Number	What does it do?	Current Status	CPC’s Position
HB 547	Prohibits school districts from punishing employees who engage in religious expression that is protected by the First Amendment.	Passed in House (81-12) / Passed in Senate (32-5)	Supports
HB 551	Legalizes sports gambling.	Passed in House (63-34)	Opposes
HB 594	Bans gray machines (video gambling machines).	Passed in House (63-32) / Passed in Senate (29-6)	Supports
SB 5	Creates a process for parents to reject controversial instructional materials they deem harmful to their children.	Passed in Senate (29-4) / Passed in House (80-18)	Supports
SB 115	Bans sexually explicit performances, including drag shows, in public areas in which children are present.	Passed in Senate (26-6-1)	Supports
SB 150 (Includes HB 470)	Bans “transition therapy” for minors, protects teachers’ conscience rights, prohibits controversial sex-ed in K-5, requires public schools to develop bathroom and locker room policies.	Passed in House (75-22-1) / Passed in Senate (30-7)	Supports

LGBT Push in Public Schools: A Christian Response

CPC will host several workshops across the state to help Christians think and respond biblically to the LGBTQ push in public schools. The first workshop will be held on April 15th at Living Hope Baptist Church in Bowling Green. Leading the event will be attorney Clint Elliott who will discuss legal rights of public school teachers and staff and how to tactfully respond to controversial issues. Former public high school principal Randy Adams will share how to maintain conscience rights, respectfully communicate concerns with public school administrators, and treat students in a positive way. Richard Nelson will speak on the cultural moment and how to respond biblically. The goal is to provide attendees with an effective plan of action and practical tools to engage the LGBT push. There is no charge, but registration is required. To register, go to www.CommonwealthPolicyCenter.org/register.

Do No Harm to Kentucky’s Children

The Do No Harm Act (HB 470) passed the Kentucky state House on March 2 amid raucous opposition. Opponents positioned the bill as anti-transgender, hateful in fact, and in some cases verbally accosted legislators for their beliefs. In reality, HB 470 was pro-child protection for children who cannot rightly make such life-altering decisions. Essentially the bill protects minors suffering from gender dysphoria from untested hormone therapy and sex “change” surgery.

A representative from the ACLU asked me while passing in the annex hallway if we were happy with the victories. My response was that I saw a lot of brokenness on both sides. There was anger and sadness in the Judiciary Committee room. Transgender identified people believed they were being erased. On the other side was compelling testimony of a young woman who had a double mastectomy at 16 and was given strong doses of testosterone so her external appearance would appear male. She testified that she ‘felt completely abandoned by what the medical professionals did to me... I will have to live with this the rest of my life.’

It’s important to understand that many minors are suffering from what is known as gender dysphoria. This is where one’s mind is not in accord with their biological sex. Gender ideology says the body should be changed to align with the mind. In the past, medical professionals advised that when there is mental incongruency with the body, it is the mind that should change. For example, people with anorexia, believing themselves to be overweight, were told that

wasn’t true. So counselors and psychiatrists worked to bring their patient’s minds into accord with the reality of their bodies. Any less counsel would threaten their well-being. Why would we treat a fellow human being suffering from gender dysphoria any differently? Instead of recommending hormones or surgical reconstruction, why not address the mental incongruency of minors and help counsel them to accept their biological reality?



Rep. Jennifer Decker (R-Waddy) is the chief sponsor of HB 470.

The strongest argument against HB 470 is that professional medical organizations have endorsed “gender, affirming care.” Interestingly, the science does not bear this out. There are no longitudinal studies that show that hormone therapy for gender dysphoric minors has the desired results of achieving happiness. Paul McHugh, former Chair of Psychiatry at Johns Hopkins University, said as much when he closed down their sex change clinic in 1979. He found that upwards of 80 percent of minors experiencing gender dysphoria eventually embraced their biological sex as they grew into adulthood. McHugh said that the gender transition of minors “borders on child abuse.” In fact, the largest youth gender clinic in the world—Great Britain’s Tavistock Centre

in London—shut down last year because of the emerging deep harm caused to young people’s health. It now faces a class-action lawsuit from transgender minors who are experiencing secondary health issues caused by various “transition” procedures. It’s this existential harm that HB 470 seeks to prevent.

So what do we make of the positions of groups like the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), which have endorsed “gender-affirming care”? An influential study by AAP in 2020 purports the benefits of hormone therapy for minors. Yet the study was flawed, according to James Cantor, clinical psychologist, sexologist, and former scientist with Canada’s Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. Cantor found the study was filled with misrepresentations and ignored the clinical and professional consensus that the best approach to care for minors struggling with gender dysphoria is the “watchful waiting approach,” which waits to see if the symptoms persist into adulthood before attempts are made to “transition” them.

The endorsements by professional organizations of the invasive medicine approach to minors with gender dysphoria appear to be political maneuvers by the leadership in these groups to placate political pressure. This is how “gender identity disorder” was downgraded from a mental illness to dysphoria when the APA updated its Diagnostically and Statistical Manual (DSM-5) in 2013. The politics of mainstreaming transgender identity began on the world stage in 2017 when Denmark became the first country

to remove transgender people’s classification as “mentally ill”—not by health authorities relying on sound medicine and research, but by politicians moved by prevailing political currents.

Such is not the first time that the medical community has been swayed by political ideology. Nor is it the first time they’ve been wrong on important issues. In the first half of the 20th century, America’s medical community promoted eugenics, the debunked science of selective breeding to weed out genetic anomalies and perfect the human race. Several states adopted eugenics laws based purely on racist motives. According to a 2020 report by the University of Michigan’s Center for Healthcare Policy and Innovation, by the end of the 20th century, some 60,000 people were sterilized in 32 states under these laws.

This is similar in some ways to what’s happening with young people suffering from gender dysphoria; questionable science, political ideology, and cultural winds often converge toward bad results. In this case, it could very well lead to another wave of sterilization of our young people. And when this happens, it will be too late to reverse choices made at a time when minors did not have the mental capacity to assent to such life-changing decisions.

State Rep. Pam Stevenson (D-Louisville) argued that gender transitions of minors should be left to parents and children. Yet state

law regularly protects children from harm in many ways. We legislate that parents buckle up their children when they get into a car. Kids cannot get a tattoo until age 16. They can’t vote until they’re 18. And they can’t drink beer until they’re 21. These laws are in place to protect the health and well-being of children. After all, the parent-child relationship is not absolute.

Unfortunately, children have become political pawns in a sexual revolution beholden to an ideology that’s discarded moral boundaries and biological realities for human sexuality. This revolution downplays and minimizes brokenness resulting from harmful ideologies.

But the results cannot be hidden, as detransitioners like Luka Hines share their stories with the public.

Dozens of states have introduced similar bills to HB 470. Utah and South Dakota have enacted similar laws. A Tennessee bill is awaiting Gov. Lee’s signature. The laws make clear that it is not “gender-affirming” care to tell young females they can transcend their biological sex through hormones and “sex reassignment” surgery. It is real harm to tell biological boys they can have a vaginoplasty and breast reconstruction to give them the appearance of a female. In Kentucky’s case, the law, as it is now proposed, will hold accountable medical professionals who practice gender transitions on minors. There will also be a 30 year statute of limitations of claims for children whose lives have been

harmed by gender mutilation or hormone therapy.

Biological categories that one is born either male or female, and that children need protection from ideologies that could gravely impair future possibilities afforded by their sex are objective truths. Such truths transcend political affiliation. If this is the case, can we not objectively agree that it’s right and proper for lawmakers to protect children from potential harms they may regret later in their adulthood? This bill shouldn’t divide us politically. Rather, protecting the health and well-being of our children and their future should unite us.



Atherton High School students stage walkout in protest of HB 470 and other related bills. (Credit: WHAS News)

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Director's Corner

I'm writing from Annex Room 129 where the Senate Families and Children Committee is hearing SB 470, the Do Not Harm Act. I got here early to secure a seat, only to find that the Kentucky Fairness Campaign was here in force, occupying many seats. The director, Chris Hartman introduced me to his people: "meet Richard Nelson, our arch-nemesis."

Most attendees in the meeting room were trans activists who opposed the bill that would stop minors from pursuing heavy doses of opposite-sex hormones to suppress their natural occurring gender appearance and shape their bodies to appear like the opposite sex. But as several detransitioners testified, the hormone therapy and surgeries that mutilated their bodies did not heal the brokenness they felt inside. Instead, their "gender transition" ultimately left them with significant health problems.

There was much tension in the room. Even though trans-activists frequently tried to filibuster testimony from doctors, parents, and detransitioners, Chairman Danny Carroll (R-Benton) promptly brought order back to the hearing. Underlying it all, was a great spiritual battle. At the heart of the issue is what it means to be human and who defines sexual identity. Certainly children whose brains are not fully formed shouldn't make decisions that may render them infertile. Nor should their parents or medical professionals. Hence, Do No Harm (See column on page 3).

HB 470 is a stopgap in the law to protect children who've become pawns in the war over sexual ideology. If the law passes (and its fate is uncertain at the moment), it will take other influencers to stand in the gap for them, and clearly speak to the issue. TikTok won't tell the truth. Neither will Hollywood or New York. So, who will? If you're a parent, please talk to your children about gender dysphoria, and how God truly made them. If you're a pastor, then please speak to this issue from the pulpit. The world is pressing hard against God's truth on human sexuality, and there's an opportunity for the church to lead the way. After all, if there's any entity to speak to true identity, and how to restore deep brokenness, it is the Church proclaiming the transformative gospel of Jesus Christ.

Please know that even if this very good measure passes into law and there is nothing supporting it outside the legislature (parents, pastors, medical professionals speaking into this issue), it will fail. So again, I ask, will you speak to this issue? Will you help strengthen the culture in a God-honoring way within your circle of influence?

CPC is hosting a series of workshops across the state to help Christian parents, teachers, and administrators think through the issue of the LGBT push into our public schools and engage the issue well. (More info on page 2). This issue may not be on your radar now, just as it wasn't for a Woodford County Middle School teacher until a transgender boy walked into the girl's bathroom with his 9 year old girl inside. It's not whether you will face this issue, but it is when you will face it. The goal of the workshop is to help prepare you for these kind of issues in our schools right now.

The issues we're dealing with today are both alarming and confusing. In short, we're facing God-sized problems. But we serve a God who's bigger than any issue we face today. Perhaps this realization is what led to the Asbury Awakening, where students were gripped by the reality of God, His mercy, and our utter dependence on Him. We need the reality of the Lord today. (To learn more, listen to a recent Commonwealth Matters podcast with Dr. Tim Beougher of Southern Seminary on the topic of revivals).

As many of you already know, CPC exists in part to help Christians think clearly about the culture, the important issues of the day, and how we can engage well for the glory of God and out of love for our neighbor. Please pray for us as we work to shape public policy that will help preserve our culture and create a healthy framework from which our children can live in the future.

Yours in Christ,

Richard Nelson



CPC's Richard Nelson testifies for SB 115, which bans sexually oriented performances, including drag shows in public places.

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COMMONWEALTH POLICY

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

IS SPORTS GAMBLING GOOD FOR KENTUCKY?

The push to legalize sports gambling (HB 551), is heading to the finish line. State Rep. Michael Meredith (R-Oakland) and Senate Majority Leader Damon Thayer (R-Georgetown) convinced a majority of their Republican colleagues that expanding gambling to sporting events is good for Kentucky. Both underscored the popularity of the issue on KET's Kentucky Tonight. According to a 2022 survey conducted by Western Kentucky University, 73% of respondents favor sports betting. Altogether, 36 states have legalized sports gambling. Both legislators argued that Kentucky is losing revenue to surrounding states that have legalized it. So why not legalize it and capture the revenue? But bigger considerations loom that few have considered as the state legislature ponders this perennial question.



CPC's Richard Nelson Debating Sports Gambling, Sen. Damon Thayer on KET's "Kentucky Tonight"

Widespread sports gambling outside Las Vegas is fairly new. In 2018, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned a 1992 federal law that restricted it in most states, so the social consequences of widespread sports gambling remain to be seen. But based on past history, we have an idea of how this will turn out.

Legitimizing and mainstreaming sports gambling will hurt Kentuckians in three ways. First, it corrupts the integrity of sporting events. Second, it will likely accelerate addictive behavior. And finally, sports gambling will unduly affect our children by introducing them to

a highly addictive behavior with a mobile device. Consider that we've had a number of scandals related to players throwing games or referees fixing them. The University of Kentucky men's basketball team lost its 1952-53 season because its players were involved in a point shaving scandal. In 2008, NBA referee Tim Donaghy spent time in jail for taking bribes to fix games he refereed. Most recently, rumors swirled around that last year's FIFA World Cup soccer championship game was rigged. An investigative body couldn't confirm the rumors, but Sports Illustrated exposed past corruption inside FIFA in a 2019 article "7 of the Most Infamous Match Fixing Scandals That Shook World Football." Bribery of officials, players, and coaches involved with gambling-related match fixing is well documented.

In 2021, The Atlantic ran a story entitled "Sports Gambling Is a Disaster Waiting to Happen: Betting on Tom Brady's next completion may sound like harmless fun. But it's not." Author Will Leitch presciently said, "People will forgive a lot in sports. But they do have to believe that the results are legitimate. Without that, the games are meaningless—a sinister chaos."

Another concern over legalizing sports gambling is that it would likely accelerate addictive behavior. We are not just talking about betting on the outcome of sporting

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**LGBT Push In
Public Schools:
A Christian Response**

April 15, 2023 | 8:00-11:30 AM

Living Hope Baptist Church
1805 Westen St.
Bowling Green, KY 42104

Event is Free, Registration Required
Light Breakfast Provided

Register at www.CommonwealthPolicyCenter.org/register