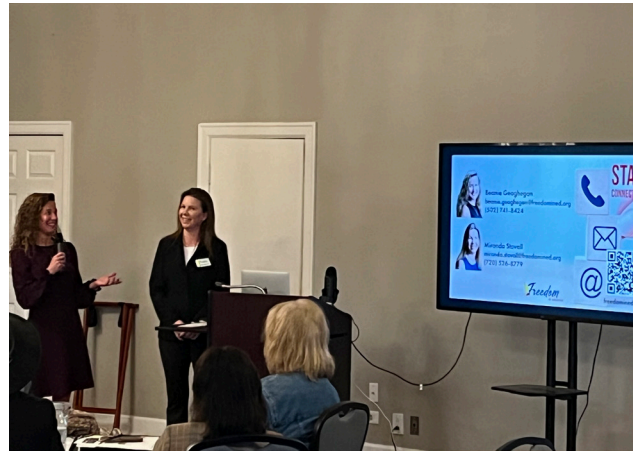


Candidate Training, a Hit with Attendees!



Beanie Geohagan and Miranda Stovall giving a presentation on "Engaging Local Schools."

On February 2-3, 2024, CPC hosted another successful candidate training event with 20 state and local candidates in attendance and over 40 participants. Speakers from all regions of the state informed candidates on effective campaigning and successful messaging. An engaging segment led by State Sen. Robby Mills (R-Henderson) and State Rep. Jason Petrie (R-Elkton) highlighted their experiences of what it means to govern with humility and grace without being trapped by the common pitfalls in Frankfort. These two men have stood strong in their faith while also being very effective legislators.

CPC's Director of Political Outreach Cole Cuzick said, "CPC focuses on training Christ-like 'statesmen' to lead Kentucky with unwavering convictions to protect faith and family." Candidates and activists were equipped with new campaign strategies while also strengthening their defense of life, religious liberty and educational freedom. "Every candidate said they were better prepared to run a successful campaign at the conclusion of the event," Cuzick said.

CPC is thankful for the various sponsors for who helped host the event. This training is usually only offered once every two years, however we are considering holding additional trainings this year. If interested, please contact CPC if you'd like a local training in your area.

Albert Mohler Headlines CPC Event in Bowling Green

Over 600 people from across Kentucky attended "Honoring God in a Culture That Celebrates Sin," an event featuring Dr. Albert Mohler. CPC Executive Director Richard Nelson was greatly encouraged by both the high attendance and the encouraging tenor of the evening. The culture's opposition to God's design for human sexuality is sobering, but Christians still have great reason for hope through the redemptive power of Jesus Christ. Dr. Mohler reminded attendees that our first responsibility is to evaluate our marriages, families, and communities through a Biblical worldview, ensuring that they reflect God's good design to our neighbors.



Pastor Jason Pettus, Dr. Albert Mohler, and Richard Nelson participating in the Q&A Session.

Sr. Pastor Jason Pettus and Living Hope Baptist Church hosted the event on February 8 in Bowling Green. Dr. Mohler, President of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, spoke on our culture's rejection of God's design for human sexuality and the Christian responsibility to show the world a better way to happiness and fulfillment. Afterwards, Mohler joined Nelson and Pettus in a panel that answered audience questions about how to faithfully respond to cultural challenges and navigating them with family and friends.

CPC's goal was to encourage Christians by helping them understand what is happening in our culture through a Biblical worldview. If you want to learn more, you can watch a recording of "Honoring God in a Culture That Celebrates Sin" on CPC's YouTube channel.



Legislature Pushes Back Against DEI, Viewpoint Discrimination in Higher Ed

Pushback against DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) programs in Kentucky higher education is moving in the legislature with the passage of SB 6 in the state Senate on February 13th. UK President Eli Capilouto called the bill "deeply concerning" in a campus message and formally opposed it.

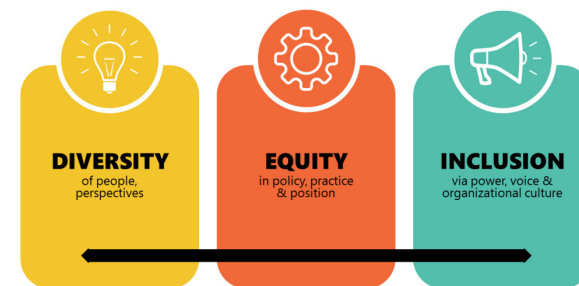
According to bill sponsor State Sen. Mike Wilson, R-Bowling Green, many universities have become hostile environments for conservatives, sometimes shaming and punishing students and faculty for their viewpoints. Senate Bill 6 specifically bans the teaching of divisive topics such as, "America is fundamentally and irredeemably racist or sexist" and racial and sex "scapegoating."

The intent behind DEI was laudable: weed out bigotry, thwart pernicious racism, and make higher ed more inclusive and accessible to all regardless of race, ethnicity or gender. However, according to Wilson, who's also the Majority Whip of the State Senate, DEI policies have moved into viewpoint discrimination and coercion of conservative views on college campuses. Wilson wants a reset where universities return to the "marketplace of ideas where the free exchange of ideas are not suppressed."

A UK college professor recently shared with me a climate hostile to conservative views and witnessed firsthand faculty compensation discrimination at the University of Kentucky. He wishes to remain anonymous out of fear of retaliation. DEI abuses are more evident across the country. A student group called Young Americans for Freedom at the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse was forced to sign a DEI statement in order to be recognized. The university later backed

down. Additionally, Ohio Northern University fired a law professor for objecting to DEI hiring practices that elevated external characteristics above qualifications. Lastly, a female DEI staffer at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire filed a lawsuit alleging she was demoted and suffered racial discrimination.

In practice, DEI policies have created a climate hostile to conservatism and effectively marginalized political views unpopular on campus. What comes to mind is the scene of former UK All-American Swimmer Riley Gaines being chased down a hallway at San Francisco State University because she dared to speak on campus that men shouldn't compete in women's sports.



Viewpoint diversity is lacking on our college campuses. Southern Seminary professor Andrew Walker pointed out in a recent KET Kentucky Tonight discussion that it would be far more acceptable for a college student to articulate anti-Semitic beliefs than it would be to say that marriage is only between a man and a woman. So where does this thinking come from?

DEI is rooted in Critical Theory and based on the ideology of oppressor/oppressed power dynamics and equality of outcomes. In fact, the "E" or equity in "DEI" is inconsistent with the American ideal of equal opportunity for all. "Equity", while it sounds good, pursues the equality of outcomes

instead of equality of opportunity. One group explains, "Equity takes into consideration a person's unique circumstances, adjusting treatment accordingly so that the end result is equal." Equity prioritizes representation of race, gender, and sexuality groups in society without regard to merit, character, and work ethic. When equity is elevated over equality of opportunity, competency is sacrificed and resentment ensues . . .

If we want to see less division, we should avoid dividing people based on external characteristics and political views. If we want to see less divisiveness then we should stop guilting, stereotyping, and scapegoating certain people. These are all aspects addressed in SB 6.

Instead of banning Campus DEI Departments, SB 6 redirects activity of DEI staff and requires that half of their time be spent on "mentoring... academic coaching and related learning support... for the academic success of students who are eligible to receive a federal Pell grant." It also requires Kentucky colleges to provide a survey on the climate regarding freedom of speech beginning in 2025, and the results would have to be posted publicly. Failure to comply with the bill could result in fines of up to \$100,000 for universities found guilty of discrimination, which immediately incentivizes compliance.

Read the full opinion piece at www.CommonwealthPolicyCenter.org.

Richard Nelson is the founder and executive director of CPC. This article originally appeared in *Kentucky Today* on February 16.

~ continued from page 1 ~

pregnant is heart wrenching, and there's no political solution to such suffering and personal trauma. Too many women—even one story is enough—have suffered a similar, horrendous fate. This is the story that has captured the social imaginary of the plurality of the electorate. And the political world is demanding a political response. But short of liberalizing Kentucky's abortion laws to the point of being meaningless, can there be an adequate political response?

Vigorous opposition to abortion exceptions from the pro-life community doesn't come from a heartless calculation but rather from a place of principle that integrates an individual's right to live with the communitarian responsibility to

welcome and protect that life. It's a position more difficult to defend in an age of images, TikTok reels, and short attention spans, because this tiny life doesn't yet have a face, a story to tell, or a compelling political ad to narrate.

Regardless of one's ability to expand room in their thoughts for the rights of a person whose father is a rapist, and whether or not the general public can find a place for such a child to join the community, both sides of the debate are looking for a principle to make the right decision. That's a question that the state legislature will address in coming days.

Richard Nelson is the founder and executive director of CPC.

CPC's Legislation of Interest

| Bill Number | What does it do? | Current Status | CPC's Position |
|---|--|---|----------------|
| SB 6 / HB 9 (Sen. Wilson - R / Rep. Decker - R) | Prohibits Kentucky colleges and universities from penalizing students or employees for not supporting discriminating concepts. | Passed Senate (26-7), Received in House / Introduced in House | Supports |
| SB 99 / HB 711 (Sen. Yates - D / Rep. Fleming - R) | Adds rape, incest, and other exceptions to KY's Pro-Life Laws. | Introduced in Senate / Introduced in House | Opposes |
| SB 142 (Sen. Bledsoe - R) | Creates Paid Parental Leave for State Employees | Introduced in Senate | Supports |
| SB 147 / HB 402 (Sen. Tichenor - R / Rep. Tate - R) | Prohibits adult-oriented businesses and drag shows from operating near places frequented by children. | Passed Senate VMAPP committee on 2/29 / Introduced in House | Supports |
| SB 239 / HB 49 / (Sen. Douglas - R / Rep. Rawlings - R) | Prohibits discrimination against medical professionals who decline to perform procedures that violate their conscience. | Introduced in House and Senate | Supports |
| HB 2 / HB 208 (Rep. Miles - R / Rep. J. Calloway - R) | Constitutional Amendment to allow for education freedom for parents and children. | Introduced in House | Supports |
| HB 47 (Rep. Rawlings - R) | Expands KY's current Religious Freedom Restoration Act. | Passed House Judiciary Committee on 2/21 | Supports |
| HB 243 (Rep. Neighbors - R) | Requires child support to be provided from conception. | Introduced in House | Supports |
| HB 304 (Rep. Baker - R) | Protects Parental Rights in public education. | Introduced in House, Referred to Education Committee | Supports |
| HB 380 (Rep. Tate - R) | Creates tax credits for Pregnancy Resource Centers and Exempts Sales Tax for formula, diapers etc. | Introduced in House | Supports |
| HB 442 (Rep. Tipton - R) | Exempts certain non-profits (educational, charitable, and churches) from collecting sales taxes. | Introduced in House | Supports |
| HB 700 (Rep. Nemes - R) | Healthcare Benefits for Rape Victims leading to pregnancy and Healthcare and Educational Benefits for Child Conceived in Rape. | Introduced in House | Supports |

If you're interested in any of these bills, please contact your legislator to make your voice heard! You can call them at 1-800-372-7181.

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Letter from the Director

How do you honor God in a culture that celebrates sin? That's the question that we tackled with Dr. Al Mohler and Pastor Jason Pettus in Bowling Green on February 8. Sin has been redefined as an outdated rule to overcome in order to find one's "authentic self". Sin is promoted as "liberating". But if this is true, why is there so much addiction, relational brokenness, and heartache today? It's clear that rejection of our Creator's moral boundaries end in fetters that undercut human flourishing. Scripture tells us "this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil" (John 3:19).



State Sen. Robbie Mills, State Rep. Jason Petrie, and CPC Exec. Director Richard Nelson on a panel discussing "Lessons Learned Campaigning" at CPC's Candidate Training.

As people of light who are committed to the truth, we can live lives of holiness and goodness because of God's grace. At the same time, since this grace has been afforded to us, we ought to work for God-honoring policies in the public arena. This is the mission of CPC and shrinking back is not an option. It was so good to see over 600 attend the event from all across the state. To read my column, go to CPC's website. To see Dr. Mohler's remarks and the Q&A, go to CPC's YouTube page.

We also had a fantastic candidate training the first weekend of February. Top presenters spoke on the issues and important elements of effective campaigns. Feedback from attendees was excellent. If you are interested in seeing an abbreviated version of candidate training come to your area, please contact us.



CPC Exec. Director Richard Nelson on KET's Kentucky Tonight to discuss the topic of DEI in higher education on January 29th.

I joined Renee Shaw on KET's Kentucky Tonight to discuss the General Assembly pushback against DEI policies at our universities. I made the case that equity or equality of outcomes is contrary to the American ideal of equality before the law. To see the debate, go to KET's Kentucky Tonight website.

I was honored to be featured in the Lexington Herald-Leader as one of the "leaders who hold sway with Frankfort legislators in the state capital." Of course, I have a great team at CPC. Special thanks to Jenny Bennett, Cole Cuzick, Christopher Parr, Alex Richey, and Justin Warriner. To read the article, go to our Facebook page. Primary elections

are coming upon us soon. We are working on resources for voters and plan to hold candidate forums for contested primary races. Those resources will be available in April.

We were honored that Dr. Hershael York gave us a very kind endorsement and plea for financial support at our event with Dr. Mohler. Please watch on CPC's YouTube and share on your social media posts if you are able. Also, to see my farewell column commemorating Dr. York's retirement, go to our website.

As you know, we could not do this work without your support. Thank you for your prayers and financial support. May God bless you.

Yours in Christ,

Richard Nelson

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Spring 2024

COMMONWEALTH POLICY

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

THE POLITICAL VIABILITY OF ABORTION EXCEPTIONS

State Rep. Ken Fleming (R – Louisville) introduced HB 711, which would add rape, incest, and fetal anomaly exceptions to Kentucky's ban on abortion. Abortion exceptions are favored by a majority of voters according to various polls. But the vocal pro-life base of Fleming's Republican party will find it difficult to accept compromise in a place where it sees an inviolable principle: human life begins at conception and should be protected by law.

If the polls are accurate, the Left is winning the issue, at least in the court of public opinion. According to a survey done last year by Emerson College Polling, upwards of 54% of Ken-

But are exceptions the path the GOP majority should take? And if so, is it the path that leads to a stronger and more just community?

Consider the multiple principles at play: bodily autonomy, communitarian values, and a human being's right to live. Interestingly, the argument for bodily autonomy was employed by conservatives who opposed COVID vaccine mandates. The communitarian-based political left didn't buy it. They saw protection of the larger community from a deadly virus to be a priority. Conservative State Rep. John



Hodgson (R-Louisville) is appealing to the idea of bodily autonomy with his HB 45 which would prevent the forced microchipping of people for tracking purposes.

The pro-life community argues that bodily autonomy has limits. They see another human life apart from the mother at stake. They argue that the right to life of the unborn child, even at the embryonic stage, has a claim on the community to protect it. So in one case, the larger community should be protected from an unseen virus that can cause death. In another case, the larger community should welcome an unseen future member into its ranks. Perhaps this is the horizon where political right and left can see each other more clearly? A situation where a woman like Hadley Duvall is abused and left the lopsided help of urban voters.

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A situation where a woman like Hadley Duvall is abused and left ~ continued on page 4 ~

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The Commonwealth Policy Center is a non-profit public policy group helping Kentuckians value life, protect natural marriage, defend religious liberty, and promote fiscal integrity.

Learn more about our work at CommonwealthPolicyCenter.org

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