



THE TORCH

— Texas Eagle Forum —

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Texas Faith & Family Day at the Capitol March 16, 2017

Join Texas Eagle Forum and a host of other conservative grassroots organizations for **Faith & Family Day** at the Texas Capitol where you will be briefed with important information on family values issues before the 85th Legislature, rally with like-minded Texans from across the state, and engage your elected officials in person.

The day will start with a **Faith & Family Briefing Session** in the Capitol Auditorium from 8:30–11:30 a.m. There you will hear from state leaders on pro-family issues and learn how

to make an impact during the legislative session.

The Briefing is followed by a noon **Faith & Family Rally** on the south steps of the Capitol Building.

After lunch, you will have time to visit your legislators' offices and encourage them to stand for faith and family in Texas. **Faith & Family Office Visits** will begin at 2 p.m.

Faith & Family Day Registration Cost: **FREE**
Faith & Family Day Box Lunch: **\$10**
Register Online at texasfaithandfamily.com.

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Texas Eagle Forum's new website is up!

Be sure and check our website for legislative updates and news from around the state.

Go to texaseagle.org

SUPPORT TEF!

Help us mobilize and sustain a grassroots army in Texas as we work to pass our conservative agenda in the 85th Legislative Session. Follow us on Facebook and Twitter and donate to the cause.

Facts on the Second Largest Crime Industry: Human Trafficking

- Human trafficking is currently the second largest & fastest-growing crime industry. It reportedly generates a profit of \$150 billion every year.
- Of that number, nearly half is made in industrialized countries.
- It is estimated that an exploiter may earn as much as \$650,000 in a year by exploiting as few as four children.
- The National Incidence of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway (NISMART) children estimate that 1.6 million children run away from home each year in the U.S.
- One in three teens will be recruited by a predator within 48 hours of leaving home.
- Women and girls represent the largest share of forced labor victims.
- The average age of entry into the commercial sex industry in the U.S. is 12 years old.
- According to the U.S. State Department, 600,000 to 800,000 people are trafficked across international borders every year.
- Eighty percent are female and half are children.
- At least 100,000 to 300,000 youth are at risk for commercial sexual exploitation annually in the U.S. alone.

SOURCE: theguardiangroup.org

While those statistics may already be shocking to most, the sad fact is that they are on the rise in the U.S. and globally. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, **Houston** is one of the largest hubs for human trafficking in the nation. The I-10 corridor links El Paso and Houston, and thus allows easy transportation of many of the trafficking victims entering from Latin America. Additionally, Houston is a popular entryway for internationally-trafficked persons due to its two international airports and the Port of Houston, which is the largest international port in the U.S. The demographic composition of Houston, with large Hispanic and Asian populations, makes it easy for trafficking victims to blend in with the local population. Also, the high frequency of large sporting events, conventions, and other festivities bring in visitors from around the nation, stimulating the growth of Houston's sex industry.

SOURCE: wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_trafficking_in_Texas

Texas has strong anti-trafficking laws that law enforcement can use to go after perpetrators; however, equally strong protections and services for trafficking victims are lacking. Children who have been exploited need to be treated as victims, not criminals.

In 2010, the Texas Supreme Court made a landmark decision, In the Matter of B.W., which addressed the issue of



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charging children with the offense of prostitution. In recognizing that children cannot legally consent to sex, the Court held that children under the age of 14 cannot be charged with prostitution. However, children between the ages of 14 and 18 can still be prosecuted for prostitution. Additionally, there is uncertainty concerning the proper protective response for these victims.

SOURCE: childrenatrisk.org

*NOTE: TEF salutes the organizations mentioned above who are dedicated to stopping human trafficking in the U.S. In addition, these bills in the TX legislature have our support: **HB 612** relates to voluntary and informed consent to an abortion and prevention of coerced abortions, **HB 269** sets aside convictions of prostitution for victims of human trafficking, and **SB 256** deals with confidentiality for abuse and trafficked victims. Ask your state representatives to support these important bills.*

U.S. in the Hall of Shame Report for the First Time

firstliberty.org, 1/21/17

Every year, the International Christian Concern (ICC) publishes the Hall of Shame Report, listing the worst nations for persecuted Christians. This year, for the first time, the United States was included in the report. In the report released in early January, the United States was included in the all new “New and Noteworthy Category,” along with Russia and China. Other categories were “Worst of the Worst” and “Core Countries,” naming nations like North Korea, Iraq, and China. “The persecution in these countries is not anywhere near the same level of persecution as those in the rest of the list,” the report states, “but events in these countries indicate declining religious freedom and are cause for alarm.”

The ICC report cited First Liberty Institute’s *Undeniable: The Survey of Hostility to Religion in America*, which revealed last year that attacks on religious freedom have doubled between 2012 and 2016. As ICC notes, Christians in particular are coming under increased legal and cultural attack. “In short, Christians in the U.S. are facing constant attacks in the media, where they are portrayed as bigoted, racist, sexist, and close-minded,” the report says. “The characterization in the media may be translating into direct attacks as well.”

Anti-religious freedom groups have taken advantage of a decreasingly religious society “to create a body of law built from one bad precedent after another. Claims of intolerance and inequality are used to fundamentally distort the clear intent of the First Amendment.” The Founders’ intention was never to eliminate free religious exercise from the public square. “The First



Amendment explicitly grants freedom of religion, not freedom from religion,” the report says. “The essential aim is to protect the right of citizens to practice religion in the public square.”

NOTE: SB 14, SB 107, and SB 24 protect religious liberties and freedom of speech in persons of faith, including pastors’ sermons from government interference. TEF supports these bills.

Texas Privacy Act

afa.net, 1/17/17

Texas Senator Lois Kolkhorst filed **SB 6** to protect the privacy, safety, and dignity of Texans in bathrooms, locker rooms, and other intimate facilities in all government buildings, including public schools. The bill makes it clear that government entities may not allow biological men and boys in girls’ bathrooms and changing facilities. Government officials are to follow the biological sex listed on a person’s birth certificate, as is the practice now for UIL athletics. The bill does not apply to private businesses or interfere with a business’s ability to set its own policies.

Texans overwhelmingly oppose the radical Left’s attacks on women’s privacy and safety as evidenced by Houston voters voting down a dangerous bathroom ordinance that would have allowed men into women’s bathrooms, 61 percent to 39 percent. In addition, a recent poll shows that a strong majority of Texas voters agree that use of public restrooms should be restricted by gender.

The radical LGBT lobby has already launched a smear campaign against this commonsense bill and is pushing radical legislation that would actually force private businesses in Texas to allow men into girls’ bathrooms.

NOTE: Contact your State Senator and ask him to support the Texas Privacy Act and sign on as a sponsor.

Meet Bethany Jarrell, TEF's New Intern

TEF President Trayce Bradford appointed Bethany Jarrell to be our intern during the 85th Legislative Session. "I have known Bethany for over a decade," said Trayce, "and am most impressed by her willingness to wait on God's direction. I am so excited to work with her this session and am thrilled for each of you to get to know her as well." On her first day at the Capitol watching legislators take the oath of office, Bethany said, "I was reminded that this great State of ours is only great because of the dedicated and steadfast spirit that brought each person to that room. The determination we Texans have to succeed in our attempts to fight for our beliefs, our families, and our friends was encapsulated in the moment the right hands were raised and the oaths of office taken. Tomorrow will bring the healthy debates... but today, we are all Texans."



American History No Longer Required for History Majors

George Washington University announced that it would no longer require history majors to take a class in American history. Yes, the university named for our first president won't require students graduating with a history degree to actually take a course on the history of this country. Sadly, many other colleges and universities no longer require courses in the history of Western Civilization or the history of the United States. Perhaps that explains why college students know so little about our history. You may have seen the YouTube video from a student group at Texas Tech University that went around campus and asked three questions: "Who won the Civil War?," "Who is our vice president?," and "Who did we gain our independence from?" Their wrong answers and blank stares were cringe-worthy. I hope that someone with a video camera might go on the George Washington campus and ask some of the students how much they know about George Washington, the founders, and the Constitution. Then they should show it to the administration that believes that a U.S. history class should be optional.

SOURCE: Kerby Anderson, "American History Requirement," afa.net, 1/19/17

Abortion Numbers Drop

The number of abortions performed in the United States fell to under one million for the first time since the mid-1970s in 2013 and 2014. And the abortion rate fell to its lowest level since the 1973 Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision that banned many state and federal restrictions on abortion. These findings were part of a study conducted by two researchers at the pro-abortion Guttmacher Institute, which released a report detailing the findings of the study on January 17. With abortions declining, as counted by the abortion lobby's leading research institute's own figures, there is cause for optimism among those who have long worked to end the killing of the unborn. If the new president follows through on his pledge to nominate pro-life justices to the Supreme Court, we may yet see an end to the slaughter.

SOURCE: *The New American*, 1/17/17

Quote of the Month

"Leftism is like the current under the boat on the Niagara River pushing us toward the destructive forces of Niagara Falls. It never stops. It never gives up. The current constantly flows. Therefore, we must practice eternal vigilance as we work to row in the opposite direction."

~ Columnist Douglas V. Gibbs, "Wikileaks: Hillary Clinton Bribed Republicans To Influence Election" Canada Free Press, 1/20/17

Great American Quote

"Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty."

~ Thomas Jefferson

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