

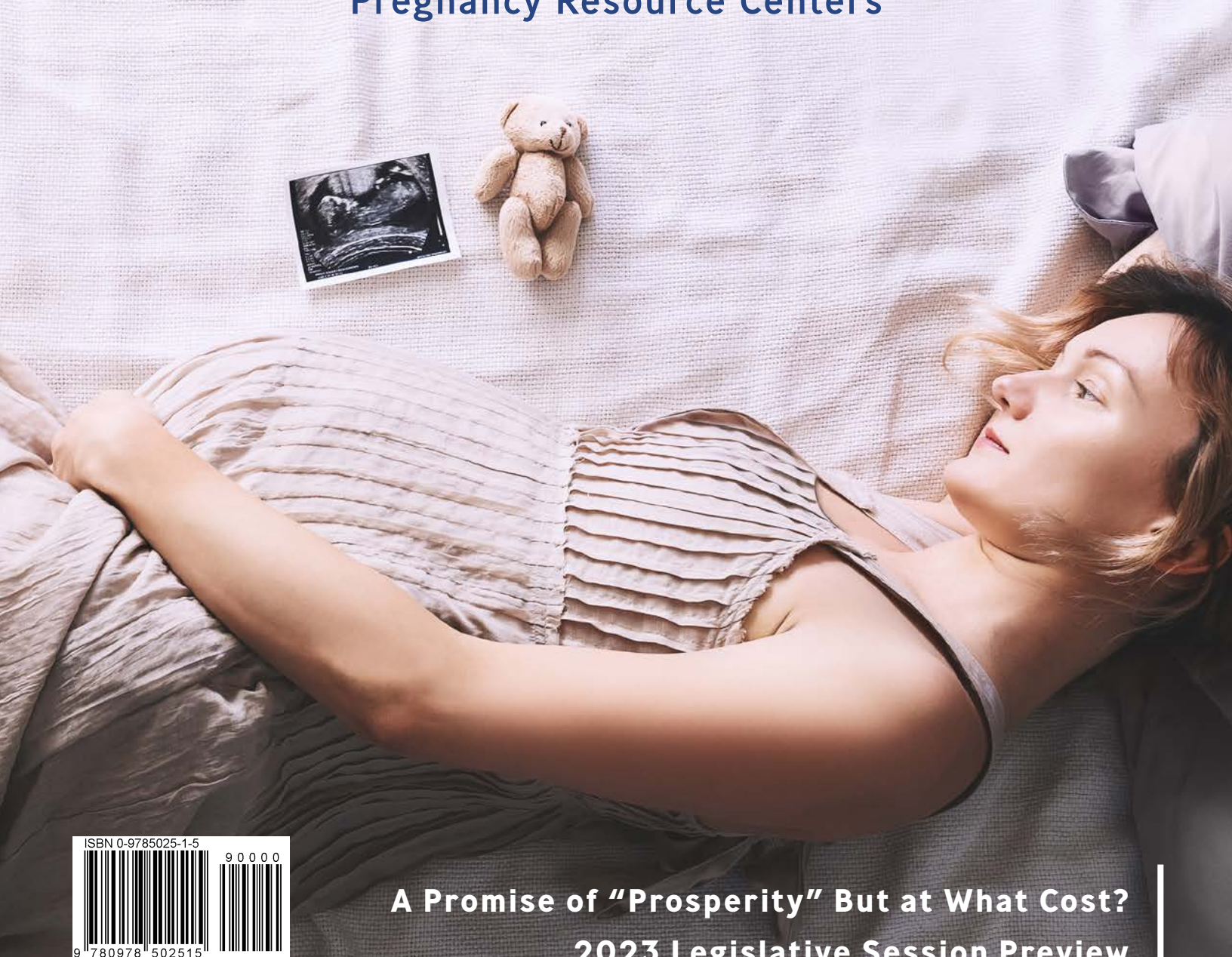
SPRING 2023

# FAMILY

north carolina

## True Women's Empowerment:

The Positive Impact of  
Pregnancy Resource Centers



A Promise of "Prosperity" But at What Cost?  
2023 Legislative Session Preview

When you see someone as being made in the image of God, you change the way that you behave.

—Ryan Bomberger, Emmy® Award-winning Creative Professional and Co-Founder of The Radiance Foundation, at NC Family’s 2022 Winston-Salem Dinner

Strong families are the foundation of a healthy society.

—Ethics and Public Policy Center, “Envisioning a Pro-Family Policy Agenda: A Statement of Principles”

## 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*

Respect for religious expressions is indispensable to life in a free and diverse Republic—whether those expressions take place in a sanctuary or on a field, and whether they manifest through the spoken word or a bowed head. Here, a government entity sought to punish an individual for engaging in a brief, quiet, personal religious observance doubly protected by the Free Exercise and Free Speech Clauses of the First Amendment. And the only meaningful justification the government offered for its reprisal rested on a mistaken view that it had a duty to ferret out and suppress religious observances even as it allows comparable secular speech. The Constitution neither mandates nor tolerates that kind of discrimination. Mr. Kennedy is entitled to summary judgment on his First Amendment claims. The judgment of the Court of Appeals is Reversed.

—Justice Neil Gorsuch in Court Opinion for *Kennedy v. Bremerton School District*

If the government may not force motorists to display a motto, school children to say a pledge or parades to include banners, Colorado may not force Ms. Smith to create and speak messages on pain of investigation, fine, and reeducation.

—Kristen Waggoner, President and Chief Counsel for Alliance Defending Freedom, arguing at the Supreme Court on behalf of Lorie Smith, a graphic designer who could be penalized for refusing to build websites promoting things that go against her personal convictions.



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**12 A Promise of “Prosperity”  
But at What Cost?**

Gambling is often seen merely as a harmless form of entertainment, but recent studies have shown that even low-level gambling can have serious consequences. From devastating financial problems to increased suicide rates, Jaden Grimes outlines the dangers that would come with more legalized gambling and the impact it could have on North Carolina.

**18 Family Policy Matters  
Radio Show and Podcast**

Read excerpts from some of NC Family’s latest and most popular episodes of the *Family Policy Matters* radio show and podcast.

**20 2023 Legislative Session Preview**

The 2023 Legislative Session is off to a busy start. With a Republican supermajority in the Senate, and an “effective” supermajority in the House, there is a good chance that positive legislation will be passed despite Governor Cooper’s veto stamp. John Rustin, President of NC Family, gives an overview of what is expected to happen during this legislative session.

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President John L. Rustin

## DEPARTMENTS



## A Season of Learning

Putting this magazine together has been a season of learning for me. To start with, I've never put together a magazine, so the process itself was new to me (I was a staff member for the student newspaper in college, but that's not quite the same thing). Even more than that, though, each of the feature articles taught me so much.

As I was interviewing women in charge of pregnancy resource centers in preparation to write "True Women's Empowerment," I learned a lot about the many challenges there are for women facing an unplanned pregnancy. I've been involved in the pro-life movement since high school, even interning at a pregnancy resource center during grad school, but talking to these women gave me a whole new perspective. From finding housing and childcare to being able to afford the prenatal appointments, choosing life is often not the straightforward decision it might seem. With so many states pursuing pro-life legislation after the *Dobbs* decision, pregnancy resource centers are more necessary now than ever.

Jaden's piece reveals just how deeply gambling impacts individuals along with their family and community. Gambling is often seen simply as a form of entertainment, but, unfortunately, it is nowhere near that innocent. The increased risks it brings to individuals, families, and communities is a fact that must be reckoned with, especially as many are attempting to expand gambling in North Carolina. The economic opportunity it is said to bring is not worth the destruction that will ensue.

Finally, I think it's safe to say that I have learned more about government in the five months I've been at NC Family than I did in my high school government class. John's preview on what we can expect from the NC Legislature this year is both informative and encouraging, and covers a wide range of topics. With so many critical issues involved, it is vital that we are active and informed citizens and get involved in the policies that will affect us and our families.

Thank you for reading *Family North Carolina*. We hope you enjoy the content found inside this edition, and please feel free to reach out to us at NC Family to request more copies to share with your community! 📧

*AnnaScott*

*AnnaScott Cross is the Communications Director for the North Carolina Family Policy Council and is Editor of Family North Carolina.*



**Spring 2023**

Vol. 18, No. 1  
ISSN 1935-7761  
ISBN 0-9785025-1-5

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*Family North Carolina* is a publication of the North Carolina Family Policy Council.

The North Carolina Family Policy Council is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit research and education organization organized in 1991 and recognized for tax-deductible giving by the federal government.

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**Internet**

Visit us online at [NCFamily.org](http://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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# True Women's Empowerment: The Positive Impact of Pregnancy Resource Centers

**Surprise! You just found out that you're pregnant, and this was not a part of your plan. Based on statistics from the Guttmacher Institute, you are probably between the ages of 18 and 24, have low income, didn't finish high school, and aren't married. The thought of figuring out medical appointments, 2 a.m. feedings, and childcare is overwhelming, and so you research your options.**

## **Option 1: Abortion**

A lot of people tell you that this is the easy answer. Just go into a clinic, get a prescription, take some pills, and life can continue as usual. Depending on what state you live in, you might even be able to do all of this from the "comfort" of your own home. You're barely making ends meet on your own, much less with a baby depending on you. This option would let you go back to school or work like you've been planning, so that you can get a better job and be prepared for when you are ready to have kids. You can't do both. Or can you?

## **Option 2: Keep the Baby or Place it for Adoption**

You might not be able to do all of this on your own, but there are resources available to you that will help you and your baby live healthy lives, including pregnancy resource centers (PRCs). You're intrigued by this possibility, but you might be wondering if it is a good idea to reach out to them. Maybe you have seen that Pro-Choice America claims that PRCs, "Intentionally misinform and mislead women seeking pregnancy-related information." Maybe you heard Senator Elizabeth Warren accuse them of fooling and torturing women. Or maybe you were doing some research and read claims on Verywell Health's website that PRCs will lure and mislead and show you "scary movies of dismembered fetuses."

**But maybe abortion doesn't feel like the right option. Maybe you've heard about the dangerous side effects that can come with it, or maybe the thought of aborting the life inside you just feels wrong. What would it really look like to visit one of these PRCs?**

## Meet Some Pregnancy Resource Centers

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### Hand of Hope Pregnancy Centers

**Locations:** Fuquay-Varina, Raleigh, and Fayetteville

**Services:** Pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, life skills classes, baby boutique, STD/STI testing, abortion pill reversal, baby showers, sidewalk ministry, abortion recovery Bible studies

**Established:** 2004

**Founder & CEO:** Tonya Nelson

When you walk in the front door of one of Hand of Hope's centers, you are immediately welcomed by smiling faces, comfortable waiting areas, and maybe even freshly baked treats. This organization came about after Tonya Nelson, the Founder and CEO, experienced her own unplanned pregnancy. Having been a single mom and experienced the challenges they face, Tonya felt God calling her to start Hand of Hope so that she could help women in similar situations. Now the organization has three locations, one across the street from a Planned Parenthood clinic, and another next door to the largest privately owned abortion clinic in Raleigh. Tonya and her team actively love every person who walks through their doors, because as she said, "You are welcome here regardless of the choice you make, because that's who Jesus is."



### Salem Pregnancy Care Center

**Location:** Winston-Salem

**Services:** Pregnancy tests, options counseling, ultrasounds, life coaching, baby boutique, and parenting classes

**Established:** 1985

**Executive Director:** Kimberly Jorgensen

This PRC got its start when a gentleman named Stuart Epperson ran for the United States House of Representatives. He ran on a pro-life platform, but ultimately lost the election. On the way to his consolation party, he realized that just because he didn't win the election didn't mean that he couldn't still help the pro-life movement. The consolation party became a launch party for what would become Salem Pregnancy Care Center, and many members of his campaign staff joined the new PRC as members of the staff or board. Since then, this center has served more than 22,000 families and has recently moved locations so that it is directly across the street from the biggest abortion clinic in Forsyth County. They work hard to meet the needs of the women who come to them, striving to do everything with excellence. They have also invested in educating youth to help them avoid facing a crisis pregnancy situation. (Incidentally, Mr. Epperson went on to grow Salem Media Group into the nation's leading media company specializing in Christian and conservative content.)





Photo by Laura Sydney Photography

## Gateway Women's Care

**Locations:** Raleigh, Durham, and Chapel Hill

**Services:** Pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, STI/STD testing, options counseling, and abortion education

**Established:** 1984

**Executive Director:** Wendy Bonano

One of the first PRCs in the Raleigh area, Gateway Women's Care started when three students at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary felt the call to do something to support women facing an unplanned pregnancy. Along with their wives, they connected with some large churches in the area and started a ministry that has since expanded to Durham and Chapel Hill. Jim Skelton, one of the founding students and the first Executive Director, is still involved in the ministry, even though he has since moved to Texas. The staff and volunteers work with each woman who comes in to create a customized care plan that best meets her needs, walking with her every step of the way. They are conveniently located close to several large colleges and universities, allowing them to reach students who may be facing an unplanned pregnancy.



## Helping Women Across the Country

The love and compassion that each of these PRC directors feel for women facing an unplanned pregnancy is abundantly apparent as they explain the work they do, and these are just a few examples of the PRCs that can be found across this state and the country. In 2019, the Charlotte Lozier Institute identified approximately 2,700 pregnancy centers across America that served almost two million people at an estimated value of nearly \$270 million.

### According to the Charlotte Lozier Institute, some of the ways PRCs have served women (at little to no charge) include:

- Almost **732,000** pregnancy tests
- More than **486,000** free ultrasounds
- **160,200** STI/STD tests
- More than **291,000** clients attended parenting and prenatal education programs
- More than **21,000** clients received after-abortion support
- More than **881,000** students attended sexual risk avoidance education presentations
- Nearly **1.3 million** packs of diapers
- More than **2 million** baby outfits

Disproving the claim that PRCs offer fake medicine, over 10,000 licensed medical workers provided care as both staff and volunteers at PRCs across the US.

### While all of these PRCs look a little bit different, there are some common services that many of them offer. Of the 2,700 PRCs:

- **94%** offer material items like clothing, diapers, etc.
- **86%** offer parenting/prenatal education
- **79%** offer ultrasounds
- **72%** offer after-abortion recovery
- **36%** offer sexual risk avoidance presentations to youth
- **30%** offer STI/STD testing
- **21%** offer STI/STD treatment
- **27%** offer childbirth classes
- **19%** offer breastfeeding consultations

These organizations play such a vital role in their communities that a national survey found that people’s responses to PRCs were “overwhelmingly positive,” whether they identified as pro-life or pro-choice.

In North Carolina, there are more than 80 PRCs spread out over 57 of the 100 counties. Each of these look a little bit different, but they are committed to serving women who are experiencing an unplanned pregnancy. While interviewing the women who lead the three PRCs highlighted in this article, it was easy to tell that they genuinely care about the women who come through their doors regardless of what decisions they had

made or would make. There is no judgment, no scary movie, and no misinformation. They want to support the women who come to them and show them the love of Jesus.

Another valuable resource across North Carolina and the United States is the Human Coalition. This organization implements a variety of digital marketing strategies to reach women who are abortion-determined. They have a call center with trained agents to counsel women and connect them with local resources. Finally, they assist these women with their long-term needs either through their own PRCs or by connecting them with an independent PRC. Their efforts have saved thousands of lives across the country.

## Abortion Clinics



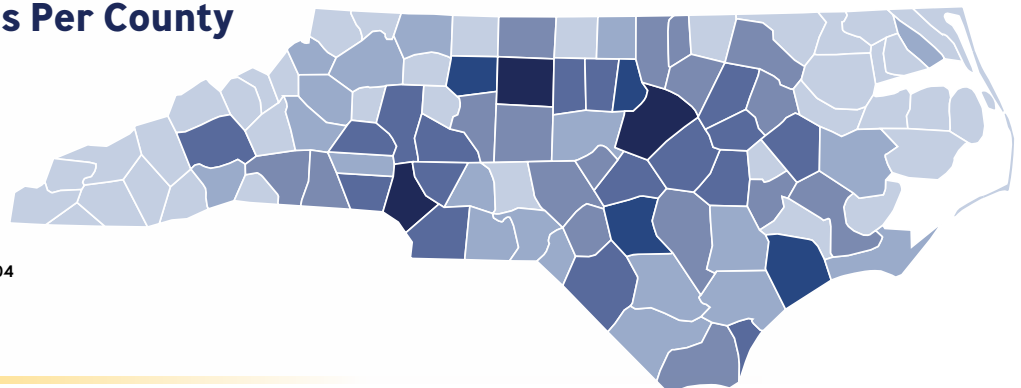
## Pregnancy Resource Centers



## Number of Abortions Per County

4,600 - 2,000	(39.35%, 3)
1,500 - 500	(18.74%, 5)
499 - 200	(23.13%, 17)
199 - 100	(9.85%, 17)
99 - 50	(5.68%, 20)
49 - 1	(3.25%, 38)

**Total Number of Abortions in NC in 2020: 30,004**  
(% of total, # of counties)





## The Impact of PRCs

The impact these organizations are having is critical. Studies have shown the most common reasons that women pursue an abortion include:

- Interference with work, education, or ability to care for dependents
- An inability to afford a baby
- Not desiring to be a single mother or having relationship issues

Notice that all of these are circumstantial. The decision to pursue abortion generally does not stem from just not wanting the baby, but rather the challenges that having a baby would bring. The services that PRCs provide enable a woman to keep her baby despite the circumstances. Many of the PRCs will help women figure out how they can continue their work or education with a baby. Almost all of them help with material resources, including things like diapers, baby clothes, maternity clothes, strollers, and even gas cards. A majority of PRCs offer parenting classes to help equip women for motherhood, even if they are single. Because PRCs are addressing the real circumstances that women face, they are effective in protecting life. Another study by the Charlotte Lozier Institute found that more than 800,000 lives have been saved through the pro-life PRC network since 2016.

## Comparing the Options

PRCs are clearly supporting women facing a crisis pregnancy, whether that means providing her with the resources she needs to keep the baby, connecting her with an adoption agency, or supporting her after she pursues abortion.

On the other side of the picture, we have organizations like Planned Parenthood. In their 2020-2021 Annual Report, they report 383,460 abortion procedures in the United States. Their services reveal that they don't really care about the women or their babies, because none of their services focus on supporting women during or after they make their decision. Their website encourages women to pursue abortion if they don't think they are ready for a baby, they aren't in a positive relationship, or they don't want any interference with their education or career. Planned Parenthood tells women that they can't overcome the challenges. And while they offer adoption referrals (reporting 1,940 in the report mentioned above), their abortion rate is almost 200 times that of their adoption referral rate.

## True Women's Empowerment

This information begs the question: Which group truly empowers women? One group tells you that the best answer for a crisis pregnancy is a medical or chemical procedure, which kills your baby and can cause severe health problems for you (they don't want you to think about that!), because you can't handle a baby right now. The other group tells you that you can overcome the challenges in your life and walks alongside you, helping you however they can.

Even this simple message of 'you can' versus 'you can't' makes a drastic difference. In education, researchers have found that a high level of self-efficacy – a belief in one's ability to accomplish something – has a significant impact on the educational outcomes of students. One of the largest findings in this regard is the impact that a teacher can have merely by communicating that every student is capable of success. Just having someone tell you that you are able to do something difficult increases your ability to actually accomplish it. It is just as critical for women to know that they are capable of overcoming the challenges set before them, not just in terms of pregnancy but for every aspect of their lives.

## The Future of Pregnancy Resource Centers

The *Dobbs* decision, which overturned *Roe v. Wade* and returned the decision about abortion to elected representatives, was an amazing step in the right direction, but there is now an even greater need for PRCs. The PRCs mentioned above commented on the increase in the number of women they have seen in recent months, along with an increase in women seeking abortions via telemedicine. They shared that North Carolina has seen a significant rise in women coming from out of state seeking an abortion due to the increased restrictions in surrounding states.

In response to this, each PRC has plans to continue to grow and meet the needs of women facing unplanned pregnancies. Tonya mentioned that she would love to open a Hand of Hope boutique that could offer employment to some of the women and generate income that would enable the ministry to help more women. Kimberly shared about plans to expand Salem Pregnancy Care Center's current services, including increasing their capacity to serve families, offering services in Spanish, and making sure that their services adapt as the needs of women change. Finally, Wendy shared that Gateway Women's Care was increasing their focus on online services and telemedicine so that they can reach women before they make a decision, along with continuing to strengthen their partnerships with local organizations.

## They Need You

Pregnancy resource centers are doing amazing work, but there is still a lot more to be done. Tonya, Kimberly, and Wendy shared some of the best ways that you can make a difference in the fight for life, including volunteering at a PRC near you, praying regularly for the centers and the work they do, and being willing to have conversations about abortion and take a stand for life.

Will you choose life? 🙏



AnnaScott Cross is the Director of Communications for North Carolina Family Policy Council

# 1

## Dinner Events

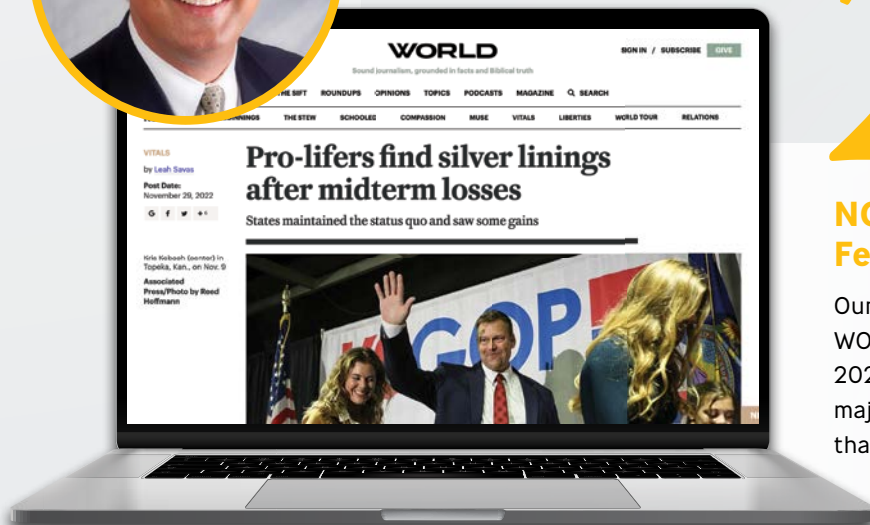
This past fall, NC Family welcomed our supporters and friends to dinner events in the Charlotte and Winston-Salem areas. Coach Joseph Kennedy, who recently won his prayer case at the US Supreme Court, spoke in Charlotte about his seven-year legal battle that resulted from his commitment to say a private prayer at the end of each game that he coached. In Winston-Salem, 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](https://NCFamily.org/past-events).



# 2

## NC Family President John Rustin Featured in WORLD Magazine

Our President, John Rustin, was recently featured in a WORLD Magazine article discussing the results of the 2022 election. He commented about the Republican majority on the North Carolina Supreme Court, and added that this majority is likely to last for at least six years.





# 3

## 2022 General Election Voter Guide

Last fall, we surveyed every North Carolina candidate at the state and federal level asking them where they stood on a variety of key issues. We published the results of these surveys in our print Voter Guide and online at our Voter Guide website. Hundreds of thousands of people accessed this information in preparation for the 2022 general election.



# 4

## New Staff Members

Over the course of last year, we welcomed three new members of our staff. Trisha is our amazing Administrator who keeps all of us organized and on track. AnnaScott took over as our Director of Communications, and is enjoying finding creative ways to communicate NC Family's message. Finally, Jaden has joined us as a Legal Intern while he is in law school. He has written articles on a variety of topics, including one in this issue.



# A Promise of "Prosperity," But at What Cost?

*Jaden Grimes*











**While the gambling industry puts up an enticing front, the health, financial, and societal problems that often accompany gambling highlight the dangers of introducing new forms of legal wagering or expanding existing ones.**

**W**hen you hear the word “gambling,” what is the first thing you think of? Maybe it’s the image of a fancy casino, memories of nights out with friends, scratch-off lottery tickets, or that alluring possibility of winning millions.

While the gambling industry puts up an enticing front, the health, financial, and societal problems that often accompany gambling highlight the dangers of introducing new forms of legal wagering or expanding existing ones.

Countless stories and studies over time have shown the various societal and health risks associated with gambling, such as depression and heightened suicidal tendencies. Problem gamblers also struggle more with financial issues and stability. These risks do not just impact individuals in isolation; there are broader risks for families and society to consider. The biggest of these concerns is the possibility of a household’s main provider(s) suffering from a gambling addiction, falling into financial ruin, and harming the entire family and potentially others.

State and federal governments should not overlook these substantial health, financial, and societal concerns in favor of the supposed “economic prosperity” that various forms of gambling promise. They should not cower to the significant influence of the gambling industry and ignore these concerns. We, as a society, must ask whether we care more about increasing the gambling industry’s wealth and the government’s coffers than we do about seeking the best for our fellow citizens.



## High roller, high health risks

It's not a secret that gambling presents substantial risks for many of those who participate most frequently. A recent Oxford study revealed some staggering findings. The study noted that “[h]igh levels of gambling are associated with a likelihood of mortality that is about one-third higher, for both men and women, younger and older.” In other words, high-level gamblers are more likely to die prematurely than non-gamblers. This increased risk of death is troubling for an activity that is freely accessible to millions.

Not only is there a higher risk of early death in general, but specifically self-induced harm and suicide. The National Institutes of Health has found that suicide is more prevalent among problem gamblers. There are also countless personal stories from families who have experienced suicide and other deaths related to problem gambling.

While high-level gamblers face significant risks, the National Council on Problem Gambling says only 40% of North Carolinians know where to find help if they are becoming or have become addicted to gambling. While the government should not always be seeking ways to “save people from themselves,” it does have a duty to try to protect the citizenry from recognized harms and to ensure that people know how to find help when they need it.

## Low roller, still high health risks

These health risks might seem obvious when looking at those who gamble the most, but low-level gamblers can also experience them. The Oxford study reveals that “poorer health [is also] more prevalent among low-level gamblers.” This finding shatters the portrayal of gambling as a harmless pastime that only becomes problematic when done excessively. Even occasional slot machine pulls, fish table endeavors, or scratch-offs that seem like harmless habits can coincide with harmful health effects. That's not necessarily saying that these activities cause those

negative health effects, but there is a very high correlation between the two. As good citizens we should be advocating for the best health choices for our neighbor, specifically by not minimizing the effects of even low-level gambling.

Sports betting, for example, reveals the harmful nature of low-level gambling. This activity is introduced to the public as a simple way to make money while doing something many of us love to do—watch sports. Two tribal gambling casinos in Western North Carolina offer sports-betting services in their facilities; however, that is the only form of sports gambling that is currently legal in the state. Regardless, we regularly hear people talking about the “over-under” on Sundays during the NFL season, are confronted with the point spreads on ESPN and other sports channels, and recognize that sports gambling apps are available on our mobile phones and devices.

Speaking from personal experience, college-aged individuals are particularly susceptible to the lure of online sports gambling. While these bets might seem harmless, they pose a risk to the mental and physical well-being of the bettor, as well as a risk of developing into broader gambling problems.

Gambling prevention hotlines have largely been the extent of governments' attempts to address the harms of gambling. But as mentioned above, a large segment of the population is not aware of these resources, thus they are not helping many people in need. The negative mental and physical health effects people endure as a result of gambling losses should be addressed, and more efforts should be made to respond to the root cause of pathological and problem gambling behaviors.

**The Oxford study shows that the likelihood of someone missing their mortgage payment increases by 97.5% when they increase spending by 10% on gambling.**





### **Financial distress**

The health consequences that go along with gambling are usually accompanied by financial problems as well. The Oxford study mentioned above analyzed how often and how much individuals gambled. It found that low-level gamblers experience gambling-related financial distress more often than do high-level gamblers. High-level gambling is still risky business that comes with harmful financial consequences; among these are unplanned overdraft fees, missed loan payments, and increased likelihood of taking out predatory loans. All three of these have other domino effects that ultimately can leave individuals to consider resorting to extreme measures to get money. Consider one who takes out a predatory loan to either pay off a debtor or indulge in more gambling. There are countless people stuck in financial spirals like these because of a gambling addiction.

The family of a person trapped in a tumultuous financial situation like this will also be affected. The Oxford study shows that the likelihood of someone missing their mortgage payment increases by 97.5% when they increase spending by

10% on gambling. These missed mortgage payments can lead to foreclosures, evictions, and ultimately people and families put out in the cold. One could simply say, “well that’s the individual’s problem, not the government’s or the gambling industry,” but we have to recognize that family members, friends, employers, and others are also often negatively impacted, not just the individual suffering from a gambling problem.

### **Broader societal concerns**

These financial consequences will have broader economic and social impacts if left unaddressed. In other words, brushing off these serious potential economic costs in favor of the supposed economic benefit gambling activity is supposed to produce is counterproductive. What good are the revenues generated by gambling if they come at the expense of family stability and well-being? After all, the money going into the gambling industry’s pockets and the government coffers is coming directly out of the pockets of our citizens.

It's hard to say that gambling activity is paying off. The Oxford study notes that "higher gambling is associated with a higher risk of future unemployment and future physical disability." Suffering from unemployment or physical disability makes providing for one's family extremely difficult. If we are more concerned as a society about increasing profits for the gambling industry and revenues for government than we are about the destructive effect of problem gambling on families, we should reevaluate our priorities as good citizens.


### Gambling Industry?

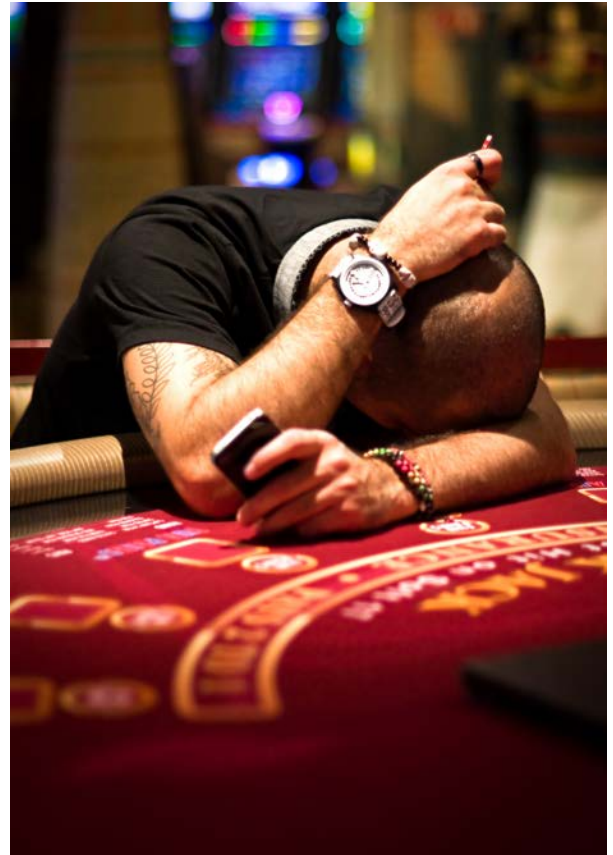
The gambling industry itself does not have an interest in lessening the amount that people gamble—their profits depend on it. Revenues for the gambling industry are likely higher now than they have ever been based on increasing access to gambling activities. Some growth in state or federal revenues may come from these activities, but it's arguably outweighed by the harms caused to local communities where addictive behaviors like gambling are promoted. Indeed, two out of three North Carolinians feel the gambling industry should do more to help people with gambling addiction. Nonetheless, the negative health, financial, and social consequences of gambling still linger without being meaningfully addressed by the government or the gambling industry.

### Sports gambling in NC?

As mentioned above, legalizing online sports betting has gained much attention in North Carolina and nationwide. The NC General Assembly has taken up multiple pieces of legislation in the past couple of years that would authorize wagering on sports. Thankfully, these efforts have been defeated after legislators from both parties have stood firm and determined the negative effects of gambling outweigh the supposed benefits.

In a cursory review of lobbying records on the NC Secretary of State's website following the 2022 legislative session, the NC Family Policy Council identified over 50 registered lobbyists representing more than 25 organizations that had some connection to the gambling industry or gambling interests. This demonstrates just how far the gambling industry is willing to go and how much it is willing to invest in an attempt to gain a big payoff from gambling expansion, even at the expense of the most financially vulnerable among us. Legislators should continue to stand with courage against these efforts.

More than a one-third increase in the risk of untimely death for problem gamblers should be enough to form an opinion on this issue. But the devastating financial impacts usually felt as a result of problem gambling—missed mortgages, taking out payday loans, etc.—are also telling, and have negative effects in themselves. It may be easy for the gambling industry to ignore these individual impacts, but at scale, they foreshadow unavoidable problems for our economy, and families in general. Economic prosperity is an important part of building up those in poverty, but we must ask, "prosperity for whom?" We must only pursue prosperity that is in the best interest of our neighbor and families, not the promise of prosperity that only benefits the gambling industry and the government. 



**If we are more concerned as a society about increasing profits for the gambling industry and revenues for government than we are about the destructive effect of problem gambling on families, we should reevaluate our priorities as good citizens.**



Jaden Grimes is the Legal Intern at the North Carolina Family Policy Council





## Susan Bane, Medical Director at Choices Women's Center



**Traci DeVette Griggs:** One of the other myths that we hear pro-abortion advocates suggesting is that unrestricted abortion is necessary for doctors to provide life-saving care for pregnant women. But you don't agree with that, do you?

**Susan Bane:** No, and that is one of the most important things for us to talk about, so I'm glad you asked that question. I've been an obstetrician and gynecologist for 25 years. I've treated thousands of women and hundreds with life-threatening medical situations, and never once have I had to perform an elective abortion in order to help save her life. The fact is that elective abortion is not life-saving medical care, and when medically necessary to treat women in those situations, we can actually respect both of the patients' lives. A big part is the timing of when the mom gets sick. If the mom is sick and the baby is viable, which now is about 22 to 23 weeks, we can actually deliver that baby, and both the mom and the baby can be cared for. If the baby is really premature, the baby may need to go to the NICU or the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. If the baby is what we call around viability, then the NICU team can actually assess the baby when the baby is born to decide if the baby can be resuscitated or not. And then if the baby is too young to survive, we can do a life-saving induction, and the mom would give birth. The baby would be too young to survive, but the family can hold that baby, can love that baby, say good-bye, grieve, even have a funeral. That is completely different than saving a mother's life without providing that same compassionate care to the baby.

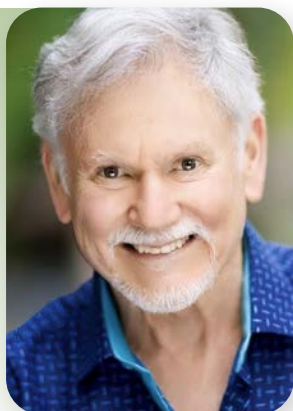


## Patrick Brown, A Fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center

**Traci DeVette Griggs:** With the many pressing issues in our country — I mean the list is so long right now — why do we prioritize public policy surrounding families? Why is it important?

**Patrick Brown:** Because the family is the cornerstone of a thriving society, as I think — as you guys know — if you don't have strong families, you have all of these other social ills that spin out from that, whether it's crime or gun violence or anything like that. And so especially in this new era that we're in, it's going to be essential for us to be thinking about families front and center. And there's a political angle as well. We've seen that Republicans have tapped into a lot of unrest from parents over what's being taught in their schools and the messages that are being pushed out to kids these days. Recognizing that some of the challenges that face parents are cultural but also economic as well can help us position this kind of agenda in a way that responds to what parents need. And so the idea that we should be thinking about the needs of babies and moms in those first critical postpartum months has a new importance but also just making parents' lives easier is always going to be important, and that goes beyond childbirth to the full 18 years of life. So having families as our sort of fundamental building block and our fundamental lens of analysis for public policy can push the conversation in a very helpful direction.

## Dr. Warren Farrell, Author of *The Boy Crisis*



**Traci DeVette Griggs:** Start off by telling us — why do you think that we are suffering from a boy crisis?

**Dr. Warren Farrell:** Well, first of all, many people don't understand that there really is a boy crisis, that it's not just that boys are going to be only half as likely as girls to graduate from college in the very near future, and are only about 44 percent of the college graduates right now. But they're also far more likely to commit suicide. Male IQs have gone down in the last decade. In 70 different areas of measurement, boys have fallen behind where they used to be and/or where girls are, and the problem with that is that so, for example, on the education issue, when girls graduate from college at twice the rate of boys, most girls who are college graduates are not looking to marry a dropout or somebody that never even got into college to begin with. So this affects the ability of girls to find a father that they feel is appropriate for helping to raise children. And so this, therefore, impacts whether or not they even raise children, by themselves or with a man. That impacts the children because we know that children that have minimal or no father involvement do much worse than children that have both father and mother involvement. And this is especially true for boys.

## Kallie Fell,

Executive Director at The Center for Bioethics and Culture Network (*Detransition Diaries*)



**Traci DeVette Griggs:** What did it look like then when these women started to change their minds? I don't want to give away the end of the movie, but give us some hints. What are we going to see?

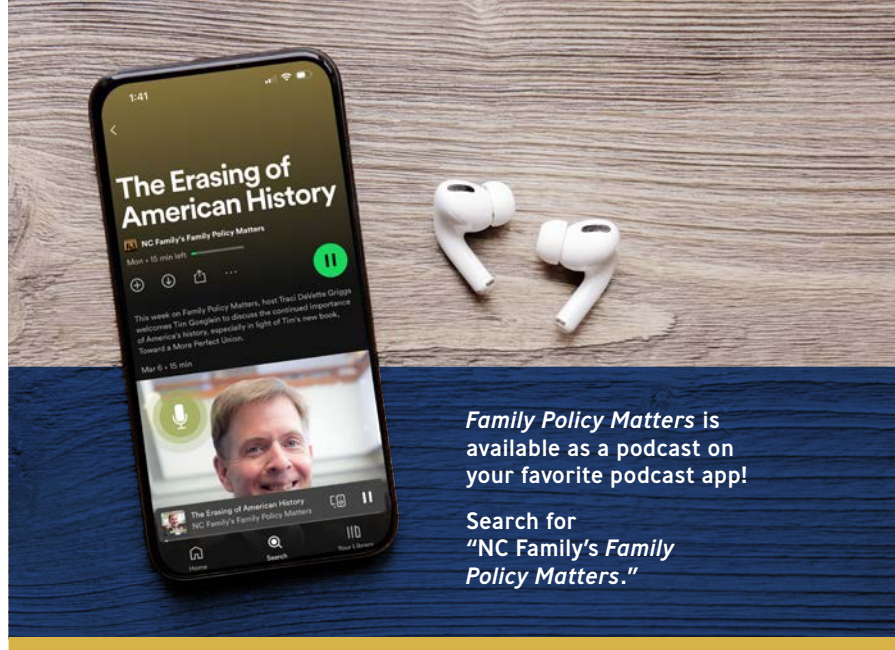
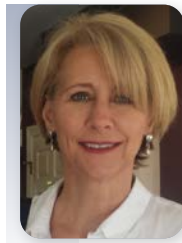
**Kallie Fell:** You know the largest thing, and it can be put quite simply, is that changing their bodies, it didn't change anything. It

didn't change how these girls felt about their bodies. It didn't make their discomfort go away. It didn't make the trauma that they had experienced as young children go away. It didn't fix anything. That's the lie we're feeding young girls or young boys is that this will fix it, you will feel better. And, instead, they're being met with medical harms, lifelong treatments, because once someone goes on this path, once a child starts puberty blockers and then what I call wrong sex hormones, they're medicalized for life. There's no going back. Even if they decide to detransition, they will be medicalized for life.

You may also stream *Family Policy Matters* online at [www.ncfamily.org](http://www.ncfamily.org)



*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](http://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
Bennett/Asheboro	WYTR 88.1 FM	Saturday, 2:00 PM
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	WZDG 88.5 FM	Sunday, 5:30 AM & 6:00PM
Winston-Salem/ Piedmont Triad Area	WPIP 880 AM	Sunday, 4:15 PM





## 2023 Legislative Session Preview

*By John Rustin*

**T**he 2023 Regular Legislative Session of the North Carolina General Assembly is currently underway, and it is likely to be an eventful term. Lawmakers gathered in Raleigh on January 11 to kick-start the year with an “organizational” session, as members were sworn in, temporary rules were adopted, and officers were officially elected. Lawmakers then returned to Raleigh on Wednesday, January 25, to start the “long” legislative session in earnest.

### Makeup of the General Assembly

Following the 2022 General Election, Republicans not only maintained control of both chambers of the N.C. General Assembly, but they widened the margins over their Democratic counterparts. In the State Senate, the GOP captured 30 of the 50 seats, just barely solidifying the veto-proof supermajority necessary to override the veto of Democratic Governor Roy Cooper. Senator Phil Berger (R-Rockingham) was elected by

his colleagues to a seventh term as President Pro Tempore of the Senate, the de facto leader of the chamber. Republican Lt. Governor Mark Robinson normally presides over the Senate but can only vote to break a tie, and Senator Dan Blue (D-Wake) was elected by the Senate Democratic Caucus to serve again as Minority Leader.

In the House, Republicans took 71 of the 120 seats, falling just one seat short of the 72-seat supermajority needed to override a gubernatorial veto. Nonetheless, Rep. Tim Moore (R-Cleveland), who was elected to a record fifth term as Speaker of the House, publicly stated that he believes the House will have an “effective” veto-proof supermajority on many issues, as the Speaker intends to work across the aisle to garner the support of his Democratic colleagues in order to override potential vetoes by the Governor on key legislation. Rep. Robert Reives (D-Chatham) was reelected by the House Democratic Caucus to serve as Minority Leader in the House.

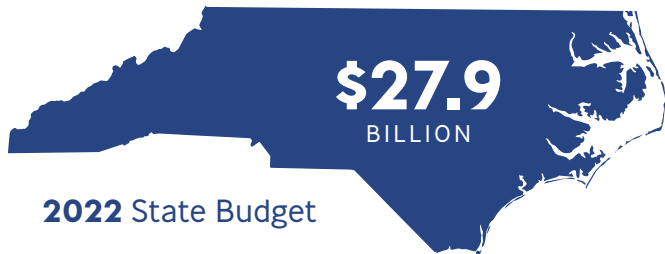
## Why A Veto-Proof Supermajority is So Significant

For the past four years, Governor Cooper has wielded his veto stamp with little challenge from lawmakers. During the 2019-2020 legislative biennium, he vetoed 25 bills, and during the 2021-2022 biennium, he vetoed 22 bills. Despite several attempts, the General Assembly was unable to muster the two-thirds supermajority necessary to override any of these vetoes. Now with more favorable GOP margins, the vote count in both chambers has become increasingly significant and will likely come into play more during the 2023-2024 biennium.



## Getting to Work

As members of the State House and State Senate get to work, a myriad of important issues loom large. Always a major initiative, the crafting and passage of the state budget will be a primary focus of lawmakers throughout much of the session.



In 2022, the state budget reached \$27.9 billion and is expected to continue to grow this year. It appears likely that Medicaid reform, in some manner, will be a major topic of discussion between the House and Senate. It is also possible that state lawmakers will consider redrawing state legislative and congressional district maps, in light of the fact that Republicans captured a 5-2 majority on the State Supreme Court in November. This court is far more likely to look to constitutional language and accept legislatively-drawn maps than the previous Democratic majority, which threw out redistricting plans initially passed by the GOP-led legislature last session. Legislative leaders are also asking the court to revisit its previous

decision on North Carolina's Voter-ID law which was approved by voters in a constitutional amendment in 2018, but was struck down by the court subsequently.

## Pro-Life/Pro-Family Legislation

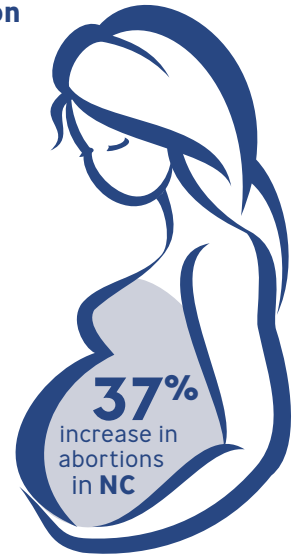
Abortion is likely to be at the forefront of debate at the General Assembly following the U.S. Supreme Court's *Dobbs* decision last summer that overturned *Roe v. Wade* and returned decision-making authority over life and abortion to elected representatives. Prior to *Dobbs*, North Carolina law prohibited abortion after 20 weeks' gestation, except in cases of a medical emergency. This law, however, was enjoined by a federal judge in 2019, who said the 20-week ban violated the "viability" standard established by *Roe* and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*.

Under that standard, abortion is legal up to the point the abortionist determines a child is able to survive independently outside the mother's womb. After *Roe* was overturned by the High Court, our legislative leaders petitioned the federal judge to vacate his previous ruling, and he complied, effectively reinstating North Carolina's 20-week ban.

While this may sound favorable, most of North Carolina's neighboring states—except Virginia—have passed legislation to protect unborn life at conception or after a fetal heartbeat is detected (typically around 6 weeks). This means that North Carolina's abortion law is substantially more liberal than most other states in the Southeast, making us a destination state for abortion. In fact, **Planned Parenthood has reported a 37% increase in abortions in North Carolina during the months following the *Dobbs* decision, and many of these abortions were sought by women from out of state.**

Abortion statistics indicate that legislation protecting life after a heartbeat is detected could save as many as 86% of unborn babies who would otherwise perish at the hands of an abortionist or through a chemical abortion. This means that the lives of over 25,000 of the 30,004 babies aborted in North Carolina in 2020 (the last year official statewide statistics are available) would be saved through a heartbeat bill. An alternative proposal that would limit abortion at 12 weeks, the end of the first trimester, is also being discussed but would save only a fraction of the lives a heartbeat bill would.

On the second day of session, Democratic lawmakers in both the State House and Senate filed bills to "codify *Roe* and *Casey* protections." This legislation would reinstate a viability standard for abortion in North Carolina, but it is not expected to be considered in either chamber.

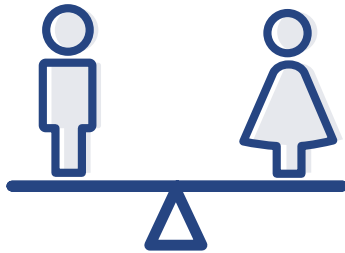




What may also be considered, however, is a variety of other pro-life and pro-family measures to provide practical support and assistance to women and families facing unplanned pregnancies. These services may include parenting and educational resources as well as additional funding for pro-life pregnancy resource centers. Additionally, the General Assembly may look at ways to streamline the adoption process, improve the foster care system, and create an environment that gives women every reason to choose life instead of abortion.

### Parents' Bill of Rights

The fundamental rights of parents to direct the upbringing and education of their children is also likely to be at the forefront of consideration this year. Last session, the State Senate passed a bill that would affirm, strengthen, and protect the rights of parents in North Carolina to take an active role in their child's education and health care, while also shielding students from instruction that is not age appropriate. Among other things, **the bill would prohibit schools from teaching lessons on gender identity, sexual activity, or sexuality in Kindergarten through fourth grade, and would require teachers to inform parents if their child requests to be referred to by a different name or different pronouns.** Senate Bill 49 passed the N.C. Senate in early February and has yet to be considered in the N.C. House at the time of this writing.



### Sports Gambling and "Medical" Marijuana

Two measures we will see again are bills that would legalize sports gambling across the state and that would authorize marijuana for "medical purposes." A sports gambling bill passed the State Senate and multiple committees in the State House last session before being defeated on the House floor by just one vote. **NC Family opposed this bill because of the harm that legalized gambling and gambling expansion can have on individuals, families, and communities that are victimized and ravaged by gambling addiction and corruption.**



The "medical" marijuana bill passed the Senate last session but was never considered in the House. This year, the so-called "NC Compassionate Care Act" was the third bill filed in the State Senate, by primary sponsor Sen. Bill Rabon (R-Brunswick). **This proposal would legalize the possession and use of marijuana for an ever-growing set of "medical" circumstances, despite the fact that major medical groups like the American**




Medical Association, U.S. Food and Drug Administration, American Psychiatric Association, and American Academy of Neurology, all "encourage continuing research, but currently do not support medicinal use of marijuana" outside of the proper testing and approval of the FDA. SB 3 has passed the N.C. Senate but has yet to be considered in the House at the time of this writing.



### Take an Active Role in Your Government

You can take an active role in the legislative process in North Carolina. First, be sure to visit our website at [NCFamily.org](http://NCFamily.org) and sign up to receive our daily emails and Action Alerts if you do not receive them already. This is a great way to stay informed and educated about important issues being considered. Secondly, get to know your lawmakers and reach out to them when issues arise that are important to you. A great way to do this is to visit the "Find Your Legislators" page on the N.C. General Assembly website at [www.ncleg.gov](http://www.ncleg.gov). On that website, you can also view daily legislative calendars, review bills that have been filed in the State House and State Senate, and listen to committee meetings and daily legislative sessions.

We all have an important role to play, and NC Family is committed to being a voice for families and Biblical values in North Carolina's policy and political arenas. Please don't hesitate to call on us whenever we can be of assistance. 



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

## Love God, Love Neighbor

“WHY?” was the question that greeted us as we walked into the meeting room a few years ago at our annual Family Policy Council conference. That one word was written on the top of six large easel pads distributed around the meeting room. Our instructions: divide up into six groups and discuss and answer the question “Why?” Why do we, as state-level, faith-based Family Policy Councils, do what we do?

Oh, and we had to answer the question in four words or less, and we had an hour. Really???

I was chosen as the facilitator for my group, and although I had not done this exercise before, it was actually something to which I had given quite a bit of thought. I told my group they were probably going to get frustrated with me because whatever response they gave to the question on the board, I was going to respond with the same question “Why?”...until we got to the bottom of the matter.

“We do what we do because we want to see good legislation passed and bad legislation defeated,” one of my colleagues commented. “That’s absolutely right,” I said, “but why?”



“We want to be a light in a dark world that is growing darker every day.”

“You’re right, but why?” I responded.

“We are about speaking God’s Truth and sharing the gospel, to help lead others to faith,” another stated.

“Yes, but why?”

“Because we believe God’s Word is true, and He has a perfect plan and a purpose for each and every person.”

Now we’re getting somewhere!!

Somewhat exasperated but also quite energized, we continued to dig and probe and ponder to answer the question at the top of our white board.

Then it was as if a light bulb went off, as several of us thumbed through our Bibles or pulled up the Bible apps on our phones.

We zeroed in on Matthew 22:36-40, where the Pharisee, “an expert in the law,” asked Jesus, “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

And Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

That’s exactly why we do what we do! Because we love God and we want to honor Him, and because we love our “neighbors” and we want them to experience the love, peace, joy, grace, and fulfillment of living into the unique individuals God has designed and created them to be! That’s it!

Now we had to boil this all down into four words or less. That was easy - **Love God, Love Neighbor**

It felt like we struck gold after toiling together on an arduous and exhausting mining expedition, and we were excited to present our valuable “treasure” to the rest of our colleagues.

As we reassembled to share our conclusions, the results were amazing, but, honestly, not so surprising. Every group but one had come to exactly the same conclusion. Several of the other groups even cited Matthew 22 and landed on the same four words (or something very close).

What an incredible affirmation this was, not only of the important work of the Family Policy Councils around the country, but also of the Spirit Who guides our efforts. I couldn’t think of a purer representation of our calling and our motivation to do all that we do than “to love God and to love our neighbor.”

Earlier in Matthew 5, Jesus says that we—as believers—are the “salt of the earth” and the “light of the world.” He even says that we are blessed when people insult us, and persecute us, and falsely say all kinds of evil against us because of Jesus. “Rejoice and be glad,” He says, “because great is your reward in heaven....” (Matthew 5:11-16).

Living into this kind of love is not easy, especially in our current culture, but as Christians, it is what we are called to do. In fact, it is what we were made to do! And in Christ Jesus, we have the perfect example to follow, and we have His Spirit within us to guide us. 🏠



A stylized, handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John".

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





North Carolina Family Policy Council  
PO Box 20607  
Raleigh, NC 27619



NC FAMILY'S

# Salt & Light

## STUDENT SEMINARS



## PASTORS SEMINARS



### STUDENT SEMINARS

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- Discussion with NC Family Staff on the importance of Christian engagement in public policy
- Message from NC Family President John Rustin on the "3 P's" of effective advocacy
- Experiencing a real-life committee debate on critically important bills of interest \*
- The option of touring the NC General Assembly and meeting with your state legislators \*\*

\* In person or virtually depending on group size

\*\* When the legislature is in session

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To schedule a Pastors Seminar, contact  
NC Family's Pastor Outreach Director  
Tom Kakadelis at (704) 575-7345 or  
tomk@NCFamily.org or visit our website.

[www.NCFamily.org/Seminar-Signup](http://www.NCFamily.org/Seminar-Signup)