



Minnesota District Legislation Committee



Report to the MN District – September 2023

Minnesota Legislature Approves Abortion Rights Bill

Earlier this year the Minnesota legislature approved the *Protect Reproductive Options Act*, a bill on abortion rights, a bill that was signed into law by Governor Walz on January 31st. The bill guarantees a woman's right to abort her baby for any reason, at any time, up to birth. The right to an abortion was already protected in Minnesota due to a 1995 state Supreme Court decision known as *Doe v. Gomez*. This new legislation makes it official state law. The bill also prohibits local governments from restricting access to abortion, birth control, sterilization and prenatal care

In May the Minnesota Legislature took things even further and passed the Abortion Repealer Bill which was signed into law on May 24th. Among other things this bill...

- removed provisions is state law requiring lifesaving care for infants born alive during a botched abortion. Lifesaving care is no longer required, only “comfort care” while the child is allowed to die.
- increased taxpayer funding of abortion for women covered by MinnesotaCare.
- repealed the protection provided by the physician-only law, meaning that abortions can now be performed by individuals who are not trained or licensed as a physician.
- repealed Women's Right to Know and informed consent.
- repealed Minnesota's viability law which states that abortions cannot be performed when the baby is viable outside the womb.
- repealed the Positive Alternatives Grant program, so that pro-life pregnancy resource centers can no longer receive state funding to provide vital services to women in need.

Minnesota Legislature Strips Parents of Their Rights

In April Governor Walz signed into the law The Kidnapping Bill. Under this new law, parents may lose custody of their child to a state court if they refuse to provide “gender-affirming healthcare,” such as puberty-blocking drugs, cross-sex hormones, or gender transition surgery. Such refusal on the part of parents would be considered “abuse” or “neglect” under the new law and be grounds for a Minnesota court to take custody of their child. Moreover, an adult from another state would be

protected from prosecution by that state for bringing a minor to receive “gender-affirming care” in Minnesota.

Minnesota Legislature Approves Take Pride Act

On May 19th Governor Walz signed into law the “Take Pride Act.” Among other things this law removes explicit legal protections for children by removing language in the Minnesota Human Rights Act which previously state that adults who have “physical or sexual attachment to children” do not have legal protected status under current antidiscrimination laws. Here’s the impact: Adults who “identify” as sexually attracted to children may now be protected by nondiscrimination laws if they sought employment at a preschool, daycare center, or other facility serving children.

New Teacher Licensing Standards Approved

The new standards for teacher licensure that were proposed by the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB) were mostly approved by two administrative law judges in December of 2022 and are set to go into effect on July 1, 2024. The new standards will apply to all new teachers applying for state licensure (including educators who end up teaching at private schools). Among other things, the new standards will require candidates to demonstrate from their coursework their ability to:

- “affirm” student identities, including sex and gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation and “incorporate” them into a learning environment
- “understand” how “ethnocentrism, eurocentrism, deficit-based teaching, and white supremacy undermine pedagogical equity”
- “assess” their “biases” and “mitigate their own behavior to disrupt oppressive systems”
- “empower” learners “to be agents of social change to promote equity”

Obviously these new standards will have a dramatic effect on students in the teaching track at Martin Luther College as they pursue state licensure. And if Martin Luther College chooses not implement or follow the new standards, it will effect the college’s status as state-licensed school.

Other Items

This year the Minnesota legislature also passed a number of other new laws affecting WELS churches and schools and their employees. The new laws pertain to things such as sick and safe leave, bereavement leave, family military leave, domestic abuse or harassment leave, and lactation breaks.

Missouri Legislature Approves Study of Bible

Earlier this summer the Missouri legislature passed a bill, authorizing school districts to offer elective social studies courses on the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament.

Respectfully submitted,

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