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QUARTERLY

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## Freedom Is at Stake: Why Christians Must Be Engaged in the 2024 Election

By Summer Ingram and Emily Hawley

Every election feels like the most important in United States history, and this one is certainly no exception. With encroaching globalism, rising inflation, and an invasion at our southern border, it's no secret that America is in the throes of crisis. It's also not hard to see that evil ideologies are pervading our culture and influencing national public policy. The battle over the right to life rages on in the states, a radical LGBTQ agenda is being pushed by the White House, and our constitutional freedoms — including religious liberty and free speech — are under nonstop attack.

Now, more than ever, America needs Christians who will stand up to protect our freedoms and values. Too much is at stake to ignore the crises. All 435 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives, 34 seats in the U.S. Senate, 11 governorships, the White House, countless

state and local seats, abortion ballot measures, and more are on ballots this November.

Roughly 25 million American Christians (about one in three) do not vote. It's crucial that we improve this statistic this election cycle, understanding that we can change the tide of history when we engage in the electoral process, exercise our civic duty, and mobilize apathetic voters to do the same.

Christians are called to be the salt and light of the world (Matt. 5:13-16), but we can't live up to this call if we isolate ourselves from the world and don't become engaged in the issues plaguing society. As a Christian, voting for biblical values is a way to honor God and love your neighbor because of the impact leaders and policies have on our lives.

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### TOP NEWS

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- U.S. Capitol Rooftop Prayer Event



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## Florida Went from an Abortion Destination to a Pro-Life Sanctuary Overnight ... But It Could All Be Reversed in November

By John Stemberger, president of Liberty Counsel Action

For those of us on the front lines of the pro-life fight in Florida, it was emotional witnessing our state transform into one of the most pro-life states in the nation overnight after decades of setbacks and very little protection for the preborn in the Sunshine State.

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Proverbs 14:34 says, "Righteousness exalts a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people," and Psalm 33:12 reiterates, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD."

### Standing Up for Our Founding Principles

As a nation whose motto is "In God We Trust," it is imperative that we uphold the righteous laws and foundational values that make our nation great.

Our nation's founding is inextricable from an acknowledgment of God, and while not every American adheres to the Christian faith, the laws, policies, and character of our nation reflect biblical principles.

Our Founders were concerned with establishing the framework for a government

that honored both moral and natural law and the Creator by whom these laws were given. President John Adams said, "Our constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other." President George Washington similarly said in his farewell address that "of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports."

### The Fallacy of Separation of Church and State

The Founders rejected the idea of a state-endorsed church, such as the one they escaped in England, but they never intended for God to be erased from government. Contrary to popular belief, the phrase

"separation of church and state" is found nowhere in America's founding documents but was a term first used in a letter.

During the time President Thomas Jefferson penned these words, he had been attending a national church service regularly held in the U.S. Capitol and wrote a letter to assure the Danbury Baptists that the American government would not interfere with religion, coining the often-misinterpreted phrase "separation of church and state."

Jefferson, a staunch advocate for religious freedom, did not intend for God to be expunged from government nor for the church to distance itself from political affairs, but rather that the government would not intrude or trample on one's faith and freedom to worship.

Nothing prevents the church from being involved and influencing the halls of power, and it is a myth that Christians shouldn't be involved in politics. Now that our nation's Judeo-Christian principles and the truth that all are created equal are being sabotaged, Christians must vote and take up the mantle to defend our rights and freedoms.

The Founders integrated a system of checks and balances and conveyed power to "We the People" as a safeguard against tyranny. Citizens have the duty and privilege to participate in the civic process to elect officials who are empowered to make decisions that affect the laws and policies.

### Fighting for Freedom's Sake

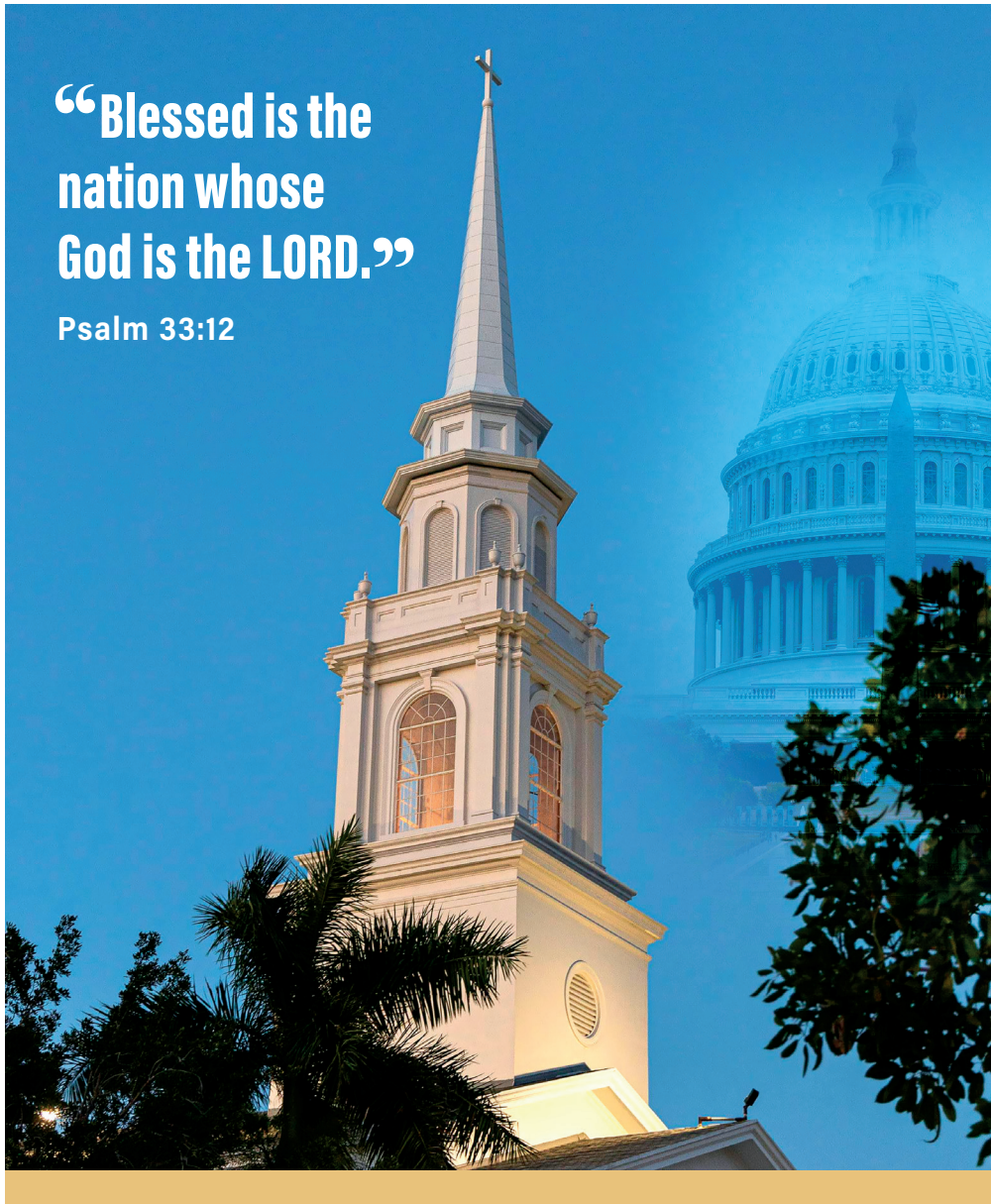
When apathetic Christian citizens forfeit their role in this, the void will be filled by those bent on undermining our freedoms.

Righteous leaders and policies will prevail when Christians are involved and influencing government and culture. The time is now for Christians to be civically engaged to ensure the endurance of the American values and freedoms that make our nation great.

Freedom is a fragile thing that must be cherished and protected to ensure it's not lost. Ronald Reagan said it best, "Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it was once like in the United States where men were free." **TC**

“Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD.”

Psalm 33:12



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## From Abortion Destination to Pro-Life Sanctuary

When the clock struck midnight on May 1, Florida went from being a so-called “destination state” for abortion to a state with significant protections for preborn babies from their first heartbeat (around 6 weeks gestation).

Florida was previously one of the only states in the Southeast without significant pro-life protections. In fact, about [one-third](#) of all abortions in the South occurred in Florida, and roughly [1 in 12](#) abortions nationwide. The heartbeat law in Florida has national implications and ripple effects that will lead to not only preborn *Floridians* being saved but countless preborn *Americans* being saved from abortion.

While there is still more work to do to ensure all humans have the right to life in Florida, tens of thousands of children will be spared now that the preborn are given heartbeat law protections. In the meantime, it’s up to us to step up to the plate in supporting life and promoting a culture where abortion is both unattainable and unthinkable.

### Step Up to the Plate for Life

The misnomer that the pro-life movement doesn’t care about children after they’re born is simply not true. We are not just “pro-birth”; we are pro-LIFE and we love and care for them both — mother and child.

First, Florida is home to around [167 pregnancy resource centers](#), many of which I’ve had the privilege of working with through the years. These are remarkable organizations run by heroic women that provide life-affirming resources for mothers to receive the support needed to carry and care for a child. As we expect to see a surge in demand for the services provided by pregnancy resource centers in the coming months, we encourage churches to partner with and “adopt” their local pregnancy center and support it through time, money, and resources.

On top of this, Florida’s heartbeat law is allocating \$30 million in annual recurring state funds to provide baby formula, diapers, car seats, counseling services, and more to help mothers and their families choose life. Florida also provides Medicaid funding one year after the child is born.

We need to plead with mothers to understand that the beautiful gift of life God places in their womb should not be destroyed.



“‘No law’ means no existing pro-life law will survive to protect mothers and their preborn children. Florida’s Amendment 4 is both dangerous and extreme.”

Death is never the answer when facing a crisis pregnancy or difficult circumstance.

### The Final Battle for Life in Florida

While this is a huge victory, the next six months are critical in ensuring that pro-life protections endure past November as the heartbeat law, along with 36 years of pro-life legislation, will be reversed if Amendment 4 surpasses 60% of votes. If abortion is enshrined in the Florida Constitution, it would allow abortion until birth. This is a matter of life and death, and the stakes couldn’t be higher.

As a lifelong Floridian, I am confident the state of Florida is in the main, pro-life. This is why I encourage people to *just read the amendment*. Since the ballot summary is deceptively worded, it’s important Floridians see how extreme Amendment 4 truly is and how it would endanger both mothers and

their preborn babies by removing virtually *all* abortion regulations up until the point of birth.

The abortion lobby and Democrat Party have made the “right” to kill preborn children the centerpiece of their campaign. They are promoting lies, fear, and distortion, arguing that Florida should pass Amendment 4. *Floridians, don’t be gaslit and fooled into voting for this radical amendment.*

### Study the Language, not the Sound Bites

The first nine words, “No law shall prohibit, penalize, delay, or restrict abortion,” is all you need to know about Amendment 4. “No law” means *no existing pro-life law* will survive to protect mothers and their preborn children. Florida’s Amendment 4 is both dangerous and extreme, and would provide virtually no protection for the preborn or their mothers if it passes.

So much is on the line, which is why this is referred to as the “final battle” for life in Florida. If Amendment 4 is codified into law, it will be almost impossible to overturn. Florida is a bellwether for the country, and as Florida goes, so goes the nation.

In the months ahead, we must continue to make the case that preborn babies are humans made in the likeness of God who have dignity and are worthy of protection. It’s also important that we defeat this amendment to ensure Florida stays a pro-life sanctuary state and not a graveyard for the preborn.

The right to life is fundamental, and all human life is valuable. We are interested in saving lives and changing hearts and minds on abortion as we work to transform our country from a *culture of death* to a *culture of life*.

And if we want to see preborn lives continue to be saved in a post-*Roe* America, Amendment 4 must be defeated in Florida this November. **IC**



**John Stemberger** is the president of Liberty Counsel Action and Senior Counsel of Liberty Counsel. John founded the influential Florida Family Policy Council, which he led for over 20 years, and was a primary founder of

*Trail Life USA*, a nationwide Christian scouting movement for boys.

## After School District Buries Opt-Out, Nearly 2,000 Minnesota High School Students Walk Out of LGBTQIA+ Lesson

Osseo Area School District 279 in Minnesota learned a lesson itself when it tried to teach one to its high school students this past April. The district scheduled a 40-minute "LGBTQIA+ History and Culture Lesson" to be presented at its high schools, complete with a "Closure Reflection Sheet" at the end.

Liberty Counsel sent a demand [letter](#) to the district superintendent to ensure that students with religious objections were able to opt out. Between April 2 and April 5, nearly 2,000 students and at least five teachers exercised their legal rights and told the district, "No thanks, we'll sit this one out in the cafeteria."

This is not to say the Osseo officials made it easy for them to do so, even though school officials assured both teachers and students that religious opt-outs would be approved while students could "leave prior to or during the lesson."

"The school district wanted to have their cake and eat it, too," said Hugh Phillips, litigation counsel for Liberty Counsel. "In other words, school officials offered a religious opt-out but made it as hard as possible for parents to help their students exercise their religious rights."

Fewer than 30 days out from the presentation of the lesson, teachers were provided an advance copy of the district's parent opt-out email. However, parents were not provided with the lesson content. So, to review the material, parents had to fill out an online form to schedule a time and *physically go into the school with I.D.* to review the lesson. It was there that parents would be able to read that the

lesson would teach the ins-and-outs of false pronoun etiquette and understanding what the "Q" means in LGBTQIA orthodoxy, just to give a few examples. Submerged at the end of paragraph five of the email was the actual "opt-out form."

"The school district buried the information, making it far more difficult for parents to opt out," Phillips added. "One of the teachers we represented complained that she felt like the district went out of its way to be secretive about the opt-out option. She reported that many teachers didn't know there was an opt-out option for themselves until it was almost too late to get the word out."

It's also important to shine a spotlight on constitutional rights here. The First Amendment and the Fourteenth Amendment protect parents' ability to direct their children's religious upbringing without fear of government interference. The First Amendment also protects every American's right to free speech and the free exercise of religion.

"Teachers and students cannot be forced to participate in speech that conflicts with their sincerely held religious beliefs," said Mat Staver, founder and chairman of Liberty Counsel. "Hopefully, the school district learned a lesson to stop trying to force its agenda on students, parents, and teachers."

Phillips concurs and takes the student walkout as a win. "My hope is that by engaging on this issue, more parents, students, and teachers will be empowered to exercise their constitutional right to opt out of participation in content which violates their religious convictions." **LC**

### Liberty Counsel at Work



### Rooftop Prayers in Washington, D.C.

**PRAYERS UP!** Members of Faith & Liberty and Rooftop Encounter join forces with representatives from Liberty Counsel Action and National Day of Prayer Task Force to spend time praying for the nation from the Speaker's Balcony at the U.S. Capitol overlooking Washington, D.C.