

Christian Action Ministry

Newsletter

Involving the Christian in Community Action

May—June 2023★ Vol. 33, Number 03

Calendar

National Day of Prayer
May 4

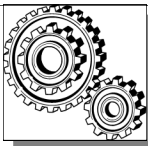
“Pray Fervently In Righteousness and Avail Much - JAMES 5:16b”
Contact:
ndpvermont@gmail.com

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If you would like to be added to our mailing list, please email us at camnetvt@gmail.com or contact our website (see back page)



In the Works

Faith & Science

Are you interested in becoming involved? CAM is looking for interested and active people to act as liaisons to their church, helping to keep the Christian community informed. Contact us at camnetVT@gmail.com.

“Child” Marriage

By
Lauston Stephens

As this is written, Vermont statute 18 V.S.A. § 5142 reads, “...The following persons are not authorized to marry, and a town clerk shall not knowingly issue a civil marriage license, when:

- (1) either party is a person who has not attained majority, unless the town clerk has received in writing the consent of one of the parents of the minor, if there is a parent competent to act, or of the guardian of the minor;
- (2) either party is under 16 years of age...”

In other words, currently, no one can marry in Vermont under the age of 16 under any circumstances.

In the past two bienniums, a bill was introduced to remove any exceptions for anyone under 18 years of age. Both times, the bill died in committee. This year, it is H. 148, and it has passed the House. One reason the sponsors are getting further this time is that they have recruited justices of the peace to support the bill. This author attended the Zoom conference that was held for said recruiting. “Takeaways” from that conference will be shared here.

First, some general points.

Eighteen is the age of majority. If you are 17 years and 364 days old, legally you are a minor until midnight. But people would not refer to you as a child. Advocates of this change to Vermont law are pitching it as eliminating “child marriage.” Highly charged language is not used to encourage rational thought. It would be more judicious to use the more precise term, “minor marriage,” which indicates that one or both partners are not legally an adult.

JPs are members of a municipal board of civil authority and hear tax appeals. They administer oaths. They traditionally serve as ballot clerks in Vermont. Solemnizing marriages is an optional duty. Some do not do it at all, some do it only for family and friends. Those that go beyond that can not discriminate against anyone by refusing to officiate at their marriage. The presenters of the conference spoke of solemnizing marriages as the central duty of JPs. Embroidering them in politics on a social issue will tend to further undermine confidence in the fairness of elections.

Focusing on one issue can result in scorched earth ac-

tions.

The leading advocate for this change had a personal bad experience from marrying at 16. That is unfortunate, but some people marry at 26, 36, 46, etc., and have a bad experience. Marriage can be hard.

Statistically, 48% of marriages end in divorce when one or both partners are under 18. However, it is 60% for those marrying between 20 and 25. Marrying young is not a sure road to trouble.

Rationals that were suggested included the fact that most New England states have already outlawed “child marriage.” How can Vermonters who see themselves as so progressive allow this state to get behind? There is no residency requirement in Vermont for marriage and we would become a destination for “child marriages.” Weddings in Vermont are big business and that won’t change.

The presenters of the conference went through some “what if” questions and the first one was, “What if they are pregnant?” The response was that the young man can provide support for the year or two until they are old enough to marry.

Why was “parental consent marriage” originally written into the law? People are biologically adults before they are legally adults. Teenage sweethearts have been known to find themselves in a family way. It is not an ideal situation, but there is a practicality to it. The advocates of H. 148 do not accept any justifications.

What happens if “parental consent marriage” is taken off the table as an option? The young man wants to take responsibility, get a job, and support his young family. As the presenters said, he can do that without moving in with them. But what are the choices for the young woman? She can become an unwed mother, get an abortion, or put the child up for adoption. There was no mention of this. That is not seen as relevant, those are her choices, married or single, adult or minor.

The effect of the proposed change would be an increase in the amount of blood on Vermont hands. Yet, the presenters claimed that passing this bill into law “harms no one.”

Another of the “what ifs” was cultural traditions. The response was to cite the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This is a misnomer. It was actually the “Majority Declaration of Universal Human Rights.” There were only 58 members of the United Nations at that time. Soviet states abstained. Saudi Arabia abstained specifically because the declaration conflicted with sharia law.



There is real child marriage in some parts of the world. They will not change because everybody in New England is changing.

There is a real issue here.

There are both red states such as Kentucky and Mississippi as well as blue states such as California that have no lower age limit for marriage. It is not a partisan issue but in numerous places, there has never been a widely seen need for government involvement.

My question was, “How does ‘child marriage’ hinder prosecution for domestic violence?” This was one of the reasons cited to build

sent to the marriage, would they not also co-sign a contract with an attorney if necessary? There are more focused, less radical, solutions than re-engineering society.

The conference presenters counseled their listeners to individually contact their representatives and the participating legislator declared that personal contacts are more likely to be considered than signed petitions or email blasts. We might remember that when we have a change we want.

The leading advocates for this change are campaigning to eliminate minor marriages throughout the world. They will not stop. It appears that in their eyes, Joseph should not have been allowed to take Mary as his wife. Legal adulthood for women may have been a foreign idea in that culture, but it seems that these people who see the State as the final authority will only respect the laws that they can enact.

Lauston Stephens is a Director of the Christian Action Ministry and attends Roadside Chapel in Rutland.

Legislative Update

At this writing, the “cross over” deadline has passed. If bills are not voted on by one chamber and passed over to the other chamber by the cross-over deadline, they can not be expected to become law this year. They might still become law next year. Several bills introduced in Montpelier were reported on in our last issue. There are some updates.

S.26 An act relating to removing the residency requirement from Vermont's patient choice at end of life laws

This bill was introduced by Sen. Lyons on January 20th and referred to the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare which is chaired by Senator Lyons. A similar bill, H. 190, was introduced in the House of Representatives on Feb. 7th, strongly passed in the House within days, and sent to the Senate where it was referred to the same Committee. The bills might be reconciled and could still become law this year.

The residency requirement was challenged in court last August on behalf of a Connecticut patient and the settlement “stipulates that the state will support removal of the residency requirement from the law.” - <https://vermontbiz.com/news/2023/march/19/>

Other states have also placed residency limits on assisted suicide laws they have passed. Vermont leaders have immediately caved on this. If something such as abortion or assisting

.is defined as medical care, any residency limits might be challenged as unconstitutional.

S.16 An act relating to repealing the exception for clergy to report child abuse and neglect

This bill was referred to the Senate Committee on Judiciary and they have received testimony from at least eleven witnesses, but it remains in committee for this year.

H. 23 An act relating to mail-in ballots for general elections

This bill was referred to the House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs. They have received testimony from Rep. Larry Labor, the lead sponsor. All sponsors are members of the minority party. The bill seems dead in committee.

H. 113 An act relating to the public, pious, or charitable uses property tax exemption

This bill was referred to the House

Committee on Ways and Means which has received testimony from Rep. Laura Sibilila, the lead sponsor.

H.174 An act relating to establishing fetal personhood

Though not mentioned in our last issue, this bill was referred to the House Committee on Health Care. No testimony has been received and all six sponsors are members of the minority party. The bill seems dead in committee.

S. 125 An act relating to voluntary engagement in sex work

Introduced on March 14th and referred to the Senate Committee on Judiciary, it will sit in committee until next year. The lead sponsor, Sen. Rebecca White, is in her freshman term and has sponsored or co-sponsored some 48 bills as well as about a dozen resolutions and two proposed amendments to the state Constitution. Is this the “shotgun” approach to legislation? If you sponsor enough bills, sooner or later something is bound to pass.

Proposal 2 “This proposal would amend the Constitution of the State of Vermont to repeal the section calling for criminals to be punished at hard labor. Guidelines for the proper treatment of justice-involved individuals can, and should, continue to evolve; such methods should not be enshrined in a state’s constitution.”

Before the Constitution can be amended, you will be able to vote on whether or not Vermont has “justice-involved individuals” instead of criminals.

A retired attorney has likened human law to cancer. It seems to grow and spread and metastasize. There have been over 600 bills introduced in the past few months in Montpelier. Many descriptions do not give a ready idea of the intended change. If you would like to help keep track of proposed changes of interest to our readers, please email us at cam-netvt@gmail.com.

Unchangeable Laws

© By Kay Trudell, December 12, 2022

We can't rewrite the laws of God
No matter how we try.
No power rooted here on earth
Can cancel God on high.

God gave the Ten Commands to us
Through Moses on the Hill.
Those laws divine are still in force.
We must obey them still.

A man should wed a woman.
There is no other way.
And tiny babies not yet born
Should see the light of day.

Males can't morph into females,
Despite the culture's say.
God's fixed standard cannot change,
Nor cells their DNA.

We thank you, Lord, for the Good Book,
And for amazing grace,
Though courts and cancel culture
Dare try to take their place.

Humans plot, and humans plan,
Their schemes will come to naught.
As in the End all bend the knee
To the King whose reign they fought.

Not Congress, Courts, nor President
Can mandate in His place,
When souls are judged by what is writ
When we see Him face to face.

Sin culture's dark bell clangs anon,
Commands that bad is good.
Until that time strew salt and light,
And stand firm as we should.



“The soul of America is decrepit. Morality has become ‘old hat.’ The Spirit of God has been pushed aside. A slow degradation of righteousness has desensitized us. Where do we, as Christians draw the line in allowing our policy setters to ‘call good evil and evil good’? Isaiah 5:20.”

“First we overlook evil. Then we permit evil. Then we legalize evil. Then we promote evil. Then we celebrate evil. Then we persecute those who still call it evil.” (Author Unknown).

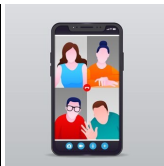
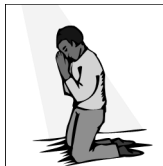
Where does your church stand in this progression?

“We should be seeing the sin, loving the sinner, then asking for God’s healing, redemption and forgiveness in each of our lives. Yet, some in our churches have come to accept and celebrate ... immoral policies and lifestyles. God calls on us to draw the line and stand firm. Romans 14:16 says, “Do not allow what you consider good to be spoken of as evil.” God calls us to His righteousness, to stand where He stands and allow Him to accomplish the healing, the redemption, the salvation from sin so we (His church, our nation) can be put back together in wholeness. “

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What Can I Do?



*Faith without works is dead
James 2:17*

Email: camnetvt@gmail.com
or website
<https://christianactionministry.org/>

✉ **CAM Network, Inc.**
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Williston, VT 05495

Next Meeting

May 2, 7:00 pm
Zoom

June 6, 7:00 P.M.
Parkinson home
Hinesburg, Vt.

camnetvt@gmail.com
Email to confirm date and location

Make A Difference