



THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC BIOETHICS CENTER

600 REED ROAD, SUITE 102, BROOMALL, PA 19008 (215) 877-2660 (215) 877-2688 FAX NCBCENTER.ORG

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National

- The Department of Homeland Security has awarded the “Sexual Minority Youth Assistance League” (SMYAL) a \$530,000 Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention grant. Some of SMYAL’s activities include distributing condoms to minors and programs open to LGBT individuals aged 13–24, actively seeking to keep parents away from their children. For further information, click [here](#).
- Congressman Chip Roy, R-TX, has introduced a bill to the House of Representatives to repeal the FACE Act, noting that “Biden’s Department of Justice has brazenly weaponized the FACE Act against normal, everyday Americans across the political spectrum, simply because they are pro-life.” Other representatives cosponsoring the bill include Chris Smith of New Jersey, Bob Good of Virginia, Andrew Clyde of Georgia, Jim Banks of Indiana, Anna Paulina Luna of Florida, and Doug Lamborn of Colorado. For further information, click [here](#).
- The Department of Health and Human Services has announced a proposal to change the regulatory language eliminating “mother” and “father” and other “gendered language” from regulations regarding childcare. The Department cited that such a measure would be “advancing equity for all, including members of the LGBTQI+ communities.” It cited compliance with the Respect for Marriage Act. For further information, click [here](#).
- Department of Education Secretary Miguel Cardona blasted “people that are misbehaving in public and then acting as if they know what’s right for kids.” He also said, “There’s a team that’s fighting for kids and there’s a team that’s fighting against kids.” The comments seemed to be aimed at parents concerned about schools promoting pornographic, LGBT content. For further information, click [here](#).
- Attorney General Merrick Garland was grilled September 20 on his anti-Catholic and pro-abortion bias during congressional hearings. When Rep. Van Drew (R-NJ) asked whether traditional Catholics were extremists, the Attorney General first expressed indignation, saying, “The idea that someone with my family background would discriminate against any religion is so outrageous, is so absurd,” until finally stating, “Catholics are not extremists.” When asked by Senator Hawley (R-MO) whether and how many undercover agents there were in Catholic churches, Garland responded, “I don’t know and I don’t believe we have any informants aimed at Catholic churches.” For further information click [here](#) or [here](#).

Federal Courts

- President Biden’s Department of Justice is appealing the decision of the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, which restricted the use and availability of the abortifacient mifepristone, however it did retain the FDA authorization of the drug. It remains to be

seen whether the Supreme Court will grant certiorari. For further information, click [here](#).

- The Eighth Circuit ruled in favor of Parents Defending Education on September 29. Reversing the district court, the Eight Circuit struck down Linn-Mar Community School District's policy allowing underaged students to make independent decisions about their gender identity, prohibiting school officials from informing parents of such decisions and punishing other students with expulsion for failure to "respect a student's gender identity" or for "misgendering." The Court noted that the policy "lacked clarity" and was, therefore, too vague to be enforced. For further information, click [here](#).

State by State

Legislative

- The California Assembly passed a bill on September 8 along party lines, 57-16, requiring that family courts examine as a relevant factor whether the parent affirms their child's "gender identity or gender expression" in child custody cases. Several Democrat Assemblymen did not vote on the bill. An identical bill passed in the Senate on September 6. The bill is vague about what is meant by "gender affirmation," but says, "[I]n every case [it] must promote the child's overall health and well-being." For further information, click [here](#).
- Governor Gavin Newsom of California vetoed the abovementioned bill in a break with the California legislature. In his veto, he explained that courts are already required to consider whether a parent affirms the child's gender identity. He warned that the legislative and executive branches ought to refrain from interfering in the judicial processes of the courts by devising legal standards. He also said that "other-minded elected officials . . . could very well use this strategy to diminish the civil rights of vulnerable communities," while expressing his appreciation of the enthusiasm of the legislature. For further information, click [here](#).

Judicial

- A New York State judge ruled on September 6 that teachers who were denied religious exemptions by New York City to be reinstated and awarded back pay. Judge Ralph J. Porzio stated that New York's denial of religious exemptions was "unlawful, arbitrary and capricious," and that there was "no rational basis" for it. For further information, click [here](#) and [here](#).
- California Attorney General Rob Bonta announced a lawsuit against two pro-life pregnancy resource centers in the State: Heartbeat International and RealOptions Obria. The State alleged "fraudulent and misleading claims to advertise an unproven and largely experimental procedure called 'abortion pill reversal.'" Specifically, the State is targeting claims that "some women regret their abortions," citing that 95% of women do not regret their abortions. For further information, click [here](#).
- A county court in Wisconsin held that schools may not facilitate the "transition" of minors. Two sets of parents, represented by Alliance Defending Freedom and Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty, sued Kettle Moraine School District for

encouraging the transition of their children without their knowledge and over their objections when they discovered the procedure. Judge Maxwell said that the school cannot “supplant a parent’s right to control the healthcare and medical decisions for their children.” For further information, click [here](#).

Religious Liberty

- Former employees of BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee have filed suit against BlueCross alleging termination based on their religious objections to the COVID-19 vaccine. The employees intend to seek class action status to represent 50 people terminated on a similar basis. For further information, click [here](#).

International

- The German March for Life organized two simultaneous marches on September 16, a historic first. One march was held in Cologne, with about 2,800 participants, and another in Berlin, with about 4,000 participants. The marches drew much support, but also much opposition from feminist groups and Antifa groups. For further information, click [here](#).

Catholic Resources

- The Heart of Christ Medical Clinic hopes to open in Detroit, MI, in October of 2023. It will be focused on the healthcare “for the whole person—physical, emotional, and spiritual.” The clinic “will serve pregnant mothers, individuals, and families of all socioeconomic backgrounds, insured or uninsured.” There will also be a chapel open to all patients located on site. For the clinic’s website, click [here](#). For further information, click [here](#).

Of Note

- The Diocese of Cleveland has issued a policy on the treatment of gender-dysphoric students in diocesan schools, stating that they “are to be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity and that every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided,” citing the Catechism of the Catholic Church, para. 2358. While the document says that no person will be explicitly denied admission to a Catholic school as a result of his or her gender identity, it does subject to discipline students who openly do so, as it could result in scandal. The policy also calls, generally, for parental notification when a child expresses gender dysphoria. For further reading, click [here](#). To read the document, click [here](#).
- A British study showed that at least a third of children placed on puberty blockers and hormone drugs deteriorated with respect to their mental health. The majority of the children “experienced erratic and fluctuating mental health” while on the drugs. This study follows a near-total ban on puberty blockers for minors in the UK from June of this year, ever increasingly leaving the United States “an outlier among many Western nations” on the matter of puberty blockers for minors. For more information, click [here](#).

- A study funded by the University of Colorado College of Nursing and supported by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development thereof found that there was a “significant interest” among advanced practice clinicians (APCs) “in training to provide medication and aspiration abortion.” Colorado law allows APCs to perform abortions. The study concludes by calling for programs to expand abortion training among APCs statewide. To read the study, click [here](#).

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