

Georgia insight

Sue Ella Deadwyler
www.georgiainsight.org
"She hath done what she could."
Mark 14:8a
"...and having done all ... stand."
Ephesian

Bring Your Bible to School Day Oct. 5th

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

– The Constitution of the United States First Amendment, Ratified December 15, 1791

Bring Your Bible to School Day, created by Dr. James Dobson's Focus on the Family ministry, began in 2014 and has continued as an annual event. The first Thursday in October is always designated as a "student-led celebration that empowers Christian students to live out their faith. "All it takes is two simple steps – bringing your Bible to school and sharing what God's Word means to you." Last year's Day was "an awesome success! Thanks to everyone who participated last year and [we] are looking forward to even more this year."

Students may register online at focusonthefamily.com/Bring-Your-Bible/ and purchase Bring Your Bible to School Day badges, stickers, patches and T-shirts that are available in colors and imprinted on the front with "Bring Your Bible to School," and "God is With You" on the back.

AM Radio for Every Vehicle Act of 2023

S.1669 "AM radio for Every Vehicle Act of 2023" by Senator Ed Markey (D-Mass.) was introduced into the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee May 17, 2023 and passed the committee July 27th. Final passage is needed because some manufacturers are leaving AM radios out of vehicles, whether or not they use electricity, gasoline or diesel fuel. It applies to motor vehicles made or imported in the U.S. or shipped in interstate commerce.

AM Radio: How important is it?

AM radio provides news and talk, sports coverage, up-to-date current event data and opinion pieces; broadcasts emergencies, weather and Amber alerts, with long-distance signals that penetrate buildings, and warn multitudes of people quickly. Some stations specialize in religious programs of spiritual messages and prayer; others air classic hits and unique music genres, such as "golden-oldie" favorites of nostalgic listeners. All may include seasonal live play-by-play sports, while communicating with experts and commentators on the field.

Requirements of S.1669: The DOT and FEMA must jointly issue a rule to install as standard equipment in new motor vehicles devices that access AM broadcasting. Prior to the effective date of the rule, manufacturers must, through clear and conspicuous labeling, inform purchasers that the vehicle has no device to access AM broadcasting. DOT may assess civil penalties against any manufacturer that fails to comply with the mandate. DOJ may sue violators.

Also, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) must study and report (a) what a different system would cost and (b) the cost and the time needed to develop and implement replacements.

Since S.1669, currently, awaits a full Senate vote, all U.S. senators need to be contacted. U.S. Senators Raphael Warnock and Jon Osoff should hear from Georgians.

ACTION – Support. Text "AM" to 52886 or call the Capitol switchboard at 1 877 762-8762 to be connected with senators or representatives. Please ask them to keep AM radio in all motor vehicles.

August 2023

Good News! Free Speech Upheld in U.S. Courts

Conversion therapy for minors is protected. In a November 2020 decision affecting Georgia, Alabama and Florida, the Atlanta-based 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the use of “conversion therapy” for minors who question their identity. The court rejected claims that local government may regulate therapist/patient conversation as conduct but not speech. Judge Britt Grant opined, “If speaking to clients is not speech, the world is truly upside down.” In an earlier case Justice Clarence Thomas wrote for the majority and said the Supreme Court “has not recognized professional speech as a separate category of speech subject to different rules.”

Flying the Christian flag is protected. On May 2, 2022 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled 9-0 in *Shurtleff v. City of Boston ET AL* that Boston could not discriminate against the Christian flag. Boston documents revealed that between 2005 and 2017, Boston approved the flying of about 50 unique flags for 284 ceremonies and rejected none. In *Shurleff* the Court ruled that government may not discriminate against Christian thought, speech, and symbols.

Professional creativity is protected. On June 30, 2023 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *303 Creative v. Elenis* that the First Amendment bars Colorado’s Anti-Discrimination Act from forcing Lorie Smith to create expressive designs that speak messages with which she disagrees. Colorado law required punishment if her website, simply, indicated that she would create only items consistent with her belief that marriage is between one man and one woman.

Pregnancy resource centers are protected. On January 18, 2019 the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Civil Rights (OCR) announced that California violated federal conscience protection law by requiring pro-life facilities to post abortion notices. OCR’s director was “pleased that the Southern Court blocked California’s blatant discrimination against non-profits that give life-affirming options to women facing unplanned pregnancies.”

Pro-life apparel is protected. The American Center for Law and Justice filed a federal lawsuit against the National Archives in D.C. forcing the government into a consent order allowing pro-lifers wearing pro-life clothing to enter the Archives. The order became necessary when a pro-life group was told to remove or cover their “offensive” apparel before entering the Archives. After ACLJ won, the Archives issued a public apology and offered the group a personal tour!

Pro-life Christian students are protected. The ACLJ filed suit against the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum for harassing and then kicking out a group of pro-life Christian students. The Museum, also, agreed to a consent order, as well as a court order prohibiting the targeting of pro-lifers again.

Cases Pending

Christian ministries must be free to hire like-minded employees. Since the Washington Supreme Court gutted the state’s religious employer exemption, ADF is defending the right of Yakima Union Gospel Mission to hire like-minded employees to help shelter over 1,000 people, serve over 130,000 meals and run one of the largest free medical clinics in Washington State. .

Students must not be forced to fund the professor’s website. Alliance Defending Freedom filed a lawsuit on behalf of over 600 students whose professor required them to sign up for the \$99-per-year “Rebellion Community” website which she, herself, created to fund her pet political projects, including Planned Parenthood.

Adoptive parents' faith must be protected. In March 2023 Alliance Defending Freedom filed a federal complaint on behalf of Jessica Bates, a Christian in Oregon whose application to adopt was rejected as inconsistent with the government's gender ideology.

Public speech must be protected in school board meetings! Moms for Liberty, a parental rights group, filed suit challenging the Brevard County speech policy, but the judge dismissed the case. Moms for Liberty appealed to the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals in *Moms for Liberty v. Brevard County Public Schools*. ACLJ filed an amicus brief on their behalf to contest the board's "Public Participation Policy," which was used to interrupt and stop a parent who was speaking. Why was she interrupted? The board explained that the material she was reading was obscene and could not be read in the school board meeting. (But it was available at school.)

Mandating sexualized speech must be prohibited. ACLJ has a case in Nevada, where a public school teacher *forced* a 15-year-old student to recite to the class a pornographic script written by another student and approved by the teacher. The school lied to the parents, then, banned the mother from reading the same content to the school board.

Expressing biological truth must be protected. At Nichols Middle School in Middleborough, Massachusetts, 12-year-old Liam wore a shirt that says, "There are only two genders." Then, the principal and a school counselor pulled him out of class and ordered him to remove his shirt or go home. So, they sent him home. In the April meeting of the Middleborough School Committee, Liam said, "I don't complain when I see pride flags and diversity posters hung throughout the school. Others have a right to their beliefs just like I do." Alliance Defending Freedom is standing up for Liam against government censorship of truth.

Honest elections must prevail. To preserve honest elections since 2012, Judicial Watch has filed federal lawsuits against states including, California, Colorado, Florida, Indiana, Kentucky, North Carolina, New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio. Judicial Watch is winning these cases and helping make certain that voter registration rolls are accurate and allow only eligible American citizens to vote. *However*, two towns in Vermont joined San Francisco and nine towns in Maryland to allow non-citizens to vote in local elections. Such laws are being considered in Massachusetts, Washington, D.C., Illinois, and New York City.

Overturning Bans against Conversion Therapy

In 2020 the federal 11th Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta threw out bans that prevented therapists from performing conversion therapy on children grappling with their sexual orientation or gender identity. That decision applied to Georgia, Alabama and Florida. In April 2023 the Tampa City Council unanimously awarded \$950,000 to the Tampa office of Liberty Counsel, the winner of the case. Liberty Counsel has overturned 23 bans in three states that prohibit conversion therapy; about 87 cities and states ban voluntary Christian change counsel.

MassResistance¹ (MR) Battles Culture War

In two Idaho library districts and two Wyoming library districts MR provided a book of ways to eliminate pornography. *In Sugar City, ID*, MR worked with the mayor to ban children from drag queen shows and other sexually oriented adult events. *In Ludlow, MA*, MR is working with school board members on a strong policy to take obscene materials out of school libraries.

¹ MassResistance, www.MassResistance.org "The truth is that everything conservative officials want to do to clean up their schools and libraries is possible – if they know how. We give these local officials the tools they need to succeed."

BGEA Victorious!

Freedom of Speech and Religion Upheld in United Kingdom (UK)

“A Scottish court has recognized the importance and the urgency of resolving a dispute relating to the Scottish Event Campus’s cancellation of its contract with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association by ordering expedited treatment of the case. The SEC must tell the court within seven days why it cancelled its legally-binding contract with the BGEA.”

– Glasgow, February 20, 2020

In Liverpool, London on November 4, 2019, Franklin Graham announced plans for a free-of charge eight-city¹ UK tour for May 30, 2020 – October 4, 2020, to end in London, England. But, by February 2020 all eight venues had cancelled their contracts under political activist pressure. In response, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) filed suit against The Scottish Event Campus Limited and Glasgow City Council for cancelling the event there.

Graham explained, “We had contracts signed and, in some cases, deposits paid. I haven’t broken any laws. We are being denied because of religious beliefs and our faith. It’s a freedom of religion issue and also a free speech issue. We have attorneys trying to get the venues to reverse their decisions. We certainly have a legal position we’re standing on.”

UK Equality Act Protects BGEA Events

Billy Graham Evangelistic Association vs. Scottish Event Campus Ltd. concerning cancellation of the May 30, 2020 event was heard by Sheriff² John N. McCormack, who ruled in favor of BGEA on October 24, 2022 and reimbursed BGEA \$111,503.19 for damages. McCormack stated, “Briefly put, if it is correct that the event a evangelistic, based on religion or philosophical belief, then it follows that the decision to cancel was a breach of the Equality Act 2010 in that the event was cancelled as a commercial response to the views of objectors.”

“Supporters of Marriage Not Welcome in Wales, Says First Minister” headlined the online UK Coalition for Marriage article of the First Minister’s statement to the Welsh Parliament. “He said [he was] ‘sorry to see’ that Revd (sic) Graham (who supports one-man, one woman marriage⁴) would be allowed a platform in Wales to express ‘those views.’”

“I want to thank Sheriff John McCormack for upholding the law and affirming that Christians must be treated fairly and equally. This ruling will be a great encouragement for Christians and people of all faiths across the UK and many other parts of the world,” said Franklin Graham.

Court Successes Overcame Opposition

BGEA event s occurred in Liverpool Exhibition Centre May 2022; South Wales (Newport) at ICC May 21, 2022; Sheffield’s Sheffield Arena May 25, 2022; and at ExCel London. Events postponed three year are underway now. By December 2021 church support was over 2,600.

The Tour’s “I Am Andrew Breakfast” was held June 15, 2023 in London; another two UK events were occurred in June 2023, and three more in July 2023. An additional London event was booked for August 26, 2023. Next year, Graham and the God Loves You Tour will partner with Scotland churches to bring the hope of Jesus Christ to Glasgow on June 22, 2024.

¹ Glasgow, Newcastle, Sheffield, Milton Keynes, Liverpool, Cardiff, Birmingham and London

² Scotland has 6 Sheriffdom districts responsible for courts in the local district. Criminal cases have a jury; sheriffs decide civil cases.

³ The term the Scottish court uses for the plaintiff

⁴ The phrase in parentheses (who supports one-man, one-woman marriage) is quoted as written in the article.