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FINAL LEGISLATIVE UPDATE!

May 1, 2007

The 2007 General Assembly Is Now History!

The 100 Representatives and 50 State Senators wrapped up their work in the 2007 regular session of the Indiana General Assembly on Sunday night, April 29th. There were some tremendous victories for the families and churches in Indiana this year! In some cases, we were not successful in seeing legislation pass and therefore we will continue to work on these issues throughout 2007 and prepare for the 2008 Indiana General Assembly. We sincerely appreciate the support and assistance from individuals around the state in contacting their Senator and Representative on issues of importance to them and their family. We are also grateful for the involvement and assistance that we received from various Representatives and Senators.

PROTECTION OF MARRIAGE

In order to protect marriage between one man and one woman in Indiana and stop the courts from creating same sex civil unions, the legislature must pass Senate Joint Resolution 7 just as they did in 2005. SJR 7 passed the Senate 39–10 this year but unfortunately died in a House committee on April 3rd. Advance America will continue to lead the effort to give the citizens of Indiana the opportunity to vote in November, 2008 to protect marriage. In order to accomplish this, the House and Senate must both pass Senate Joint Resolution 7 in the 2008 session of the General Assembly.

VICTORY FOR CHURCHES

Advance America was successful in getting the House and Senate to pass Senate Bill 190. Under the provisions of this bill, churches that have events involving food like bake sales and Christian schools that sell food at concession stands would

not be required to be licensed by the state as a restaurant. The freedom that churches and Christian schools have historically had to have events involving food will now be protected.

REPEALING PROPERTY TAXES

Advance America continues to lead the effort to permanently repeal property taxes in order to protect homeowners, senior citizens, farmers, businesses and churches. Individuals never really own their own home. If they cannot pay their property taxes because of the death of a spouse, loss of a job or some other adverse circumstance; the government will take their home and sell it. The legislature did nothing to **permanently** protect homeowners from losing their homes. The legislature did nothing to **permanently** protect homeowners from future massive property tax increases. The legislature did nothing to make sure that local income tax increases that could occur in exchange for lowering property taxes will **not** result in only **temporarily** lowering property taxes. The legislature did **not** vote on a **Constitutional amendment** to repeal property taxes which would start the process to let the people vote to repeal property taxes.

Advance America will continue to lead the effort to **permanently** abolish property taxes, thereby protecting all property owners including homeowners and senior citizens in the State of Indiana.

GAMBLING

The State of Indiana doesn't need to expand legalized gambling. Unfortunately the House and Senate both voted to pass House Bill 1835 which would permit the placement of 2,000 slot machines at each of Indiana's two race tracks located in Anderson and Shelbyville. This is the largest expansion of gambling since 1993. This now makes both of these race tracks land based casinos.

HATE CRIMES

Fortunately, House Bill 1459 did not pass the legislature creating special protection for homosexuals and cross dressers. This bill would have established a very dangerous precedent because it would create two classes of victims and punish someone more because of their alleged thoughts. The bill represented a step in the wrong direction with regard to free speech. Would the next step have been to prohibit speech that someone views as hateful? For example will legislation be introduced in the future to prohibit pastors from speaking out against the homosexual lifestyle?

CHURCHES AND PASTORS WIN

There were three bills that could have threatened the freedom that churches and pastors have in the State of Indiana. Under the provisions of the original version of House Bill 1551, if a pastor were to speak out in the community or in the church, on issues such as abortion, homosexual marriages, crime and gambling, then the church could have been required to be registered with the state as a Public Advocacy Organization. This would have also impacted other organizations like a Crisis Pregnancy Center, Christian school or rescue mission. Fortunately the bill was amended to protect churches and pastors and these other organizations. Two other bills that threatened churches were Senate Bill 186 and Senate Bill 399. These bills were identical and would have made it against the law for anyone including a church or private citizen to spend \$500 to "inform the general public" about an issue or "urge the general public to take any action" concerning a legislative issue unless they register with the state as a lobbyist! This means a pastor and church would be breaking the law if they spoke out on abortion, homosexuality, gambling or some other Biblical issue in the church or in the community; or urge people to contact their Representative or Senator and someone alleges they spent more than \$500. Fortunately both of these bills died.

PRO-LIFE LEGISLATION

Senate Bill 135 as introduced would have required, among other things, that information in writing be provided to a woman seeking an abortion at least 18 hours before the abortion can be performed concerning the physical risks to the woman, that life begins at conception and that the unborn baby might feel pain when the abortion takes place. Unfortunately the bill failed to pass the House and Senate. Hopefully this pro-life bill will be reintroduced next year.

PARENTAL CHOICE IN EDUCATION

Every child in Indiana in elementary, middle and high school should have the opportunity to get a first class, world class education. In order to accomplish this Indiana needs to have mechanisms in place to assist parents such as an **educational tax credit** or **opportunity scholarship**. Unfortunately no legislation passed this year supporting parental choice in education. Advance America will continue to support **parental choice in education** because it will benefit all of the children and families of Indiana.

VOTING RECORDS

Advance America is Indiana's **largest pro-family** and **pro-tax reform** organization. Advance America is a non-partisan organization and does not endorse any candidate or any political party. Advance America will once again be compiling, printing and distributing **Voting Records** on the Indiana General Assembly. Individuals can order a **free** Voting Record for their family or a quantity for their church, organization or business by contacting Advance America by phone, email or by going to our website www.advanceamerica.com.

TEXT OF BILLS AVAILABLE

The complete text of a bill or resolution can be accessed at <http://www.in.gov/apps/lsa/session/billwatch/billinfo>.

Contributions are Needed and Appreciated!

In order to continue to serve as the eyes, ears and voice for the families and churches of Indiana, Advance America depends on the **tax deductible contributions** of individuals, families, and businesses around the state. Advance America receives **NO** government money. Your contribution will help us pay our expenses during 2007 which could **exceed \$60,000 per month**. Follow this link to make a **secure** contribution; www.advanceamerica.com/donate.htm or individuals can mail their contribution to Advance America at 101 W. Ohio Street, Suite 660; Indianapolis, IN 46204.

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

House of Representatives: 800-382-9842 and 317-232-9600 | State Senate: 800-382-9467 and 317-232-9400 | Governor: 317-232-4567 Lt. Governor: 317-232-4545
Please let us know about any response you receive from your legislator. You can find out who your legislators are and get their email address by going to www.AdvanceAmerica.com or by calling us at (800)448-VOTE (8683).