



## Concerned Women for America Legislative Action Committee of Georgia 2015 Legislative Session Wrap Up

The fast-paced 2015 Georgia legislative session came to a close at midnight on April 2. The 40-day session opened on January 12, and State Director Tanya Ditty represented your interests as a volunteer lobbyist with a physical presence at the State Capitol throughout the entire legislative session.

Concerned Women for America's seven core issues are: **Sanctity of Life, Defense of Family, Education, Religious Liberty, National Sovereignty, Sexual Exploitation, and Support for Israel.** Legislation this session encompassed several of these core issues. On-the-ground lobbying efforts combined with grassroots prayer and action gets results! Without calls and e-mails from CWA members and friends, successes would have been more difficult to achieve.

**New this year!** CWA of Georgia is now scoring key legislation that aligns to our core issues. In addition to our *Targeted Bills List*, we now provide you with a *State Legislative Scorecard* so you can see how your legislators are voting on bills that impact our culture. Check out CWA of Georgia's targeted bills and scorecard at <http://www.cwfa.org/states/georgia/>.

Below are just a few of the bills CWA of Georgia targeted for passage or defeat in the 2015 legislative session.

### Religious Freedom

#### **SB 129 – Georgia Religious Freedom Restoration Act (Support)**

Bible-believing Christians are increasingly facing challenges to their fundamental right to freedom of religion and freedom of conscience – the right to think and believe what we want without fear of retaliation. CWA is concerned about these challenges and about the trend of government to diminish and disregard the God-given inalienable rights of individuals. We are working to see our government strengthen and renew its commitment to respect and protect each individual's exercise of his God-given inalienable rights. Here in Georgia, this means passing SB 129, our own state religious freedom restoration act.

State Director Tanya Ditty testified at four hearings for SB 129. We are also grateful for the CWA members who attended the hearings.



State Director Tanya Ditty testifies before Senate Judiciary Committee.



CWA of Georgia members Joy Deal, Tanya Ditty and Janice Geary attend religious freedom hearings.



State Director Tanya Ditty joins others as they monitor the House subcommittee hearing.

**Legislative status:** SB 129, introduced by Sen. Josh McKoon (R-Columbus), passed out of the full Senate but stalled in the House. SB 129 did pass out of a “special” subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee, but was tabled in the full House Judiciary Committee after three Republicans voted with the Democrats to add an amendment that would have gutted the bill.

**Looking ahead:** SB 129 is still active legislation for the 2016 legislative session. CWA of Georgia will be working throughout the remainder of this year to educate on the need to pass this legislation. You can be assured that CWA of Georgia will not support any compromising language that does not protect the free exercise of religion for all Georgians, and this includes closely-held businesses.

## Education

### SR 80 – Advanced Placement U.S. History (APUSH) Resolution (Support)

The College Board, led by David Coleman, the “architect” of Common Core, rolled out the new APUSH Framework and Exam in August 2014. This new Framework is an all-out assault on our country’s heritage, and the best and brightest of Georgia’s students are now being subjected to the left’s view of American history. SR 80, introduced by Sen. William Ligon (R-Brunswick), urges the College Board to create a balanced curriculum framework more compatible with the traditional topic outline, which respects and allows flexibility to incorporate the Georgia Performance Standards for Social Studies. Because the College Board holds a monopoly on advanced placement college credit courses, SR 80 directs the State Board of Education and the Georgia Department of Education to explore alternatives to the College Board’s Advanced Placement program, and also directs Gov. Deal to contact other governors to join Georgia in efforts to further market competition in advanced subject based testing for college credit.

The House and Senate education committees held a joint hearing in February on the revised Advanced Placement (anti) U.S. History Curriculum Framework and Exam. National experts [Stanley Kurtz](#) and Larry Krieger exposed the underlying dangers of the College Board’s new Framework and the need for alternative testing options.



L-R: State Director Tanya Ditty, Stanley Kurtz, Sen. William Ligon, Larry Krieger and Jane Robbins with American Principles Project

**Legislative status:** SR 80 passed out of the full Senate. The bill passed unanimously out of the House Education Committee but the clock ran out on the session before SR 80 could make it to the House for a full floor vote. SR 80 is still active legislation for the 2016 legislative session.

## **SB 116 – Celebrate Freedom Week (Support)**

Introduced by Sen. William Ligon (R-Brunswick), the purpose of the legislation is to educate students about the sacrifices made for freedom in the founding of this country and the values, principles, and philosophies on which this country was founded. The full week in September which includes Constitution Day, September 17, will be recognized in public elementary, middle, and high schools in this state as Celebrate Freedom Week.

**Legislative status:** SB 116 passed both the House and Senate and awaits Gov. Deal's signature.

## **Defense of Family**

### **HB 1 – Medical Marijuana (Oppose)**

HB 1, also known as the "Haleigh's Hope Act", was introduced by Rep. Allen Peake (R-Macon) last year, but failed to move out of the legislature. HB 1 was reintroduced in 2015, passed both chambers and was signed into law by Gov. Deal on April 16, 2015. HB 1 has legalized the use of medical marijuana (cannabis oil), and allows possession of up to 20 ounces of the oil for the treatment of eight disorders in both adults and children.

CWA of Georgia opposed HB 1 because it opens the door for legalized use of recreational marijuana. The state of Colorado is a foreshadow of what we can expect to happen Georgia. It might not be tomorrow, but any state that has legalized recreational marijuana started out with legalized medical marijuana. Watch for legislation to be introduced in 2016 to permit in-state cultivation of marijuana for the purpose of extracting the cannabis oil. It is indeed a slippery slope.

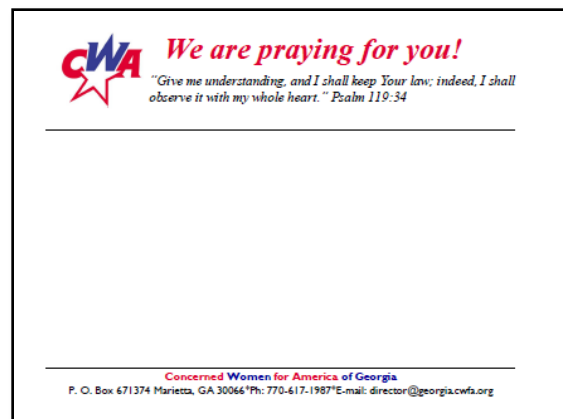
### **SR 135 – Horse Racing (Oppose)**

Sen. Brandon Beach (R-Alpharetta) is hoping to get Georgia into the horse racing business. SR 135 proposes a constitutional amendment to allow pari-mutuel wagering on horse racing. The resolution passed out of committee but didn't move any further. It is active legislation for the 2016 legislative session.

You can review all the bills that CWA of Georgia tracked this year by [clicking here](#).

## **Encourage-A-Legislator Prayer Project**

This was CWA of Georgia's twelfth year to pray for and send note cards of encouragement to state legislators. Scripture commands us in I Timothy 2:2 to pray for *"kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness,"* and over 70 volunteers did just that! These volunteers prayed and encouraged 120 state legislators during the 40-day session.





*Standing for Our Faith* rally in support of fired Atlanta Fire Chief Kelvin Cochran.



Second religious freedom rally took place on March 3, 2015 at the State Capitol.