



CWA Legislative Action Committee 2017 Georgia Legislative Session Wrap Up

The fast-paced 2017 state legislative session came to a close at midnight on March 30. The 40-day session opened on January 9, and State Director Tanya Ditty represented your interests as a volunteer lobbyist at the State Capitol throughout the entire legislative session.

Concerned Women for America's (CWA) 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.

CWA of Georgia had an aggressive list of legislative priorities for the 2017 legislative session. Many of the legislative priorities were not addressed by the General Assembly this year. We wanted to highlight for you a few of the bills that we fought hard to support or oppose.

[Gambling: Casinos and Daily Fantasy Sports](#)

The efforts to expand predatory gambling via casinos and online Daily Fantasy Sports were stopped for this year! Because of your prayers, phone calls and e-mails, all four bills were stopped this session.

[HB 118](#), the Daily Fantasy Sports (DFS) bill sponsored by Rep. Trey Kelley (R-Cedartown), seeks to regulate online fantasy sports. The bill passed out of the House but was not voted on by the full senate. HB 118 remains alive for the 2018 legislative session. Should the bill pass, it would legitimize the new crack-cocaine of online gambling – Daily Fantasy Sports. CWA of Georgia is scoring all votes on this bill. [Click here](#) for the DFS scorecard.

[SB 79 and HB 158](#), sponsored by Sen. Brandon Beach (R-Alpharetta) and Rep. Ron Stephens (R-Savannah) respectively, would authorize the licensing of up to two “destination resorts”, i.e., casinos in Georgia. Both bills were heard in their respective Regulated Industries Committees, but no votes were taken. CWA of Georgia fought aggressively alongside other pro-family groups to stop both casino bills for this year. The bills remain alive for the 2018 legislative session.

[SR 249](#), also sponsored by Sen. Brandon Beach, is a proposed constitutional amendment for casino gambling. The resolution did not move but remains alive for the 2018 legislative session.

Stopping the gambling bills was a major victory, because any form of gambling is destructive and causes detrimental harm to individuals and families.



Tanya Ditty testifying in front of the House Ways and Means subcommittee in opposition to HB 118, the Daily Fantasy Sports bill.



Tanya Ditty and American Principles Project lobbyist Jane Robbins talk with House Education Chairman Rep. Brooks Coleman.

Religious Freedom

Sen. Marty Harbin (R-Tyrone) filed [SB 233](#), a state-level religious freedom bill that mirrors the 1993 Federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act that was signed into law by President Bill Clinton. CWA of Georgia supported a similar bill in 2015. SB 233 provides religious liberty protections for people of all faiths living in Georgia. Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle assigned the bill to the Rules Committee where it was destined to languish there for the remainder of the session. SB 233 remains alive for the 2018 legislative session.

Sexual Exploitation

[HB 341](#), a human trafficking bill that targets the demand side of the sex-slave market, passed both the House and Senate and is awaiting Gov. Deal's signature. While the final language of the bill was weaker than what was introduced by the bill sponsor, Rep. Bert Reeves (R-Marietta), we applaud Rep. Reeves for seeking to focus on the flip side of trafficking: demand.

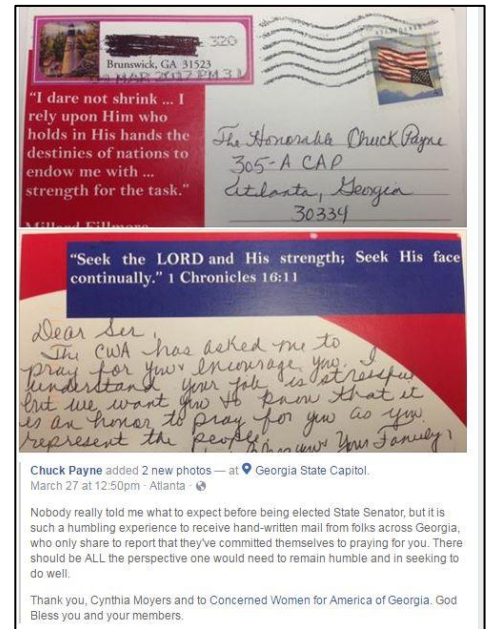
You can review all the bills that CWA of Georgia tracked this year by [clicking here](#).

Encourage-A-Legislator Prayer Project

This was CWA of Georgia's fourteenth 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 50 volunteers did just that! These volunteers prayed and encouraged 80 state legislators during the 40-day session. A special thanks to all those who participated this year!

This is one of the most important projects of CWA. I wanted to share a Facebook post from Sen. Chuck Payne (R-Dalton) who received our postcards. We are honored to pray for our legislators.

CWA of Georgia also hosted its first Encourage-A-Legislator Day at the State Capitol. Four of our faithful encouragers spent part of their day learning about the legislative process, touring the Capitol, meeting their legislators and, most importantly, praying for the legislators.



Encourage-A-Legislator Day



[Live Updates From the Capitol](#)

CWA of Georgia, along with other pro-life, pro-family groups stepped up our game this year and did our inaugural season of live updates from the Capitol.



Facebook Live included updates from Tanya Ditty (CWA of Georgia), Dave Baker and Virginia Galloway (Faith & Freedom Coalition), Paul Smith (Citizen Impact) and Mike Griffin (Georgia Baptist Mission Board).

[So What Lies Ahead in 2017?](#)

One doesn't need to look far to see that powerful forces are at work to destroy not only our state and nation, but our culture, our families and our way of life. But even in these unsettling times, God has promised restoration to that nation whose people will humble themselves and pray. (II Chronicles 7:14)

In the midst of attacks on our faith, it is easy for people of faith to retreat and to simply close their hearts and minds to the madness happening all around them.

But we can do the opposite! Instead of retreating and closing off the world, CWA of Georgia is boldly moving forward in strength and confidence, seeking God's face and calling on Him to reset our state ... as we work to restore our foundational stones. CWA's CEO and President Penny Nance said this, "During this time in our country's history – with the cultural battle raging around us – it's never been more important that the voice of conservative women be heard – loud and clear."

[Get involved with CWA of Georgia](#)

Psalm 11:3 says, "When the foundations are being destroyed what can the righteous do?" If you are interested in becoming a leader who thinks big and would like to be where the action is, we have a place for you! [Click here](#) for exciting CWA opportunities.

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