



WISCONSIN FAMILY COUNCIL  
Marriage|Family|Life|Liberty

## Church Connection August 2018

### *Strengthening, Preserving & Promoting Marriage, Family, Life & Religious Liberty*

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*Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*

Ephesian 1:5-6

*But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*

Galatians 4:4-5

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### **Mark Your Calendar!** **August 14, Fall Primaries**

On August 14th, YOUR vote will help determine who runs for office in November. We encourage you to be a good steward of your citizenship and participate in this and every election.

**Remember:** Those who get elected to office will be the ones who determine laws impacting issues such as adoption.

### **The Good of Faith-based Adoption Agencies**

Just how important are faith-based agencies in child welfare, especially when it comes to adoption? We've had such organizations around for so long and been so blessed by them that too often we take them for granted. We shouldn't. Laws and court cases dealing with religious freedom are making it harder for these agencies to continue to operate.

In 2006, after the Massachusetts Supreme Judiciary forced same-sex marriage on the entire state in 2004, Catholic Charities of Boston was forced to shut down because they refused to compromise their religious beliefs and place children with same-sex couples. Later, agencies in Washington, D.C., San Francisco and Illinois were similarly closed. Earlier this year, Philadelphia announced it was suspending placements with Catholic Social Services and Bethany Christian Services pending an investigation regarding possible violations of the city's Fair Practices Ordinance which involves so-called discrimination against LGBT persons.



After the US Supreme Court forced same-sex marriage on all states in June of 2015, a number of states looked at what could be done to protect these valuable faith-based adoption agencies. In recent years, nine states have passed laws to exempt these agencies from having to choose between violating their religious beliefs or not placing children who desperately need a forever earthly family. The two most recent states are Kansas and Oklahoma. Wisconsin is not one of the nine.

Currently, Wisconsin law does not clearly protect the faith-based adoption agencies in Wisconsin that regularly help to protect the best interests of children, both in foster-care based adoptions and private adoptions. It would be disastrous if they could not continue their work.

The Heritage Foundation published a new report in May supporting these faith-based agencies. It is authored by Natalie Goodnow, a Research Fellow at Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty. The report is available at [www.heritage.org](http://www.heritage.org).

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## Consider This...

As Scott Klusendorf with the Life Training Institute observes, there are only four differences between unborn and born babies, which you can remember with the acronym S.L.E.D.: Size, Level of development, Environment (location), and Degree of dependency. Not one of these differences is a valid reason to take the life of any person, including an unborn child.

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## Please Pray...

- For “all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.” I Timothy 2:2.
- For our elected representatives to see the importance of legislatively protecting the work of faith-based adoption agencies.
- For all who serve in faith-based adoption agencies and the vitally important work they do.

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## Further reading...

*Orphanology: Awakening to Gospel-Centered Adoption and Orphan Care*, Tony Merida & Rick Morton, New Hope Publishers, 2011, 192 pp.

Goodnow points out that these private-sector agencies are effective and efficient, often more so than the state agencies, noting that “in the 1990s, the majority of states increased their reliance on private providers...partly to improve the cost and quality of services.” These faith-based providers often supplement the money that is available from the state for foster families, covering items state money doesn’t.<sup>1</sup>

In addition, faith-based agencies, as Goodnow notes, sometimes “excel at placing children who may have a more difficult time finding adoptive homes, including older children, sibling groups and children with special needs.”<sup>2</sup>

At a time when the nationwide number of children in foster care has been rising sharply, making it difficult for faith-based agencies to operate is wrong-headed and hurts children—the ones government is supposed to be helping.

As Goodnow says, “[p]reventing FBAs from serving their communities—which many have been doing for decades, some for over 100 years—by providing foster care and adoption services because of their sincerely held religious beliefs is not a win. It only places a greater strain on other agencies....The population that bears the consequences of this cost is the children in foster care....Forcing out FBAs undercuts communities rather than building them up....”<sup>3</sup>

Children need forever families. The state should utilize every possible means to accomplish that worthy objective. That some faith-based agencies sincerely and rightly believe that it is best for children to have a married dad (male) and mom (female), and hold to that belief in their placement policies should not preclude them from being part of the adoption process in our state.

Religious freedom as guaranteed in our US Constitution was never intended to be a bludgeon against faith-based organizations. The Free Exercise clause extends to faith-based groups working for the best interests of children while maintaining their religious convictions. Pray that Wisconsin will take steps to ensure our faith-based agencies can continue, for decades to come, giving children the gift of a forever earthly family.

<sup>1</sup><https://www.heritage.org/civil-society/report/the-role-faith-based-agencies-child-welfare>

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

## About Wisconsin Family Council

*Wisconsin Family Council is a 501 (c)(3) organization that has been advancing Judeo-Christian principles and values in Wisconsin since 1986. We have largely done this by informing Wisconsin citizens, policymakers and churches about the important legislative and cultural issues so that they can be involved in strengthening, preserving and promoting marriage, family, life and religious liberty in our state.*

*“Church Connection” is published monthly by WFC and is available to churches in Wisconsin.*