



William J. Murray

# The Chairman's Action Report

Religious  
Freedom  
Coalition

December 17, 2005

## YEAR END REPORT - ON THE HILL

**To include everything the Religious Freedom Coalition has worked on during 2005 on Capitol Hill would require just page after page of lists.**

In all, the Religious Freedom Coalition worked directly on forty pieces of legislation. Some of those, such as the Pledge Protection Act, I reported to you more in depth about than others because they have become ongoing programs. Some, such as the North Korean Human Rights Act, were passed as soon as we and other groups got behind them on Capitol Hill. Still others, such as the Marriage Amendment to the Constitution, are far enough off from passage that we are not yet at a point of actively pursuing them other than to write letters of support to congressmen and Senators. In the case of the Marriage Amendment, the battle has shifted to the state level with many states passing one man, one woman marriage amendments to their constitutions.

On the pro-life and family front, our office assisted with the Child Custody Protection Act, Children's Hope Act, Children's Safety Act, Home School Discrimination Act, Marriage Protection Act, Parents Right to Know Act, Protection of Incapacitated Persons Act, Respect for Life Embryonic Stem Cell Act, Right to Life Act, RU-486 Suspension and Review Act, and the Unborn Child Pain Awareness Act. Many of these have actually passed the House and have moved to the Senate for action.

Sometimes we have had both victory and defeat within one bill. We worked to pass the Children's Safety Act to protect children from pedophiles, but Democratic Congressman John Conyers (D-MI) attached as an amendment the homosexual hate crimes bill known as the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act, to the Children's Safety Act. Social conservative groups had no prior warning about the amendment and were unable to block it. Under this law it would be a "hate crime" to prohibit a transvestite from using the ladies' rest room. The amendment would federalize any crime against a homosexual or transvestite. Any simple assault or even insult would become a federal crime. The bill which was originally meant to protect children, now protects pedophiles as well. We were able to move the Senate version of the Children's Safety Act out of the Judiciary Committee without the "hate crimes" provision, and we pray we can stop this madness in the Senate.



**Congressman Tom DeLay and William Murray discuss legislation**

We also worked on the Broadcast Decency Enforcement Act to increase the fines for broadcasting pornographic material over the public airways. The House version increased the per instance fine from \$27,500 to \$500,000. We are now working to expand the law from broadcast to cable to stop the Comedy Channel and "adult cartoon" channels from being brought into the living rooms of Americans unless they request them. This is also the reason we have supported the FCC bid to force cable channels to offer "a la carte" channels rather than forcing Americans to take groups that include porn channels they do not want in their homes.

I have written extensively about the Pledge Protection Act offered by Congressman Todd Akin (R-MO) The bill he has authored would prohibit federal courts from finding the use of the phrase "under God" unconstitutional as a District Court in California has already done. Children under Judge Lawrence Karlton's jurisdiction are not allowed to properly recite the Pledge to our flag because of his outrageous ruling..

So far we have managed to obtain over 180 co-sponsors to the Pledge Protection Act, but we need forty more Congressmen to be able to take the bill directly to the floor of the House and by-pass all the committees that will only hold it up. We must also encourage the co-sponsors to act to get the bill to the floor of the House for a vote.

So far we have distributed over 100,000 petitions for signatures. Next year we will mail as many as 500,000 more. In addition the petition is available to be printed out at our Internet site and we are receiving hundreds from this source every week. More than 100,000 people visit our Internet site each month!

Besides the Pledge Protection Act we also helped to pass HR 3430, a Resolution to ensure the military service academies allow voluntary nondenominational prayers. This was in response to the Air Force Academy telling chaplains and others they could not use the name of Christ in prayers. We also worked on the First Amendment Restoration Act, the Public Expression of Religion Act, the Unlawful Internet Gambling Empowerment Act and the Religious Freedom Amendment to the Constitution.

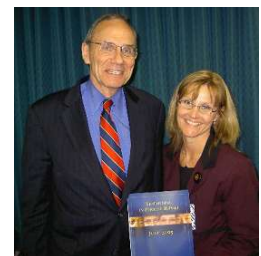
Internationally we worked both on the Hill and within the State Department on issues such as Human Trafficking. We helped to pass the End Demand for Sex Trafficking Act and the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act. In addition, our Executive Director, Peggy Birchfield has become virtually a fixture in the State Department Office on Human Trafficking, She has been instrumental to the State Department as a coordinator with NGO's (Non Governmental Organizations) on this issue.

### **YEAR END REPORT - MAJOR EVENTS**

Our staff began 2005 by attending the inauguration of President George W. Bush. We had special invitation only seating for the parade across from the White House by the President's reviewing stand. Later that month, Peggy Birchfield and I also attended numerous congressional swearing in ceremonies including those of Senators Thune and Coburn. That same month I and my wife Nancy traveled to Florida to attend a fund raising dinner for the settlement of Ariel in the West Bank. The RFC operates an evangelistic outreach from Ariel. That same week in January, Peggy Birchfield participated in a press conference re-introducing the Unborn Child Pain Awareness Act.

In February we participated in the release by the State Department of the Trafficking in Human Beings report that blasted many nations for assisting in sexual and forced labor trafficking of human beings. Many of the items in the report had been suggested by our office. That same month we worked on Washington, DC events with China Aid in their ongoing battle to bring religious freedom to China. Our staff also attended several formal events including a Chinese New Year's Gala.

In March Executive Director Peggy Birchfield participated in meetings in New York involving the United Nations Women's Project for 2005. She was a participant in the Commission on the Status of Women. During that same time period I spoke at a National and Local Affairs Briefing. We also had two round table discussions with ambassadors from Islamic nations. In the House we helped in the introduction of the First Amendment Restoration Act mentioned above. Finally that same month we acted as the hosts for Jerry Corsi, the author of *Atomic Iran* as we escorted him to various events in Washington, DC.



**Ambassador Miller and Peggy Birchfield at introduction of State Department finding on human trafficking.**

I began April by speaking at a press round table in New York City on religious freedom, or lack thereof, in China. I also appeared on FOX Live before departing on a ten day fact finding and mission trip to Israel where I visited numerous persecuted Christians in the West Bank and arranged to assist Christian schools in that area. Meanwhile back in Washington Peggy Birchfield helped arrange and participated in a press conference for the End Demand for Sex Trafficking Act.

As May began, several of our staff participated in a Bible Marathon reading on the lawn of the US Capitol. Our staff members also attended the National Day of Prayer and the Israel Solidarity Breakfast. I also met in May with Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and spoke to him about the security of Ariel, Samaria and the protection of Christians in Bethlehem. We also participated in a dinner event in honor of our good friend Majority Leader Tom DeLay.

We began June with a breakfast conference with Senators Brownback, Coleman and Santorum dealing with the plight of Iranian women and children under Islamic law. We also participated in the special screening of "Born Into Brothels," by Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao. Peggy Birchfield was extremely active on sex trafficking issues with the State and Labor Departments in June and eventually appeared on the Bill O'Reilly Show on FOX concerning that issue.

July is supposed to be an off month in Washington, yet we managed to participate in a roundtable discussion with Imad Moustapha the Ambassador from Syria, to discuss the condition of Christians in Syria. I also spoke at an event for religious freedom in China held on the South steps of the Capitol Building before leaving for my second mission trip to the Middle East this year. For months we had been collecting funds for scholarships for Christian children who live in the now Islamic dominated town of Bethlehem. I delivered scholarship funds to several churches and Christian schools.

August is also supposed to be an off month, yet Peggy Birchfield, acting on behalf of our sister organization the Religious Freedom Action Coalition, participated in a "Women Leaders' Press Conference for Roberts." Peggy was one of the leaders in working for a positive vote in the Senate for the confirmation to the Supreme Court of John Roberts. The entire first week of August I remained in Israel working with Christian families including those of men who are on a death list if they return to the "West Bank."



**William Murray speaks as Senators Allen, Allard and Inhofe listen. Sen. Brownback also present stands behind Murray and Allen.**

In September we organized a demonstration outside the offices of Senator Hillary Clinton by more than 120 Hispanic pastors from New York City who supported the nomination of John Roberts to the Supreme Court. While those pastors were in Washington we arranged numerous meetings for them, including one with Majority Leader Frist. Peggy Birchfield participated in a number of prayer walks, press conferences and other events involving Judge John Roberts. Our good friends David Ortiz and his wife Leah visited Washington, DC from Ariel, Samaria where they have a Christian outreach to the Arab community. We arranged numerous meetings and speaking events for David including a private meeting with Senator Sam Brownback. I also appeared on FOX News again in September as well as on several other media outlets. We also hosted a visit to Washington, DC by a Christian presidential candidate for president of Peru.

In October the Lifetime TV made for TV movie, *Human Trafficking*, premiered at the Department of State and leaders who have fought against sexual trafficking were present. At the end of the movie there is a news conference on human trafficking. Peggy Birchfield was stunned to see that she was in the actual movie as a participant in one of those press conferences. (Unfortunately for us Peggy now thinks she is a movie star.) Once again I appeared on FOX News on the issue of religious freedom.

In November Mayor Ron Nachman of Israel came to Washington, DC at our invitation. We arranged a total of more than 20 speaking engagements for him plus over a dozen private meetings with congressmen and Senators. He also appeared on several national radio programs. This was a spectacularly successful event that made many in Washington more aware of the security situation in Samaria. In the last Chairman's Report I reported extensively on these meetings and the impact they had on congressmen and Senators.

Separately, I did several radio and TV interviews that month including one on CNN concerning the atheist lawsuit to outlaw "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance. Peggy Birchfield attended the swearing in of State Department Assistant Secretary Barry Lowenkron.

So far in December I have appeared twice on Fox News, on the topic of Christ being kicked out of Christmas by American businesses and I have also written Op-eds on this issue. Somehow I found the time to have lunch with several Senators, congressmen and one Ambassador this month as well.



**Senator Orrin Hatch of Utah, William J. Murray & Mayor Ron Nachman of Ariel, Samaria**

The above items are meant to be highlights and do not include the weekly meetings that were attended by myself, Peggy Birchfield and other members of our staff weekly. Each week Congress is in session, either Peggy Birchfield, myself or another staff member attends House and Senate Values Action Team meetings. At these meetings leaders of conservative organizations such as ours interact with congressional leaders on how best to move forward on behalf of America's families and America's traditional values. We also attend a private weekly luncheon with representatives of congressional leadership.



**Congressman Trent Franks, Peggy Birchfield and William Murray at an RFC sponsored reception on Capitol Hill**

Although I have mentioned some CNN and FOX interviews above, I have not mentioned the dozens of radio shows on which either myself or Peggy Birchfield are invited each month. In the middle of all of this it is not unusual for a congressman or even a Senator to call directly into our office asking for assistance on some issue. Sometimes the weeks go by so quickly with the amount that has to be done, that I find myself hard put to sit down and write a report to you on exactly what we are accomplishing here in Washington.

We get a lot done here in Washington, more than I can hope to write about in the four pages of the Chairman's Report. Each week on Friday our office issues a Legislative Update from here in the nation's capital. More than 70,000 people have signed up to receive the update by e-mail containing information important to social conservatives. There are hundreds of individuals with "dot gov" and "dot mil" e-mail addresses signed up to receive the updates who are government or military employees.

Our internet site at [www.rfcnet.org](http://www.rfcnet.org) receives an average of 150,000 hits per month from 70 nations including the USA. A lot of the hits at our Internet site come from nations you would not expect such as Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Israel.

Having an office in Washington, DC makes a difference. Our office is just seven blocks from the Capitol Dome. When a congressman doesn't return a call we simply go up to his office and wait outside the door for him. It would be a lot cheaper to do business from Mississippi or even West Virginia, but we would not have the tremendous impact we now enjoy on Capitol Hill. All of this work is done with the help of individual supporters like yourself. The Religious Freedom Coalition receives no federal funding and virtually no funds from foundations.

## **MERRY CHRISTMAS**



I pray that each and every supporter of the Religious Freedom Coalition has a Merry Christmas and a wonderful year in 2006.

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William J. Murray, Chairman