



William J. Murray

The Chairman's Action Report

Religious
Freedom
Coalition

February 16, 2006

DEFENDING THE PLEDGE



Peggy Birchfield checks in with Congressman Akin's office before delivering petitions to other congressmen

Last week we began delivering petitions to congressmen in support of the Pledge Protection Act. The first deliveries were to Republicans who have not signed on as co-sponsors of Congressman Todd Akin's bill to protect "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance to our flag. Several congressmen or their Legislative Directors agreed to meet with us. Even if we did not have the opportunity to meet directly with a congressman the petitions were delivered to his or her office with a cover letter explaining the legislation and asking them to co-sponsor.

Most of the Republican congressmen we are working with are still new to Congress and have been eager to meet with us. This does not mean that we do not want Democratic support. This is not a political issue; it is a social issue and next week we begin delivery of petitions to the offices of newly elected Democrats. We feel we may be able to move them a bit faster than the old hard liners that have been in Congress for years.

SOME SUCCESS

Sometimes not signing onto a popular bill such as the Pledge Protection Act is just an oversight. In looking over the list of co-sponsors I noticed that my old friend Congressman Tom Tancredo (R-CO) had not as yet signed on as a co-sponsor although he had done so in the 108th Congress. When I called his office he was out of town but his Legislative Director, Mac Zimmerman, was eager to talk with me. When I told him Congressman Tancredo was not yet listed as a co-sponsor he was surprised and said it was an oversight by their office. As soon as we were off the phone he called Congressman Todd Akin's office to inform them to add Congressman Tancredo as a co-sponsor.

As a side note, Congressman Tancredo is under heavy attack from the business community and liberal activists because of his stance against illegal immigration. The Wall Street Journal has attacked him both in editorials and in front page articles. Illegals keep the general wage structure in the United States lower. If all the illegals were not here, the average wage in the United States would rise by \$2 to \$3 per hour and millions of people would be taken off the unemployment and welfare rolls. The way things are, big business gets cheaper labor while American workers pay higher taxes so that millions of their fellow citizens can stay home.

THE SUPREME COURT AND JUDGE ALITO

How important is it to have an office in Washington, DC? When the White House calls at 5:00 PM and invites you to a reception the next day at 2:00 PM, just try to make it from Colorado or California. Our office had less than 24 hours notice to be at the official swearing in and reception for Judge Samuel Alito at the White House on February 2, 2006.



William Murray and Justice Samuel Alito

At the appointed time our executive director, Peggy Birchfield, and I attended the “formal” swearing in of Justice Samuel Alito at a White House ceremony. President George W. Bush presided over the formal event. During the swearing in ceremony, we sat directly behind the wife of Chief Justice John Roberts. Also attending were First Lady Laura Bush, Vice President Cheney and his wife Lynn. Including Samuel Alito, five members of the Supreme Court were present, including Justice Clarence Thomas. Many Republican Senators, including Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist and Judiciary Committee Chairman Arlen Specter were also present.

After the formal swearing in ceremony for Justice Alito by Chief Justice John Roberts, those assembled moved from the East Room through the Green and Blue Rooms of the White House to a reception in the State Dining Room. During the reception both Peggy Birchfield and I had the opportunity to speak with Chief Justice John Roberts, Justice Alito and Justice Thomas. Both Justice Alito and Chief Justice Thomas mentioned the T-shirts our sister organization, the Religious Freedom Action Coalition, had furnished for volunteers during their confirmation hearings.

A side story about the [T-shirts](#): remember during the hearings when Mrs. Alito was so overwhelmed with the unjust criticism of her husband that she began to cry and left the hearing room? After leaving the room Mrs. Alito went to a window at the end of hall and looked down to see volunteers wearing the bright red T-shirts embossed with ALITO A+. She told Peggy Birchfield that seeing those Alito A+ T-shirts helped her overcome the gloom of the day and cheered her up so much that she regained her composure and was able to return to the hearings. A photo gallery of our participation in the White House event is located at: <http://www.pixagogo.com/0005465220>



Mrs. Martha Alito and Peggy Birchfield

OTHER LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

Holly’s Law: RFC's Executive Director Peggy Birchfield participated in a news conference on Wednesday, February 1st urging Congress to move forward with Holly's Law (HR 1079) which would suspend FDA's fast-track approval of the human pesticide drug RU-486. Along with Congressman Roscoe Bartlett (R-MD), Congressman Christopher Smith (R-NJ), Dr. Donna Harrison and Dr. Margaret Gary of the American Association of Pro-Life Obstetricians & Gynecologists and more than a dozen other pro-life organizations called attention to new research and evidence exposing the unacceptable threat the drug RU-486 poses to women's lives and health. A drug which is given to induce abortion is actually a poison, which naturally has potentially serious side effects, causing death in some women.



Holly Patterson was a California teenager who became pregnant at the age of 17 and had barely turned 18 years old when she died in a hospital from toxic shock, just seven days after being given RU-486. Her parents did not even know she was pregnant until she was dying. The photo to the left pictures Congressman Bartlett, Dr. Gary, Dr. Harrison, Marjorie Dannefelser, Congressman Chris Smith, Peggy Birchfield, Wendy Wright, Janet Morana, Deirdre McQuade, and Kristen Day in support of

the passage of Holly's Law. Many women who have been given the drug do not even know the potentially fatal side effects, so how many deaths does it take for FDA to suspend the drug? Senator Jim DeMint (R-SC) has sponsored a companion bill in the Senate.

Film Exposes Reality of Abortion: That same week, Peggy Birchfield attended a briefing and screening at the U.S. Capitol previewing the new independent film, [A Distant Thunder](#). This is the first motion picture to address the partial birth abortion issue. This powerful 35 minute film is the creation of Hollywood writer/director Jonathan Flora, who learned what PBA was after struggling to cope with his own post-abortive experience. His wife underwent an abortion with his full agreement, but later in life when they desperately wanted children they found it difficult to conceive.

Flora's perspective changed as he realized, "Here we are praying fervently to have a baby while America is treating unwanted pregnancies like a common cold at the rate of more than 4,500 abortions a day, 95% elective." Flora was shocked to learn what happens during a partial birth abortion procedure, and it was then he decided to create and direct this motion picture in hopes of educating people. In this film his wife, Deborah Flora, plays a pro-choice lawyer whose heart is changed by her experiences.

Several of us, including Peggy, my wife Nancy and my daughter Katie attended the signing into law of the Partial Birth Abortion Ban in 2003. That day President Bush said, as he signed the ban into law, "For years, a terrible form of violence has been directed at children only inches from birth while the law looked away. At last the American people and our government have confronted the violence and come to the defense of the innocent child." Today the Religious Freedom Coalition continues to work with other social conservative groups in Washington, DC to help unborn babies see the light of day.

A Shameful Anniversary: On January 23rd, pro life activists from across the country gathered in Washington, DC for the 33rd annual March for Life, on the day following the anniversary of the Supreme Court's decision in *Roe v Wade*. Thirty-three years ago the Supreme Court invented the "right to privacy" and forced every state to legalize abortion, thus signing the death warrants of millions of American children. This year, neither the chilly, rainy day nor the hostile pro-abortion protesters carrying coat hangers, stopped thousands of pro-life marchers from rallying on the National Mall, or from marching down Constitution Avenue to the U. S. Capitol and then to the Supreme Court Building. Peggy Birchfield was there to represent the RFC on this solemn occasion. Other pro life rallies were held across the nation the previous weekend, even in liberal cities such as San Francisco.

Marriage Policy Forum: Just last week, on Wednesday, February 8th, the Religious Freedom Coalition participated in the Family Policy Marriage Panel held at the headquarters of the Family Research Council here in Washington, DC. The forum was designed to discuss and plan legislative action during the current Congress to strengthen the traditional family. The Family Research Council is one of the few social conservative organizations that actually has an office in Washington, as does the Religious Freedom Coalition. Those groups having offices here meet frequently on such subjects to plan strategy and work together for common goals. Every week that Congress is in session someone represents the Religious Freedom Coalition at meetings of conservative groups here in the Capitol.

Council on National Policy: On Thursday, February 9th, I flew to Nevada to attend an annual meeting of the Council for National Policy in Henderson, Nevada. This is a broader two day meeting of conservative leaders from both the social conservative and economic conservative communities. Many of the forums and meetings are restricted to the principals of organizations only, and no aides or assistants may attend. Many times social and economic conservatives are at odds over policy concerning such issues as slavery in the Sudan, or dealing with the Chinese communists.

MEDIA

On Friday the 27th of January I attended the “Conservative State of the Union” broadcast on C-Span from the headquarters of the Free Congress Foundation which was open to only a handful of people. On the air I asked former Michigan Governor Engle a question about business funding of the far left, a real problem. Corporate America gives funds to conservative congressmen and Senators to run for office and then gives radical left groups such as Planned Parenthood and Jesse Jackson’s Rainbow Coalition millions of dollars. Some even help fund the radical projects of George Soros.

Just after returning from the Council of National Policy conference in Nevada I taped a lengthy program with the British Broadcasting system at our Washington, DC office. The program will be broadcast in the United Kingdom sometime in March. I have done several shows with the BBC on the social conservative views of Americans. Of course that is not all the media exposure the RFC had during the last month. There are just too many radio and short news interviews done by Peggy Birchfield, myself and others at the Religious Freedom Coalition to report on.

We have also contracted with a well known Washington, DC publicist to book radio and TV programs for our Pledge Protection Act campaign. This was needed to target the districts of certain congressmen who have not as yet agreed to co-sponsor the Pledge Protection Act. While we receive requests for interviews almost daily we want to be able to target certain congressional districts and this requires contacts with different media that we just don't have in house. While relatively expensive, this will allow us to use our time on radio and television programs more effectively

BETHLEHEM

Please pray about the situation of our brothers and sisters in Christ in Bethlehem. Hundreds of years before Mohammed was born, Bethlehem was a Christian village. Despite the wars of nearly 2,000 years it remained a majority Christian town until the mid 1980’s. In the 1950’s Bethlehem was 85% Christian and today it is less than 20% Christian. Soon Bethlehem will be nothing more than a Christian theme park operated by Muslim businessmen unless we help those Christians who remain.

All year long the Religious Freedom Coalition's Bethlehem Project sends funds to Christian schools in the Bethlehem area. Each year I travel at least once to the Bethlehem / Beit Jala area to determine where help is most needed and to deliver funds for scholarships to keep Christian kids in Christian schools rather than those operated by the America-hating Palestinian Authority.

Please pray for the Christians of Bethlehem as we move forward with our plans to assist the Christians remaining there. As the time approaches for our mission to Bethlehem this year, I will inform you of current conditions and what we plan to accomplish.

A

William J. Murray, Chairman

*Religious Freedom Coalition, PO Box 77511, Washington, DC 20013 *(202) 543-0300 * www.rfcnet.org*