

April 2000

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## On Endangered Civil Liberties

There is much evidence to indicate that our state is becoming the business and cultural nerve center of the nation. It is no secret that world leaders, international bankers, and Hollywood's elite are frequent visitors at the mansion in Medina - home of Bill Gates, the world's richest man.

Besides Microsoft, Washington State is also the world headquarters for other major Fortune 500 players like Boeing, Weyerhaeuser, and Starbucks. Toss in agriculture, forestry, and fishing, and discover why financial markets from London to Tokyo say, "God bless you," every time we sneeze.

Our state is also gaining recognition in other ways. In January, National Abortion Rights Action League president Kate Michelman, admitted that the pro-choice movement is bogged down virtually everywhere except the Evergreen State. The average grade NARAL recently assigned to all states was a D-plus. Washington State, however, received an A- ranking it the number one abortion-friendly state in the nation.

Another shameful secret revealed - the University of Washington is a world-class consumer of "fresh" baby parts, reminiscent of the horrific medical experiments in Nazi death camps during WWII.

Recently, Jordan Lawrence, an attorney with the Alliance Defense Fund in Fairfax, Virginia, told me that a number of Christian legal organizations around the country believe that Washington State is shaping up to be THE battleground for many of the moral and religious issues of our day. Lawrence is concerned, however, that the battle will be over quickly unless Christians in our state wake up and show up.

Late developments in King County illustrate just how endangered our liberties are:

### ***Seattle library employee fired for objecting to Internet pornography***

A Seattle reference librarian with 10 years of service has been forced to resign her position after refusing to provide public access to graphic Internet pornography sites on library terminals. According to the Pacific Justice Institute, "Not only was the librarian required to allow adults unchecked, unlimited, and unregulated access to these sites, but she was also required to allow such access to children as well.

### ***Passengers ejected from bus for religious talk***

Last year on April 2, near Bothell, Michelle Shocks was riding a bus and began a casual dialogue with another Christian. Suddenly, the Community Transit driver pulled over and ejected both passengers from the bus because of the religious nature of their discussion.

Apparently, the driver did not approve of the religious content of their speech on a government-owned bus.

### ***State scholarship rescinded when student studies religion***

The ACLJ has filed suit on behalf of 19-year old Joshua Davey, a freshman student at Northwest College in Kirkland. Davey, who intends to major in Pastoral Ministries and Business Management, was awarded \$1,125 for the 1999-2000 school year through the Promise Scholarship. According to the ACLJ, this scholarship "provides financial assistance to students from low and middle income families who exhibit high academic credentials and are enrolled in an accredited public or private post-secondary school within the state of Washington."

Although the young man met all of the qualifications and received a letter from Governor Locke certifying that he had been awarded the scholarship, the State evidently had second thoughts on the matter. Several days after receiving the award from the Governor, Davey was notified by school officials, who had already received the scholarship check, that the scholarship had been withdrawn.

In a letter to Northwest College, the Washington State Higher Education Board referred to a new policy that says: "*students who are pursuing a degree in theology are not eligible to receive any state-funded student financial aid, including the new Washington Promise Scholarship.*"

As Christians, God calls us to be salt and light in order to engage our culture for His redemptive purposes. We must not stand by and passively allow the TRUTH to be supplanted by a lie. I believe we are called to be witnesses, whether in libraries, on buses, at school or to the uttermost part of the earth.

Perhaps you would prayerfully consider helping in one of the following ways:

1. Help us to get timely information to your pastor. Ask if he would like to receive our newsletters or other information about the Christian Coalition of Washington.
2. Help us locate Christian attorneys throughout our state who desire to take back right ground.
3. Help us double or triple our influence by passing these monthly letters to at least one other friend or neighbor. We need your help to mobilize the Christian community.
4. Fast and pray for guidance. Ask God how He wants to use you in your community.
5. Support the Christian Coalition of Washington with your finances.

Working together, the Christian community can be an effective force, bringing renewal to all levels of government, from the schoolhouse to the White House.

***Rick Forcier***

Executive Director