

★ AMERICAN CHARACTER BUILDERS ★



But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary *in* doing good.

2 Thessalonians 3:13
(NKJV)

2015 Legislative Session to begin March 3: Several alcohol-expansion bills expected to be introduced; gambling expansion also being discussed

MONTGOMERY, AL—A recent article from AL.COM stated that the Alabama Brewers Guild (ABG) plans to introduce legislation making exemptions to the three-tier system that was put in place after the repeal of Prohibition – a system that was designed to prevent corruption in the alcohol industry. The ABG executive director, Dan Roberts, said such a bill will be introduced in order to allow “craft brewers to sell their beer at the brewery and restaurant for on- and off-premise consumption.”

Another bill that could expand the availability of alcohol in Alabama is a bill that would privatize the Alabama Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC) stores throughout the state. Such action could potentially expand the locations of liquor stores and the

hours of operation (including Sunday and holiday openings). Privatization could also result in increased advertising, especially targeting young people, while lowering the incentives to check the IDs of potential under-age drinkers.

During the 2014 elections many candidates in both parties, as well as numerous media outlets, promoted gambling as a solution to the economic problems facing Alabama. Gambling has proven to be a failed economic policy everywhere it has been tried. ALCAP offers a wealth of information and links to other websites that provide statistical evidence showing the failure of lotteries and casino gambling to provide the revenues they claim will

come to state coffers. (See www.alcap.com and www.StopPredatoryGambling.org.)

ALCAP will monitor these plus other bills and keep churches informed of the status of each.



For up-to-the-minute notifications during the year and, especially during the annual sessions of the Alabama Legislature, follow us on Twitter (@ALCAPministry) and sign up to receive our “ALCAP Alerts!” via email at www.alcap.com.

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WHO WE ARE:

The Alabama Citizens Action Program (ALCAP), originally founded in 1937 as the Alabama Temperance Alliance, serves together with local churches as Alabama's "moral compass." This ministry provides an outlet for churches throughout Alabama to fulfill God's command to His followers to be "salt & light" in our culture. (Matthew 5:13-16)

In 2010 ALCAP became a 501c4 organization (non-profit, but NOT tax-deductible) and renamed its school program "American Character Builders," a 501c3 organization (non-profit AND tax-deductible), having its own separate Board of Directors.

Churches are encouraged to support ALCAP while individuals are encouraged to support American Character Builders with their financial contributions and prayers.



ALCAP & American Character Builders Executive Director, Joe Godfrey, had the opportunity to share about the American Character Builders school programs at the Clanton Kiwanis Club in July. Pictured with Dr. Godfrey is Clanton Kiwanis Club President Scott Zuelzke (right).

Coming soon! New American Character Builders instructional videos!

The AMERICAN CHARACTER BUILDERS programs that were taught by volunteers in schools throughout the state for over thirty years and were turned into kits for use in schools and churches in 2011 are about to undergo another upgrade and a new option for use. Volunteers are still available to speak in schools and the kits are still available for a minimal cost, but soon there will be downloadable video versions available, as well.

American Character Builders is hoping to find enough funding to purchase the basic camera and lighting equipment needed in order to set up a small studio where we can produce (in-house) 5-10 minute instructional videos that can be downloaded from our "soon-to-be-updated" website. Along with the videos, we plan to offer PDF versions of questions that schoolteachers or volunteers can use to lead class discussions

after each video has been presented. We also plan to offer, in a separate PDF file, Bible-based questions that can be used by Bible study teachers for students and/or student pastors in a church setting.

Unlike the kits, which will still be available and which have several distinct advantages, but which require a donation in order to cover the cost of production and printing, the videos and discussion questions will be available for download from our website at no charge. All we need is between \$15,000 and \$20,000 up front in order to purchase the needed equipment.

If you, your church, Bible study class or youth group would like to donate all or part of these needed funds please contact Sharon Cook at:
scook@americancharacterbuilders.org.

The following is from an article published by the Alabama Citizens for Media Accountability (ACMA). To read the entire article, go to <http://mediaaccountability.org/page/24/>

The Argument against a Lottery... In the Words of Liberals

June 2014

As much as lottery proponents in Alabama like to tout the benefits that may come from extending the lottery into our state, they are seemingly reluctant to share many of the negatives that often accompany lotteries.

Interestingly enough, reporters at several liberal media outlets are more forthcoming in detailing the cons of a lottery. So without further ado, the argument against a lottery... in the words of liberals:

From *Think Progress*:

"With odds stacked sky high against actually winning a jackpot, lottery players lose an average of 47 cents on the dollar for each ticket. With such low payouts, tickets act as an implicit tax of 38 percent."

"One study found that a reason for this is that 'lotteries set off a vicious cycle that not only exploits low-income individuals' desires to escape poverty but also directly prevents them from improving upon their financial situations.' The loss in income of buying tickets that provide no reward is harder to bear on a slim budget."

"The revenues from lottery tickets act as a regressive tax because states use them to fund many public services, such as education. Lotteries netted 11 states more revenue than their corporate income tax in 2009. But states don't fare well either in the long run. While states that have lotteries increased per-capita spending on education at first, after some time they ended up decreasing overall spending, while states without them increased investment."

"One study found that 'nonlottery states spend, on average, 10 percent more of their budgets on education than lottery states.' In fact, lottery revenues may not end up increasing funds and could actually increase budget imbalances. There are only so many tickets that a state's population can buy, making it a short or medium term fix but not a long term source of revenue."

From *Salon.com*:

"State lotteries amount to a hidden tax on the poor. They eat up about 9 percent of take-home incomes from households making less than \$13,000 a year. They siphon \$50 billion a year away from local businesses—besides stores where they're sold. And they are encouraged by state-sponsored ads suggesting everyone can win, win, win!"

"What many people don't know about lotteries is that they prey on those who can least afford it; most people never win anything big; and 11 states raise more money from lotteries than from corporate taxes.

Beyond the moral, mental health or religious debates over gambling, lotteries are another example of how society preys on the poor and the working-class."

"They redistribute money up the economic ladder.' Most people buy tickets and win little or nothing. This is taking more money from the poor, working and lower middle-classes than from those most able to pay taxes. These billions also are diverted away from local businesses—with the exception of the stores where tickets are sold. "This is exacty [sic] the opposite of the kind of economic stimulus a depressed economy needs," wrote economist Wolff."

So, not only is the lottery a *de facto* tax on those least able to afford it, it is often bad news for those who do win.

The ACMA editorial went on to point out: "But what about the constant comparisons to Georgia? Well they aren't doing so hot either. A 2011 study showed that Georgia's lottery-funded HOPE scholarship was 'hemorrhaging money,' generating \$37 million less than expected and leaving the programs it funds in the lurch."

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON WHY STATE-RUN LOTTERIES, AS WELL AS STATE-SPONSORED CASINOS, HAVE FAILED TO PROVIDE THE REVENUE AND BENEFITS THEIR PROPONENTS TOUT, GO TO www.alcap.com OR www.StopPredatoryGambling.org.

ALCOHOL FACT: Surveys of people incarcerated for violent crimes indicate that about 40% had been drinking at the time they committed these offenses. Among those who had been drinking, average blood-alcohol levels were estimated to exceed three times the legal limit. Drinking is especially common among perpetrators of specific crimes, including murder, sexual assault, and intimate partner violence. – From "Alcohol is still the deadliest drug in the United States, and it's not even close" by Harold Pollack, August 2014, Washington Post

ALCAP & American Character Builders: *Your* missionaries to the Alabama Legislature and local schools!

I often hear church leaders say that they want to increase their support for missions (an admirable and biblical goal). In the process, they will often consider decreasing or eliminating items in their budgets that are not helping them to achieve their mission goals. Let me remind you that the only missionary enterprise currently reaching the legislators, constitutional officers, state employees and other lobbyists in Montgomery (people who are making, executing and judging the laws that impact our religious freedoms and general public welfare) is ALCAP. Our American Character Builders resources are excellent tools that help churches reach school officials, faculty, students and their families for Christ. Both ministries are helping churches to fulfill Christ's Great Commission found in Matthew 28:18-20.

Pray for ALCAP & American Character Builders throughout this Christmas season and the New Year. If you would like to make an end-of-the-year contribution, individuals who want tax deductions are encouraged to make checks payable to **American Character Builders** while churches are encouraged to make checks payable to **ALCAP**.

Thank you for your continued support—both your prayer support and your financial support!

¹³ "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

¹⁴ "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all *who are* in the house. ¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."

***Matthew 5:13–16
(NKJV)***

Merry Christmas

...from the staff and their families at ALCAP and American Character Builders!