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Candidates Who Support the Best for Children

Elect Candidates Who Support the Best for Children

American College of Pediatricians – October 2018

The American College of Pediatricians (ACPeds) is concerned that political candidates often ignore the health and well-being of children. While it is not unusual for politicians to “kiss babies” during the campaign and then “kiss them off” after the election, it is worrisome when some “kiss them off” even before their election.

In 1973, the US Supreme Court invented a “right” to unrestricted abortion from an implied right to privacy that ignored the more fundamental one – the right to life – which is the first right enumerated in the Declaration of Independence. Since then, millions of unborn children have been killed. Candidates on both national and state levels have far different responses to abortion, from no restrictions, taxpayer financing, and no protection for children born alive after a failed abortion attempt on one hand, to urging the protection of all innocent human life from conception on the other. Any politician who does not value the life of our smallest and most vulnerable children cannot be expected to support what is best for all children.

A more recent threat to children is the insistence that the rights of transgender – identified adults should supersede the rights of all others. This is especially true with candidate support for children deciding their perceived gender and then subjecting themselves to treatments both emotionally and physically harmful; treatments including what amounts to chemical castration that can render them permanently sterile. There is no rigorous science to suggest that a child’s failure to identify with his or her biological sex requires anything more than patience, and, in some cases, counseling. Over 80% of pre-pubertal children distressed by their biological sex will cease to feel this way by late adolescence or early adulthood. To encourage, or worse, to begin a sex change during childhood, is blatant child abuse as the ACPeds has noted and does not take into account the ongoing developmental changes occurring in the brain of the adolescent and young adult.¹

In addition, when candidates refuse to acknowledge the decades of social science that has established the natural family as the optimal setting in which to nurture children, their misguided decisions harm the emotional and physical health of all children. When the institution of the natural family is respected, and the marriage of biological parents is advocated and protected, children thrive, and rates of adult illness and disability decline. More healthy marriages will save the U.S. economy hundreds of billions of dollars annually. Our society once

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insisted that divorce and single parenting were harmless to children. The Carnegie Report,² late in the last century, put those claims to rest noting that children in these circumstances were proven to be at risk. We should not repeat our prior mistakes in our zeal for “political correctness.” These are our children, the future of our nation, not test cases in unregulated social experimentation.

Government spending of money we do not have burdens our children and future generations with debt. Candidates should promote fiscal responsibility to assure a healthy tomorrow for our children. In addition, candidates should respect our Constitution and Bill of Rights, and commit to appointing judges who will do likewise.

Though the focus of the nation is on the Congress, elections for state legislatures, city and county councils, and school boards are also critical to the welfare of children. In today’s society, these are important not only for the general education of our children, but also for preserving their right to privacy and modesty through safe locker rooms and bathrooms.

The ACPeds also strongly encourages candidates to support sexual risk avoidance programs rather than sexual risk reduction programs. Risk avoidance programs provide health education that encourages adolescents to avoid any and all behaviors that might cause physical, emotional, or financial harm. Risk reduction programs, however, attempt only to decrease risk rather than eliminate it – such as the promotion of condoms to decrease pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease. This is the equivalent of an anti-tobacco education program promoting the use of filtered low tar cigarettes rather than avoiding tobacco products.

Providing the best for children is embodied in medicine’s ancient principle of “First do no harm,” which is inextricably linked to moral conscience. Medical and scientific debate is not immune to political influences. For this reason and others, freedom of conscience is an integral and necessary component of quality medical care. Yet, freedom of conscience is increasingly under attack today. In some states healthcare professionals, including pharmacists, cannot refuse to do harm because of laws that disregard the First Amendment’s guarantee of Freedom of Religion and Conscience. No healthcare professional should be forced to perform a procedure, prescribe or dispense a medication, or refer for a procedure that violates his or her conscience. Candidates must reaffirm and support our Bill of Rights.

When political candidates, and ultimately legislators and leaders, ignore the needs of children, society suffers, and these consequences are felt for generations to come. Cast your vote to elect candidates who support the best for children.

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The American College of Pediatricians is a national medical association of licensed physicians and healthcare professionals who specialize in the care of infants, children, and adolescents. The mission of the College is to enable all children to reach their optimal physical and emotional health and well-being.

References

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2. Starting Points: Meeting the Needs of our Youngest Children. The Report of the Carnegie Task Force on Meeting the Needs of Young Children. Carnegie Corporation of New York, NY, April 1994, p.153. Available at

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