



2013 Year-End Report

113th United States Congress, First Session

President Obama's Second Term failures in 2013 should have meant enormous opportunity for conservatives; however, the Republican establishment's attacks on true conservatives along with misguided initiatives like Common Core and the move toward a Convention of the States have led to frustrating and disappointing fights. Still, Eagle Forum is leading the charge and refuses to surrender in these vital battles.

The following report is an overview of the battles in which Eagle Forum was involved in the first session of the 113th Congress. We have listed the Republicans who voted the wrong way and Democrats who voted the right way on these issues to assist grassroots activists in future efforts.

So-Called "Filibuster Reform" in the Senate

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid began 2013 with his usual dirty tricks to silence conservative opposition to his liberal agenda. He convinced a few gullible RINOs to go along with an alleged compromise on so-called "filibuster reform," designed to shut conservatives out of the legislative process in the Senate.

In one of our legislative alerts, we explained the complex scam Harry Reid has been pulling on the American people throughout his tenure. He consistently uses Senate procedure to shut conservatives out of the process while also creating the illusion that he is actually including them so that he can accuse them of being obstructionists. The next few paragraphs explain this process.

Harry Reid's Deceptive Tactics: Few people have time to watch Senate proceedings on C-SPAN every day, and the mainstream media will not cover stories that jeopardize Reid's liberal agenda. So, not only has Harry Reid has been getting away with tyranny, but he's getting away with claiming that it's the Republican Minority that is being unreasonable. The Senate Majority Leader's power comes from his ability to be recognized on the Senate floor before anyone else. So, when he brings a bill to the Senate floor, he uses procedural tricks to shut out minority amendments and debates.

"Filling the Tree": Senate rules limit the number of amendments that can be added to bills. So Reid uses his power of recognition to fill the amendment slots, usually with

inconsequential amendments like changing commas, changing section numbers or names, etc., thus, keeping the Minority party from offering amendments.

Selectively Adding Republican Amendments: While “filling the amendment tree,” Reid will often throw in a few Republican amendments that are non-controversial and do not interfere with his agenda. That enables him to say he included the Minority in the process, while keeping them from offering any substantive amendments.

Same-Day Cloture Motions: After bringing a bill to the floor and “filling the tree,” Reid will frequently file a Cloture motion, which is a motion to end debate. Senate Rules allow a Senator to speak as long as he or she desires and on any subject he or she desires unless 3/5 of the Senate votes to “invoke Cloture” to end the debate.

The “Filibuster” can be a powerful tool for the Minority party in order to stall or block the passage of legislation to which the party objects. However, Senator Reid will invoke Cloture almost simultaneously with bringing the bill to the floor. This maneuver sets up the fabrication that Republicans are filibustering, when in reality, they have not had the opportunity to even start the debate.

Liberals then criticize Republicans for voting against Cloture motions, claiming they are obstructing Senate business, when really they are simply voting to protect their right to properly consider matters before voting on them. Harry Reid created the illusion that Republicans were abusing the filibuster so he could justify getting rid of it and call it “reform.”

Reid Breaks the Rules to Change the Rules

In order for Reid to amend the Senate Rules to limit a filibuster, he had to break Senate Rules. Unlike the House of Representatives, which changes every two years, the Senate is a continuing body. The members have staggered terms, and the rules stay consistent from one session to the next. Reid’s scheme was to discard the notion that the Senate is a continuing body and change Senate rules to require only a simple majority to end a filibuster.

On January 24, 2013, the Senate passed two bills that fell short of eliminating the filibuster but weakened the Minority party’s power. A bill that shortened the duration of Senate debates passed by a vote of 71-16, and another set of rules changes that limited debate passed by a vote of 86-9.

Rule Change the Week before Thanksgiving

Just before leaving for Thanksgiving Recess on November 21st, Harry Reid rushed through the so-called “nuclear option” bill that allowed a simple majority of Senators to invoke Cloture on all Presidential nominations. Although this procedural change only pertains to Presidential nominations, many fear that this will lead to a change in the rules regarding legislative procedure as well.

All Senate Republicans, and three Senate Democrats, Joe Manchin of West Virginia, Mark Pryor of Arkansas and Carl Levin of Michigan voted to keep the 60-vote threshold.

Presidential Nominations

Among the most important and long-lasting actions of a United States President are his nominations to the federal agencies and courts. Likewise, among the most important and long-lasting votes of United States Senators are their votes to confirm – or not – Article III federal judges. We believe that Senators should not vote to confirm a federal judge unless the record of the nominee supports the conclusion that they respect the role of the judiciary which is to decide cases and to not legislate from the bench. Because of this belief, Eagle Forum frequently takes an official position on controversial judges.

Procedurally, the Cloture vote ends debate so that the Senate can move to final confirmation. This means that on controversial nominees, the Cloture vote is the vote that counts because liberal Democrats cannot meet the 60-vote threshold without the support of Republicans.

It is quite obvious that when Harry Reid changed the Senate rules, it was an egregious abuse of power as he brought up for reconsideration many nominees that had previously been rejected. This is a list of only those nominees that Eagle Forum officially opposed.

Chuck Hagel, Secretary of Defense – Confirmed

Eagle Forum issued multiple alerts urging opposition to President Obama's nomination of former Iowa Republican Senator Chuck Hagel as Secretary of Defense because of his internationalist and anti-military philosophy.

Among other concerns, Hagel served on the Board of the Atlantic Council, an internationalist organization that promotes peace through diplomacy instead of military strength. Hagel is also an outspoken supporter of nuclear disarmament and the controversial Global Zero international disarmament movement. Hagel consistently supported slashing the military budget and declared his belief in a "pared-down Pentagon."

Hagel's internationalist philosophy also led him to support the discredited Law of the Sea Treaty, which would diminish U.S. sovereignty, as well as amnesty for illegal aliens, which weakens national security.

Hagel was confirmed on February 26, 2013 by a vote of 71-27. All Democrats voted YES on Hagel's confirmation, and they were joined by Republican Senators Coburn of Oklahoma, Sessions of Alabama, Thune of South Dakota, Burr of North Carolina, Hatch of Utah, Flake of Arizona, Ayotte of New Hampshire, Blunt of Missouri, Chambliss of Georgia, Cochran of Mississippi, Johanns of Nebraska, Graham of South Carolina, Alexander and Corker of Tennessee, McCain of Arizona, Murkowski of Alaska, and Collins of Maine.

Thomas Perez, Secretary of Labor – Confirmed

Thomas Perez led the Civil Rights Division at the Department of Justice. His tenure was marked by a radically liberal track record, demonstrating that he does not believe in the equal application of the laws. Perez filed an anti-religious liberty brief in a Supreme Court case arguing against the ability of churches to hire individuals they choose. Perez argued for pro-life protestors to be prosecuted as criminals and opposed removing ineligible voters from the voting rolls.

On July 17, 2013, Cloture was invoked on his nomination, and Perez was confirmed by a vote of 54-46, a straight party-line vote.

Caitlin Halligan, nominated to D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals – Defeated

The Senate rejected Caitlin Halligan during the 112th Congress, but President Obama re-nominated her to the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals. Eagle Forum issued multiple alerts urging members to tell their Senators to oppose her nomination for many reasons including her positions on issues like same-sex marriage, abortion, racial preferences, and Second Amendment Rights.

As Solicitor General of New York, Halligan wrote an opinion arguing for same-sex marriage, even though the state's domestic law required that marriage licenses only be issued to opposite-sex couples. Halligan declared that observing the statute as written raised "serious Constitutional concerns." She also joined an *Amicus Curiae* brief in support of the National Organization of Women's (NOW) suit attempting to use civil racketeering charges to shut down abortion clinic protests nationwide. The importance of Halligan's joining the *amicus* brief cannot be understated. One of the key purposes of the brief was to persuade the Court to rely on New York's expanded definition of property and how property can be obtained through extortion, a point she hoped that the weight of her office as New York's Solicitor General would carry. NOW's and Halligan's arguments were so radical, they were rejected by an 8-1 margin.

Halligan also joined briefs supporting racial quotas at universities. Three out of four of the policies she supported were later declared unconstitutional. She also strongly supported, "inside and outside the courtroom," the State of New York's activist efforts to sue gun manufacturers for crimes committed with guns. When Congress passed the bipartisan Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act to protect manufacturers from such frivolous suits, Halligan signed onto a friend of the Court brief arguing that the law was unconstitutional.

Halligan was also a member of a bar committee that issued a report claiming it is unconstitutional for the United States to detain enemy combatants. During her testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee, Halligan tried to distance herself from this report; however, she also signed onto a friend of the court brief arguing the same conclusion in a case involving such detention.

On March 6, 2013, by a vote of 51-41, Cloture was not invoked, so Halligan's nomination was again defeated. It was widely believed that Senate Judiciary Committee Chair Patrick

Leahy planned to bring Halligan's nomination to the floor again, but on March 22, 2013, Halligan withdrew her name from consideration and President Obama withdrew her nomination.

D.C. Circuit Court Nominees – Defeated then Confirmed

Eagle Forum opposed three of President Barack Obama's D.C. Circuit nominees: Cornelia T.L. Pillard, Patricia Ann Millett, and Robert Leon Wilkins.

Cornelia T.L. Pillard demonstrated her willingness to abuse judicial power by: (1) suggesting that abstinence education may be unconstitutional, and (2) arguing in favor of the finding of a new non-textual "right" to abortion in the constitution. In addition, Pillard was founding co-director of a dangerous transnational law center that threatens U.S. constitutional sovereignty, and also attacked Virginia Military Institute, questioning why anyone would go there.

On November 7, 2013, the Senate rejected the motion to invoke Cloture on Pillard's nomination by a vote of 56-41. All Democrats voted YES and were joined by Republican Senators Collins (ME) and Murkowski (AK). Harry Reid joined Republicans in voting NO so that he could bring her up for a vote at a future date.

After the Senate rules change in November 2013, the Senate on December 10, 2013, voted 56-42 to invoke cloture on Pillard. The vote was strictly along party lines with the exception of Manchin of West Virginia voting NO with Republicans. The final confirmation vote occurred on December 12, 2013, in a 51-44 vote, with Democrats Manchin of West Virginia, Pryor of Arkansas, and Donnelly of Indiana voting NO with Republicans.

Patricia Ann Millett indicated her willingness to depart from the text and intent of the Constitution by suggesting that the question of gay marriage should not turn on the text of the Constitution but on some malleable theory of fundamental fairness. Moreover, Millett demonstrated a lack of judgment when she called President Bush's appointment of Justice Samuel Alito "a sorry statement about the appointment process thus far [and] where it's gotten us in the last 8 years." Millett also suggested that the Supreme Court should have a certain "look" and that gender should play a role in the selection of Justices.

On October 31, 2013, the Senate rejected the motion to invoke Cloture on Millett's nomination by a vote of 55-38. All Democrats voted YES and were joined by Republican Senators Collins (ME) and Murkowski (AK). Senator Harry Reid joined Republicans in voting NO so that he could bring her up for a vote at a future date.

On November 21, 2013, the motion to invoke cloture was again rejected, 57-40. This is when Harry Reid conducted the rules change that meant presidential nominees only need a simple majority (instead of 60 votes) to proceed to confirmation.

Immediately following the change, the Senate voted 55-43 to invoke cloture, the vote count being strictly along party lines. The final confirmation vote occurred on December 10th, and the Senate confirmed Millett strictly on party lines.

Judge Robert Wilkins, by his judicial record, erased all doubt as to his willingness to abuse judicial power. Wilkins held in *Texas v. Holder* that a Texas voter identification law was invalid because it would result in retrogression in the position of racial minorities for them to produce identification. In *Dearth v. Holder*, Wilkins held that American citizens do not have the right to purchase firearms for self-defense if their primary residence is not in the United States. In *Wesby v. District of Columbia*, Wilkins found police officers individually liable for nearly one million dollars for arresting participants in what appeared to any objective observer as – and was – a prostitution party at a home where it was undisputed that the owner had not given any of the participants permission to be on the premises.

On November 18, 2013, the Senate failed to invoke cloture by a vote of 53-48. Republican Senators Collins of Maine and Murkowski of Alaska voted YES with Democrats while Senator Harry Reid voted NO with Republicans in hopes of reconsidering Wilkins at a later date.

Although we expected Reid to hold a vote on Wilkins' before they adjourned for Christmas, the vote did not take place until the beginning of this Congress' Second Session. On January 9, 2014, by a vote of 55-38, cloture was invoked with final confirmation occurring on January 13, 2014, by a vote of 55-43, strictly along party lines.

Fighting Obamacare

The legislative battle to overturn Obamacare continued through 2013. The program itself has proved to be a monumental failure with two-thirds of the states refusing to set up exchanges, and a rollout that included dismal enrollment numbers, overwhelming glitches, a thoroughly defective website and very high disapproval rates. However, even while attacking the program as a "trainwreck" and a failure, Democrats continued to defend the health care takeover, and weak-kneed Republican leadership fought conservative efforts to defund the program.

On May 16, 2013 the House of Representative voted to repeal Obamacare for the 37th time since the law's passage.

Conservative leaders in the Senate, led by Ted Cruz of Texas and Mike Lee of Utah led a charge to defund Obamacare through the Continuing Resolution before October 1, 2013, when major portions of the bill were scheduled to go into effect. There was little support for this effort in the Senate, where the defunding bill failed by a vote of 79-19. All Democrat Senators voted against the defunding measure and Republican Senators Johnson of Wisconsin, Cornyn of Texas, Coburn of Oklahoma, McConnell of Kentucky, Barrasso of Wyoming, Boozman of Arkansas, Coats of Indiana, Thune of South Dakota, Burr of North Carolina, Ayotte of New Hampshire, Blunt of Missouri, Chambliss of Georgia, Cochran of

Mississippi, Johannis and Isakson of Georgia, Graham of South Carolina, Alexander of Tennessee, Wicker of Mississippi, Corker of Tennessee, Hoeven of North Dakota, Kirk of Illinois, McCain of Arizona, Murkowski of Alaska, Chiesa of New Jersey and Collins of Maine. These Republican Senators chose to fund the government instead of defunding Obamacare.

An Eagle Forum-endorsed Congressman, Mark Meadows of North Carolina, led the charge toward a similar defunding effort by circulating a letter urging House leadership to defund Obamacare in the Continuing Resolution on the budget.

Because of the strong outpouring of support for conservatives like Ted Cruz, who aggressively engaged in a grassroots and media campaign demanding House Republicans insist on Obamacare defunding, Republicans stood strong. Democrats refused to allow the defunding to take effect and forced a government shutdown from October 1st to October 16th, when Republicans finally caved and accepted a compromise that included Obamacare funding so that the government could reopen.

Feminist Pork

Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)

Emboldened from the successful “War on Women” rhetoric that led to widespread liberal victories in the 2012 elections, liberals moved quickly to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), which they were unable to pass in the 112th Congress.

The good news is that, historically, very few Senators have been willing to vote against VAWA, but when the reauthorization vote came to the Senate floor on February 12, 2013, 22 Republicans voted NO.

Eager to capitalize on the “War on Women” momentum, President Obama’s “Organizing for America” and several other radical liberal groups immediately launched a social media attack on the 22 Senators who voted NO, bombarding the Senators with nasty, vulgar messages on their Facebook pages and Twitter accounts. Immediately, Eagle Forum began fighting back by launching a campaign urging supporters to thank the Senators and to post facts about the feminist pork-laden VAWA on Senators’ social media sites.

Unfortunately, the House of Representatives was ill-prepared to fight back against the feminist rhetoric, and even some solid conservatives were afraid of the attacks from feminists. In advance of the House vote, Eagle Forum hosted a “Tweet Up,” where we invited conservatives groups to join us at the Eagle Forum office and throughout the country to post truths about the Violence Against Women Act on Twitter.

We were joined by conservative allies such as Heritage Action, The Mommy Lobby, FreedomWorks, Concerned Women for America and Independent Women’s Forum for an hour-long “tweet up,” during which we got VAWA to “trend” on Twitter. This exercise helped us raise awareness of the negative aspects about VAWA, and to provide support to

conservative House Members who were being attacked in their districts for their lack of support for VAWA.

House Republicans came up with an alternative that purported to address some of the concerns with the Senate bill having to do with granting jurisdiction over American citizens to Native American courts. However, the weak Republican version failed in the House because it did not have support from conservatives.

Unfortunately, the House of Representatives passed the Senate version of the VAWA Reauthorization on February 28, 2013 by a vote of 286-134. All Democrats voted for the bill, and they were joined by the following Republicans: Rokita of Indiana, Poe of Texas, Royce of California, Hunter of California, Messer of Indiana, Buschon of Indiana, Jenkins of Kansas, Rigell of Virginia, Terry of Nebraska, Yoder of Kansas, McHenry of North Carolina, Miller of Michigan, Nugent of Florida, Barr of Kentucky, Gardner of Colorado, Renacci of Ohio, Shuster of Pennsylvania, Coffman of Colorado, Ryan of Wisconsin, Farenthold of Texas, Cook of California, Gibbs of Texas, Pearce of New Mexico, Heck of Nevada, Issa of California, Paulson of Minnesota, Rogers of Michigan, Duffy of Wisconsin, Webster of Florida, Bill Young of Florida, Brooks of Indiana, Daines of Montana, Tiberi of Ohio, Walorski and Todd Young of Indiana, Camp and Upton of Michigan, Walden of Oregon, Amodei of Nevada, Stivers of Ohio, McKinley of West Virginia, Collins of New York, Buchanan of Florida, Kinzinger of Illinois, Kline of Minnesota, Lance of New Jersey, Thompson of Pennsylvania, Hanna of New York, Rodgers of Washington, Schock of Illinois, Simpson of Idaho, Bachus of Alabama, Benishek of Michigan, Boustany of Louisiana, Capito of West Virginia, Tipton of Colorado, Joyce of Ohio, Latham of Iowa, LoBiondo of New Jersey, McCarthy of California, Reichert of Washington, Turner of Ohio, Herrera-Beutler of Washington, Calvert of California, Barletta of Pennsylvania, Crenshaw of Florida, Davis of Illinois, Frelinghuysen of New Jersey, McKeon of California, Meehan of Pennsylvania, Cole of Oklahoma, Nunes of California, Alexander of Louisiana, Cramer of North Dakota, Denham of California, Dent of Pennsylvania, Gerlach of Pennsylvania, Shimkus of Illinois, Cooper of Tennessee and Harper of Mississippi.

Immigration

Senate “Gang of Eight” Bill - Amnesty

Eagle Forum led a coalition of conservative organizations to defeat amnesty in 2013 just as we did in 2006. Eagle Forum worked closely with groups like NumbersUSA, Center for Immigration Studies, ProEnglish, FAIR, Heritage Action for America, Tea Party Patriots and grassroots conservatives throughout the United States. We hosted regular meetings and conference calls among the organizations at the Eagle Forum Capitol Hill office to strategize, mobilize and lobby against amnesty.

The Senate Gang of 8, comprised of Republicans Marco Rubio of Florida, John McCain and Jeff Flake of Arizona and Lindsey Graham of South Carolina and Democrats Dick Durbin of Illinois, Robert Menendez of New Jersey, Chuck Schumer of New York, and Michael Bennet of Colorado negotiated a sweeping comprehensive amnesty bill topping 844 pages.

In an effort to stop the Gang of 8 Senate bill, Eagle Forum issued 20 action alerts and began several online-media efforts. Our first website www.stopamnesty.me aggregated news articles and facts about amnesty divided into four sections: the cost of amnesty, saving American jobs, border security, and the lack of transparency in the legislative process surrounding the amnesty effort.

In meeting with other coalition groups and anti-amnesty legislators, it became apparent that it was necessary to counter faith-based groups such as the Southern Baptist Convention, the National Hispanic Christian Association, led by Rev. Samuel Rodriguez, Mat Staver's Freedom Federation and other Christian groups being exploited by pro-amnesty forces. We developed a website and a petition for people of faith who oppose amnesty.

Eagle Forum then led an effort in conjunction with NumbersUSA and other anti-amnesty groups and garnered signatures from more than 150 conservatives on a coalition letter urging opposition to the Senate Gang of 8 Bill, including Laura Ingraham, Mark Levin, Michelle Malkin and hundreds of local tea party and grassroots conservative leaders throughout the country. The letter was delivered to Senate leadership and heavily covered through an earned media campaign.

This letter dealt a significant blow to the amnesty efforts. Days after the letter was released, on May 23, 2013, House Speaker John Boehner declared that even if the Gang of 8 bill were to pass the Senate it would be "dead on arrival" in the House of Representatives.

Eagle Forum also hosted a national telephone town hall on the amnesty issue featuring Robert Rector of the Heritage Foundation, Rosemary Jenks of NumbersUSA, a representative from Senator Jeff Sessions office, and Betsy McCaughey, a renowned author and scholar who is well-known for reading through proposed legislation like HillaryCare, the stimulus bill and Obamacare to find the ugly truths hidden in the bills. McCaughey exposed multiple dirty secrets contained in the Gang of 8 bill.

Eagle Forum also helped facilitate two more telephone town halls with NumbersUSA, including one specifically geared toward state legislators to inform them of the expenses Obamacare posed to their state governments. Eagle Forum executive director Colleen Holcomb participated in a webcast with NumbersUSA and spoke at the Faith and Freedom Conference about opposing amnesty from a Christian perspective.

Amnesty opponents succeeded in getting out the truth about the Gang of 8 bill and its failures, specifically its failure to secure the border. Unfortunately, Republicans Bob Corker of Tennessee and John Hoeven of North Dakota sponsored an amendment to give Republicans cover to claim they were fighting for stronger border security. The 1,190-page Amendment materially changed the 844-page bill by adding significantly to the bill's price tag and providing payoffs to multiple Senators, yet it did nothing to increase national security. Still, the amendment bought enough votes to secure passage of the Gang of 8 bill.

On June 11, 2013, the Gang of 8 bill passed the Senate by a vote of 68-32. This vote disappointed amnesty advocates who boasted that the bill would pass overwhelmingly with more than 70 votes, so keeping the vote under 70 was considered a significant victory.

All Democrats voted for the Gang of 8 amnesty bill, and they were joined by the following Republican Senators: Rubio of Florida, Heller of Nevada, Hatch of Utah, Flake and McCain of Arizona, Ayotte of New Hampshire, Graham of South Carolina, Alexander and Corker of Tennessee, Hoeven of North Dakota, Kirk of Illinois, Murkowski of Alaska, Chiesa of New Jersey and Collins of Maine.

Eagle Forum and our stop amnesty coalition partners then focused our efforts on the House of Representatives. We worked closely with Texas Representative Steve Stockman's office to inform Congressmen that the Gang of 8 bill is unconstitutional because it assesses a fee to aliens applying for amnesty. This makes the bill revenue-generating, which violates the origination clause of the Constitution, which declares that all revenue-generating bills must originate in the House of Representatives.

Eagle Forum sent talking points on the Constitutional issue to all Republican Members of Congress and urged them to bring up the issue at a meeting of the House Republican Conference. The next day, Representative David Camp, Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, issued a statement declaring the Gang of 8 bill unconstitutional, and noting that Chairman Camp would issue a "blue slip," or a Constitutional challenge to the bill, once Leader Reid sent the bill to the House.

Because of this, Harry Reid has refused to send the Senate-passed Gang of 8 bill. He is waiting for the House to pass any bill at all dealing with immigration. Any immigration bill can serve as a vehicle to send the Gang of 8 bill into a conference to work out the difference between the two bills, with the likely result of such a conference being amnesty. Therefore, Eagle Forum and our coalition partners continue to urge Representatives not to pass ANY legislation dealing with immigration until the Senate Gang of 8 bill has been blue slipped.

Fighting Back against Amnesty by Executive Order

Congressman Steve King sponsored an amendment to the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act (H.R. 2217), that would prohibit funds in the bill from being made available to implement either the June 17, 2011, memorandum from the director of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement regarding the exercise of prosecutorial discretion or the June 15, 2012, memorandum from the Secretary of Homeland Security regarding the exercise of prosecutorial discretion. It would also prohibit funds to implement President Obama's memos from March 2, 2011, November 17, 2011, and December 21, 2012, through which he sought to work his way around Congress by implementing amnesty through Executive Order instead of the legislative process.

Democrats John Barrow of Georgia and Nick Rahall of West Virginia voted for this amendment. The following Republicans joined the rest of the Democrats in voting against this amendment: Bachus of Alabama, Nunes of California, Denham of California, Valadeo of California, Grimm of New York and Ros-Lehtinen of Florida.

Protecting a Pro-Family Culture

Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act

On June 18, 2013, the House of Representatives passed a nationwide ban on abortions after 20 weeks following the conviction of Philadelphia late-term abortionist Kermit Gosnell, who was found guilty of first-degree murder in the case of three babies born alive in his clinic.

Senator Lindsey Graham introduced a Senate counterpart, S. 1670, on November 7, 2013. This bill had 40 cosponsors, but more support was needed, especially from moderate members.

Texas Pro-Life Omnibus

Following the Gosnell trial, the Texas legislature took center stage of the national media, when State Senator Wendy Davis filibustered the Texas State Senate for 12 hours as she stalled common-sense, lifesaving measures in a pro-life omnibus. She was joined by hundreds of protesters as she effectively delayed the pro-life omnibus in the State Senate for 14 hours.

However, because of the time frame, the measure failed. If the vote had been taken 5 minutes earlier, the pro-life omnibus would have passed, putting common-sense, lifesaving measures into place for women and unborn babies. Clinics would have been forced to comply with basic safety regulations, and abortions after 20 weeks would have been banned.

Governor Rick Perry heard the cries of pro-life activists and called a special legislative session. Pro-life groups like Eagle Forum gathered activists to pack the Texas Capitol to show support for the pro-life legislators and the Governor. Ultimately, the historic pro-life legislation passed.

Employee Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA)

This Act was re-introduced in the 113th Congress as H.R. 1755 and S. 815. Under the guise of equality, ENDA creates special rights for homosexual and transgendered individuals and forbids employers from considering the consequences of this behavior in the workplace and is particularly concerning because of the ambiguous and broad implications of the bill. It opens employers up to numerous claims of discrimination.

Unlike race or gender, sexual orientation and gender identity are subjective, self-disclosed, and self-defined, and employers should not be subject to lawsuits because they are taking into account the behavior of their employees. Furthermore, ENDA violates the right of employers, who object to homosexual or transgender behavior for religious reasons, to operate their businesses or organizations according to the dictates of their faith.

ENDA is yet another example of the federal government imposing on employers what the free market can work out itself. ENDA passed the Senate by a vote of 64-32, with Republican Senators Ayotte of New Hampshire, Collins of Maine, Flake of Arizona, Hatch of

Utah, Heller of Nevada, Kirk of Illinois, McCain of Arizona, Murkowski of Alaska, and Portman of Ohio.

No action was taken in the House of Representatives.

Defeating Common Core – State by State

For decades, we have fought progressive and liberal initiatives in education. The Department of Education's latest effort began in 2009 through a federal stimulus program called Race to the Top. Forty-five states ceded their sovereignty over education when they promised to adopt the national K-12 Common Core standards in English and math in order to compete with other states for funding in a federal grant competition called Race to the Top. Unfortunately, the majority of the states did not receive funding, yet all states are responsible for implementing the Common Core in their schools.

In 2013, a groundswell of opposition began to rise up to remove the Common Core from schools across the nation. In most every state, Eagle Forum is leading the effort and drawing in hundreds of new grassroots activists. People are realizing that the standards are of poor quality and fail to prepare American students for studies in science, technology, engineering, and math. By eighth grade, the standards put our students two years behind their peers in high-performing countries and even further behind in high school.

In English language arts, the Common Core severely de-emphasizes the study of classic literature and instead implements drab and simplistic "informational" texts. We know that critical thinking is the key to success, and the evidence shows that children should be reading more, not less, classic literature. More than that, child psychiatrists and psychologists have heavily criticized the standards as being age-inappropriate for young children.

There are many efforts underway in key states across the nation. The grassroots know that their states must reclaim authority over education this year. Eagle Forum is constantly releasing information about the Common Core, and our office frequently sends targeted alerts to states with movement on the issue. Common Core is gaining widespread and national attention, and the media continues to come to Eagle Forum for statements and interviews on the issue.
