

Families Win Big in Congress

By Amelia Wigton

Several victories in Congress this session show that CWA's members make a big difference on Capitol Hill!

Cord-blood bill signed into law. S. 1317, which furthers medical treatments with cord-blood stem cells, finally passed after being stalled in the Senate for months. The House version, H.R. 2520, had passed quickly in the House last May in a 430-1 vote.

In a frustrating, purely political move, the Senate had held up the life-saving cord-blood bill for months pending a vote on a controversial bill to federally fund unethical embryonic stem-cell research, which hasn't been used to treat any diseases. CWA opposes embryonic stem-cell research because it destroys human life. CWA members in the states, especially in Iowa, jumped into action and made calls that were vital to the passage of this common-sense bill. [See *Chairman's Desk*, p. 2.]

The legislation will fund databases to streamline and increase cord-blood units, making needy patients more likely to find a match. Cord-blood stem cells have success-



President Bush signed the cord-blood bill into law at a ceremony in the White House. CWA's Wendy Wright attended.

fully treated more than 70 diseases! We thank Rep. Chris Smith (R-New Jersey) for introducing this bill, and we appreciate his kindness in citing CWA in the *Congressional Record* as a key organization in getting it moved through Congress.

The Healthy Marriage Initiative passes. Just before Christmas recess, the Senate passed a bill that provides \$100 million for the Healthy Marriage Initiative; the House passed it weeks after. Research shows that investing in the health of marriages saves taxpayer dollars and improves communities because children and parents are less likely

to participate in problem behaviors.

“CWA worked tirelessly to fight for this marriage bill; we contacted members of Congress on behalf of our constituency to let them know that this bill was a priority,” said Lanier Swann, CWA’s Director of Government Relations.

Tax Breaks for casinos thwarted.

CWA worked hand-in-hand with key members of Congress to prevent tax breaks from going to casinos, massage parlors and other entertainment-oriented businesses in Katrina-relief funding. Historically, these types of private businesses have not received tax breaks, and the Gulf Coast’s many other dire needs were far greater. Language in the post-Katrina relief package excluded these groups.

End Demand Act passed. The House passed H.R. 972 as an amendment that creates funding to target and reduce the demand side of sex trafficking, which exploits and abuses women and children for money.

Dr. Janice Crouse, CWA’s expert on this issue who attended the bill’s signing at the White House, said, “The vote to pass H.R. 972 culminates months of intense negotiation and hard work by those of us who are passionate about ending the scourge of human trafficking. It will help eliminate modern-day slavery and prosecute those criminals who are modern-day slave masters.”

Cable Choice Campaign continues.

CWA also launched a new phase of its campaign to support and raise public awareness on Cable Choice. These actions came as a response to three dismal decency hearings, held in November, December and January by Sen. Ted Stevens (R-Alaska). The hearings failed to offer families and consumers real protection from ever-worsening television content.

CWA spearheaded a letter to Congress, also signed by 35 pro-family groups, urging elected officials to pressure video service



CWA interns distributed information on Cable Choice at the Capitol Hill hearing on indecency.

providers to provide a la carte pricing for consumers. This would allow them to pay for only those channels that they choose, instead of predetermined packages.

In addition, Lanier Swann hosted a teleconference on a la carte programming at CWA’s Washington, D.C., headquarters and submitted testimony to a Senate committee on behalf of CWA’s 500,000 members. Ads in *The Washington Times* and *Roll Call* soon followed, and hundreds of thousands of readers were educated on our Cable Choice campaign.

The battle to protect our airwaves is two-pronged, and CWA continues to work for passage of the stalled Broadcast Decency Enforcement Act of 2005 (H.R. 310). This important legislation would stiffen fines for broadcast indecency.

CWA is so thankful for concerned citizens who are educated and involved in legislative issues. As these successes show, you are vital.

Amelia Wigton is CWA’s Legislative Assistant. To read Lanier Swann’s Senate testimony on Cable Choice, visit

<http://www.cwfa.org/images/content/indecencytestimony011906.pdf>, or call 1-800-323-2200 to request your copy. ■