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For my part, whatever anguish of spirit it may cost, I am willing to know the whole truth; to know the worst and provide for it.

Patrick Henry

AACS Hosts Youth Legislative Training Conference

By all accounts, the 18th annual Youth Legislative Training Conference was a great success. Forty-two students from AACS schools around the country were selected to attend this year's conference in Washington, D.C. Throughout the week, the students were addressed by several speakers including Dr. Keith Wiebe (AACS President), Judge David Gustafson, Rep. David Schweikert, Christopher Doss (Leadership Institute), Tim Goeglein (Focus on the Family Vice President of External Relations), Lila Rose (Live Action President), and Jennifer Marshal (The Heritage Foundation). Mrs. Gail Nicholas, National Forensic League speech coach, guided the students through proper parliamentary procedure as they participated in a mock Senate. Wednesday was the "Day on the Hill" in which students met with their Representatives and Senators, and attended a Congressional briefing in the U.S. Capitol. Members of Congress, including Rep. Ann Marie Buerkle (NY), Rep. Jim Jordan (OH), Rep. Louie Gohmert (TX), and Senator Jim DeMint (SC), shared personal anecdotes and encouraged the students to get involved in the political process. The "Day on the Hill" concluded with an after-hours Capitol tour, hosted by Rep. Jeff Duncan (SC) and Melissa Evans who both highlighted our country's spiritual heritage demonstrated in the Capitol. Other tours throughout the week included the Library of Congress, Arlington National Cemetery, and an evening tour of the monuments. The students were also able to enjoy an inspiring trip to the Marine Corps Barracks Parade where the President and Commandant's Own bands performed patriotic selections with the Joint Chiefs of Staff in attendance. The week concluded with a wreath laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery. The AACS Legislative office is grateful for all of the parents, sponsors, volunteers and prayers that made this year's YLTC a rousing success.

To read a full report of the events of the YLTC, please click [here](#).

To view pictures of the week, please click here: [AACS Legislative Office YLTC](#)

Largest Teacher's Union Revamps Organization

In the wake of significant member losses, the leadership of the National Education Association (NEA) recently announced a complete overhaul of their organization and primary focus. Since 2010, the group has lost 100,000 members resulting in a \$65 million dollar revenue drop. The organization will now concentrate on mobilizing the remaining 3 million members into a "politically potent force." Outside observers question whether the group can achieve this objective without compromising its efforts to improve teaching as a whole. Unions have been steadily losing bargaining power in states such as Wisconsin and Tennessee. In order to cut costs, NEA officials are slashing committees and offering employees early retirement packages. Program cuts, canceled conferences, decreased travel, and reduced benefits have been enacted to stave off significant budget shortfalls. Officials blame the recession, Republicans, and "wacky" education reforms for their current troubles. Although the group supported the President's stimulus proposals, they have rejected programs such as "Race to the Top" which set

teacher quality and rating standards. At the July 2-5, 2012, convention, *Education Week* [reported](#) that the event had the feeling of a “campaign rally” because it prominently featured political signs and speakers repeatedly stated the need to re-elect President Obama. One official stated that the future of the 155-year-old organization depends on the success of these restructuring efforts.

Higher Education Subcommittee Holds Hearing

On Wednesday, Rep. Virginia Foxx chaired a hearing [entitled](#) “Keeping College Within Reach: Exploring State Efforts to Curb Costs.” Since 2001, the average college tuition has risen approximately 72%. In addition, the federal takeover of student loan programs such as the Pell Grant program has resulted in government expenditures of approximately \$40 billion dollars annually. Chairwoman Foxx (R-NC) highlighted states that have implemented “pay for performance” systems and comprehensive articulation agreements (credit transfer arrangements between two-year and four-year colleges). Experts testified that state revenue shortages are a major barrier to improvement. Several witnesses expressed the need to standardize credit transfer processes within states. Attrition was also identified as major problem since 1/3 of students do not finish college. Rep. Bishop (R-UT) suggested that a distinction should be made between the issue of access to higher education versus the completion of college and related Pell grants issues. Indiana Commissioner for Higher Education Theresa Lubbers cautioned that factors such as escalating costs, higher student debt, and the lack of job opportunities in higher education could become the “next bubble” in our economy.

Mississippi Abortion Clinic Showdown

Earlier this month, Judge Daniel Jordan issued a partial injunction that will allow the lone abortion clinic in Mississippi to remain open for now. Since the state legislature passed strict health and safety regulations, the Jackson Women’s Health Organization went to the courts to gain a reprieve from H.B. 1390, the state law which requires abortion centers to retain doctors with local hospital admission privileges. Proponents of the measure contend these regulations will protect women’s health in case of surgical complications. The owner of the remaining abortion clinic also owns other clinics in neighboring states that have been charged with numerous pages of health code violations. Despite the fact that the clinic’s operators have been repeatedly denied the required admitting privileges, the Judge argued that closure of the clinic would present an “undue burden” for women seeking abortions.

In Case You Missed It:

[Weekly Market Update](#) provided by Jeff Beach of the [AACIS Investment Team at Merrill Lynch](#)

[Scholars and Scribes Review the Rulings: The Supreme Court’s 2011-2012 Term](#)

[Boy Scouts Reaffirm Traditional Stance](#)

[Attack on Church Youth Group a Disconcerting Shift in Mexico](#)