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*“The Bible is the Chief moral cause of all that is good, and the best corrector of all that is evil, in human society; the best book for regulating the temporal concerns of men, and the only book that can serve as an infallible guide to future felicity. . . . It is extremely important to our nation in a political as well as religious view, that all possible authority and influence should be given to the scriptures, for these furnish the best principles of civil liberty, and the most effectual support of republican government.”*

Noah Webster, 1833

**Louisiana School Choice Bill Enacted**

Louisiana became the [sixth state](#) to enact a special needs school choice program when Gov. Bobby Jindal signed into law the School Choice Pilot Program for Students with Exceptionalities Act, “a two-year pilot program that will commence in the fall.” The program is designed to allow “kindergarten through 8th grade students with autism, mental or learning disabilities, developmental delays, traumatic brain injuries, etc., to attend a private school that better addresses their unique needs” and also gives parents a choice in their child’s education.

Louisiana now joins Arizona, Georgia, Florida, Ohio, Oklahoma and Utah in offering a program designed to promote the best quality education for each child while giving parents the ultimate choice in choosing what is best for their child’s educational needs.

**CA District Approves Bible Elective**

The Chino Valley School District in California decided this week in 5-0 decision to [institute](#) an elective Bible course that will be taught in public schools beginning this fall. The decision came after parents urged the school board to allow for a Bible course to be taught to students who wish to take the course as an elective. The new course, titled “Bible as/in Literature and History,” will offer students an overview of both the Old and New Testaments as well as history of the Middle East. Its main focus will be on “giving students an understanding of the Bible's influence in history, literature, religion and politics.”

Fred Youngblood, President of the Board of Education, fully endorsed the course, stating, “It is my belief that better understanding the Bible will help all students with their decision-making process.” He continued to say, “The Bible has been a part of my life ever since I could remember. It has had a very positive influence on me and my family. It is my hope that our students will have a better understanding of the impact the Bible has had on all that surrounds us.”

**States Continue to Resist Race to the Top Funds**

Several states have [decided to opt out](#) of the Race to the Top (RTTT) funds, a federal program designed to award states for bringing about education reform and improvements. Reasons for this increased skepticism in states range from the time-consuming and expensive nature of the application process to the lack of support

within state governments and resistance from teacher unions. In Phase 1 of the program, dozens of states applied for the federal grants, revamping their educational systems and instituting vast reforms; yet only two states, Delaware and Tennessee, were actually awarded federal money. Phase 2 of the program began in June, yet states have become more wary of the program causing some of them to back out.

Indiana, for example, applied for Phase 1 of the RTTT funds, but reviewers of the application denied them any funds because they were lacking the support of the teacher unions. The state then tried to bring about reform through the legislature but was met with substantial resistance. The state therefore was forced to withhold from applying to Phase 2 of the RTTT funds. According to Indiana Department of Education Superintendent Tony Bennett, “The federal government is speaking directly to the need for states to engage in bold reforms. In order to make a case to get fed money and have bold reforms, one of two things has to be present. You either have to have a legislative framework in your state that affords you the opportunity to make those bold reforms, or in the absence of that you have to have tremendous union buy-in. If you have both you're in great shape. You need to have one or the other. We have neither.” The state of Minnesota experienced the same problem.

Other states have declined from participating all together. Texas and Alaska both expressed concerns with the program from its inception due to increased federal control and a time-consuming, expensive application process with no guarantees. Texas Gov. Rick Perry has stated, “This program is not a 'race to the top.' It's a spring to the middle—to mediocrity.” The Governor has also referred to the program as “a tangle of red tape . . . a legislative sleight of hand” that could cost the state nearly \$3 billion in “compliance costs.” Texas Education Commissioner Robert Scott has also publicly expressed his concern stating, “This grant application is essentially a Trojan horse—designed for us to take the money and then hand over our control.” Virginia has also opted out of the program. Gov. Bob McDonnell expressed that in order to be considered to receive grants Virginia would essentially “have to lower our standards. This we cannot do.”

### **Hawaii Governor Vetoes Same-Sex Unions**

In April of this year, Hawaii's legislature passed a bill that would allow for same-sex civil unions and would grant same-sex couples the same benefits that married couples receive. However, this week Hawaii Governor Linda Lingle [vetoed the measure](#). Since April, the bill had been sitting on her desk awaiting her signature as thousands wrote, called, and protested the bill. After vetoing the bill, Gov. Lingle stated, “There has not been a bill I have contemplated more or an issue I have thought more deeply about during my eight years as governor than House Bill 444 and the institution of marriage. I have been open and consistent in my opposition to same-gender marriage, and find that House Bill 444 is essentially marriage by another name.” According to the Governor's office nearly 34,000 letters, calls, and emails had been received, 60% of which were opposed to the bill and urged the Governor to veto the measure.

### **America Speaking Out**

In an effort to engage the American people in the realm of public policy and to give voice to the people on what issues matter most to them, the Republican leadership has launched a new website titled [America Speaking Out](#) to gain new ideas regarding what Congress should be concerned with and working towards. The website is an interactive avenue that allows Americans to vote on issues and ideas as well as promote new ideas on how best to combat some of the biggest issues America is now facing. The Republican leadership is urging all Americans to use the website as a tool to move the agenda of Congress in the right direction. Republicans have expressed their commitment to use the website and the ideas of everyday Americans to mold their agenda and to take up the causes that the majority of Americans wish to see addressed. To find out how you can express your ideas and opinions please go to [www.AmericaSpeakingOut.com](http://www.AmericaSpeakingOut.com).

### **In Case You Missed It:**

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

[Louisiana Opts Out of Federally Funded Abortions](#)

[More Senators Voice Opposition to Kagan Nomination](#)

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